LCQ16: Control for food safety of fruits and vegetables

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

Regarding the Government's control for food safety of fruits and vegetables, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Centre for Food Safety under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) conducts sampling checks on fruits and vegetables imported by sea, land and air at its Kwai Chung checkpoint, Man Kam To office (MKT office) and airport office respectively, of the details of the sampling check procedure (including the methods for taking samples of fruits and vegetables for laboratory tests); in respect of each type of imported fruits and vegetables, the current average daily quantity going through each checkpoint as well as the quantity and percentage of such quantity taken for laboratory tests (set out in a table);

(2) of the quantities of fruits and vegetables imported from the Mainland in each of the past five years; the criteria currently adopted at MKT office for conducting sampling checks on fruits and vegetables imported from the Mainland, as well as the quantities and percentages concerned;

(3) whether it will proactively improve the procedure for conducting sampling checks on imported fruits and vegetables, so that checks on fruits and vegetables fully packed in lorries are conducted in a more effective and expeditious manner; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that many lorries carrying imported fruits and vegetables enter Hong Kong through MKT office every day, of the maximum number of lorries per hour in respect of which the sampling checks on the fruits and vegetables carried can be handled by the MKT office's staff, and the approach for handling the situation where the number of lorries that arrive exceeds that number; whether the Government will study (i) how sampling checks on fruits and vegetables can be conducted more flexibly and expeditiously at the MKT office, and (ii) the reprovisioning of the MKT office at a suitable location with a view to developing a centre that combines the functions of conducting sampling checks on fruits and vegetables with wholesale functions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) as it has been reported that some traders, after mixing organic vegetables with imported vegetables or other vegetables which have not gone through sampling checks and with unknown places of origins, sell such mixed vegetables as organic vegetables, of the measures to be put in place by the

Government to combat such trade practice and ensure food safety; of the number of prosecutions instituted in the past five years by the Government in this regard, and the penalties imposed on the convicted persons; and

(6) given that the Office of The Ombudsman made eight recommendations in its direct investigation report entitled Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's System of Safety Control for Imported Fruits and Vegetables released in November last year, of the latest progress of FEHD's follow-up work on each of these recommendations?

Reply:

President,

The laws of Hong Kong stipulate that all food for sale must be fit for human consumption. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department takes food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing and adopts a risk-based approach in determining the types and the sizes of samples to be collected and the laboratory analyses to be conducted.

The reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1), (2) and (4) On the sampling of vegetables and fruits at the import level for testing, the CFS conducts sampling mainly at its checkpoints or offices at various control points. The majority of imported vegetables and fruits enter Hong Kong by land or air, whereas a limited amount is imported by sea.

All vegetables and fruits entering Hong Kong by land are imported from the Mainland through Man Kam To Control Point (MKTCP). When an inbound goods vehicle carrying vegetables and fruits arrives at the Man Kam To Food Control Office (MKTFCO), CFS staff would check if the seal on the vehicle remains intact, examine the accompanying documents, and adopt a risk-based approach in taking samples for quick tests for pesticide residues and comprehensive chemical analysis.

Regarding vegetables and fruits imported by air, upon arrival of the air cargos in Hong Kong, the importers would follow the instructions of the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) to submit import documents to CFS' office at the airport. CFS staff would examine the import documents and adopt a risk-based approach to take samples for testing.

As for vegetables and fruits imported by sea, the CFS adopts a risk-based approach to arrange importers to bring the vehicles carrying the relevant consignments of vegetables and fruits to the Food Control Checkpoint at Kwai Chung Customhouse for examining the import documents and taking samples for testing, or to arrange CFS staff to carry out the relevant work on the consignments of vegetables and fruits concerned in the warehouses/cold storages of the importers.

According to the data provided by the Census and Statistics Department,

the amount of vegetables and fruits imported from the Mainland to Hong Kong in the past five years is as below:

	2013 (tonnes)	2014 (tonnes)	2015 (tonnes)	2016 (tonnes)	2017 (tonnes)
Vegetables	761 636	756 685	765 533	789 345	821 781
Fruits	184 105	188 459	203 952	220 106	217 194

The number of goods vehicles carrying imported vegetables through MKTCP, and the number and percentage of the goods vehicles inspected by CFS in the past five years are as below:

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of goods vehicles importing vegetables to Hong Kong through MKTCP	84 523	87 583	96 891	99 793	108 536
Number of goods vehicles inspected by CFS	32 721	34 736	33 898	33 643	28 004
Percentage	38.7%	39.7%	35.0%	33.7%	25.8%

CFS has been flexibly deploying manpower to sample and inspect vehicles arriving at MKTFCO at different period of time. The operation is generally smooth. Insofar as taking food samples at the import level is concerned, the most effective venues to conduct the relevant sampling must be places as proximate to the control points as possible. Currently, we do not have plans to relocate the existing MKTFCO.

The CFS does not have breakdown figures of each type of vegetables and fruits imported through each of its checkpoints or offices.

(3) and (6) the CFS reviews its food safety control work from time to time, including the procedures for sampling imported vegetables and fruits for testing. In response to the Investigation Report on Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's System of Safety Control for Imported Fruits and Vegetables (the Investigation Report) published by the Office of The Ombudsman in November 2017, the CFS has taken various follow-up actions, as summarised below:

(i) the CFS has arranged to increase the number of fruit samples taken at MKTFCO;

(ii) the CFS has issued guidelines to frontline staff on the collection of samples of vegetables and fruits in the storage compartments of goods vehicles (including the inner parts). Also, the CFS has enhanced training and on-site guidance to frontline staff, for the effective implementation of the procedures and ensuring the occupational safety of the frontline staff;

(iii) to enhance the surveillance of fruits imported by sea, the CFS has started to take samples from the importers' warehouses for testing, and has increased the number of samples;

(iv) to enhance the surveillance of fruits imported by sea, the CFS has gradually enhanced sampling from wholesale markets for testing, and will continue to increase the number of samples;

(v) the CFS will maintain close contact with the Government Laboratory, making flexible arrangements to minimise the lead time for testing vegetable and fruit samples;

(vi) in view of the classification of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) on "lotus roots" and "bean sprouts" to which the Investigation Report had made reference, the CFS will keep in view the situation of other economies in adopting Codex's classification, and consider whether and if so how to adopt the standards concerned locally;

(vii) the Food and Health Bureau submitted the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) (Amendment) Regulation 2018 to the Legislative Council on June 13, 2018 for negative vetting. The Amendment Regulation adopts the relevant Codex standard for the maximum level of "lead" in leafy vegetables. The Subcommittee on Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) (Amendment) Regulation 2018 of the Legislative Council is scrutinising the Amendment Regulation; and

(viii) the CFS will continue to keep in view international development, including the food safety standards set by Codex and other economies, the dietary habit of Hong Kong people as well as other relevant factors, with a view to reviewing food safety legislation and regulatory regimes as and when appropriate.

(5) Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362), any person who, in the course of any trade or business, makes false or misleading statements in respect of the goods (including organic food) he supplies commits an offence. The C&ED may take enforcement actions under the Ordinance. The C&ED has been proactively handling complaints related to false trade description, adopting a risk-based approach in prioritising its enforcement actions, and taking appropriate enforcement actions having regard to the evidence of individual cases. In the past five years, the C&ED had taken prosecution actions against three cases related to organic vegetables. All of them led to successful convictions. The convicted vendors were fined $2,000 to $10,000.

The CFS will continue to adopt a risk-based approach to take vegetable and fruit samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for laboratory analysis, to ensure the safety of the vegetables and fruits for sale on the

market.

LCQ3: Bus stops

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So Wai-man, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

According to the Transport Planning and Design Manual, the bus stop spacing in urban areas should be around 400 metres and it may need to be increased to 600 metres in the light of traffic congestions. However, the current bus stop spacing of certain bus routes in urban areas is only 130 to 200 metres, and the frequent pick-up/drop-off of passengers by buses has prolonged the journeys as well as aggravated traffic congestions and air pollution. Besides, some members of the public have criticised that the bus stops are lacking facilities which are friendly to passengers and passers-by. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the bus stops in urban areas with a spacing of less than 300 metres at present, and set out the details, such as the District Council districts in which the bus stops are situated, the bus stop spacing, as well as the names of the franchised bus companies, the bus route numbers and the start and end points of the bus routes concerned; whether the Government will discuss with the franchised bus companies and members of the local communities the consolidation of bus stops that are too close;

(2) of the regulatory measures it has put in place to ensure that a balance is struck among the following considerations in the design of bus stops: the generation of advertising income for franchised bus companies, the provision of a comfortable waiting environment for passengers, and the avoidance of causing obstruction on the pavements; and

(3) given that the Government announced in the 2016 Policy Address that it would allocate $80 million to subsidize franchised bus companies in installing seats and panels for display of real-time bus arrival information at bus stops, of the latest progress of such work?

Reply:

President,

Currently, around four million passenger trips are carried by franchised buses daily in Hong Kong, accounting for about 31 per cent of the overall public transport patronage. Therefore, the Government has been encouraging franchised bus companies to enhance the bus stop facilities for the

convenience of passengers and better waiting environment. My reply to the various parts of the Hon Tony Tse's question is as follows:

(1) Regarding the location of bus stops, the Transport Department (TD) will make reference to its Transport Planning and Design Manual when considering adding, changing or cancelling any en-route bus stops. According to the Manual, the ideal walking distance between two bus stops in urban area should be within 400 metres, while the distance between en-route bus stops would preferably be 400 to 600 metres.

In adopting the suggestions in the Manual, the TD will also need to take into account a host of factors in the light of the actual circumstances. Such factors include geographical constraints (e.g. whether the proposed bus stop is close to road junctions), road safety (e.g. whether drivers' view will be obstructed and whether vehicular access to nearby buildings will be obstructed during passenger boarding and alighting), the traffic flow in the vicinity, passenger demand, adequacy of space for waiting passengers and traversing pedestrians, etc. To facilitate orderly boarding of passengers, bus routes heading to the same destinations or destinations with close proximity will be arranged to use the same or a nearby en-route bus stop as far as possible. In determining the suitable location of en-route bus stops for individual route or a combination of routes, the TD will also take into account the service frequency and the number of passengers using that particular bus stops.

Given the vast number of en-route bus stops, we have not maintained information on bus stops with a spacing of less than 300 metres across the territory. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the TD will take into account various factors on a case-by-case basis to determine the location of a bus stop, and the spacing between en-route bus stops will be reduced as actual needs arise. Take the section of King's Road between Island Place and Kam Hong Street as an example. Since the pavement along the eastbound section of the road is relatively narrow to cater for the heavy flow of waiting and interchanging passengers there, two en-route bus stops with a spacing of approximately 140 metres are provided for diverting passengers to ensure the safety of waiting passengers and pedestrians. As for the westbound of the same section of King's Road, two en-route bus stops with a spacing of approximately 150 metres for two daytime routes are provided to meet the needs of students commuting to school in the morning and interchanging passengers.

All in all, when considering adding, changing or cancelling en-route bus stops, the TD will continue to make reference to the suggestions in the Transport Planning and Design Manual, and make corresponding adjustments having regard to the actual traffic conditions, passenger demand and views of the local community so as to provide passengers with safe and convenient franchised bus services.

(2) As regards the design of bus stops, under the current practice, the franchised bus companies will submit new proposed appearances for bus stops and their shelters to the Advisory Committee on the Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures under the Highways Department for scrutiny. The

Committee scrutinises the appearances in the proposals mainly from the aesthetic, visual and greening points of view. When vetting franchised bus companies' applications for erecting bus stops at individual locations, the TD will take into account the Committee's opinion on the appearances of the bus stops, while carefully considering such information as the locations and sizes of the proposed bus stops, and the numbers of light boxes at the proposed stops. In addition, the TD will examine the potential impact of the proposed bus shelters on pedestrian flow, the sightline of other road users and the operation of nearby shops, and will seek the views of relevant departments.

The primary objective of adding shelters to bus stops is to provide passengers with a more comfortable waiting environment. The light box panel, on the other hand, is an extension of a bus shelter. The panel can be used for displaying bus service details or other information for waiting passengers' reference. In case a proposed bus stop is located in a relatively narrow area which is not suitable for a larger shelter or one with light box panels, or that a proposed bus stop design may cause obstruction to pedestrians, the TD will request the franchised bus company concerned to change the design into more appropriate ones, such as a shorter and narrower shelter or one without light box panels, so as to adapt the bus stop to the specific environment of the pavement concerned.

Franchised bus companies intending to place advertisements on light box panels are required to file an application with the TD and bear the costs of the installation and maintenance services concerned. According to the current regulatory arrangements for franchised bus companies, revenue generated from advertising at bus shelters should be credited to the overall operating revenue of the companies. This will help relieve the pressure of fare increase.

As shown from the above, when the TD processes applications for erecting bus stops from franchised bus companies, it will consider various factors so as to enable that the bus stop designs can cater to the needs of the public and the local community, pedestrian and vehicular flows, road safety, etc., as far as possible.

(3) The Government has provided subsidies to franchised bus companies for installing seats at about 2 600 covered bus stops, and funded the installation of real-time bus arrival information display panels at about 1 300 covered bus stops with electricity supply on a matching basis. It is expected that the installation works will be completed in phases in 2020.

The first phase of seat installation commenced in November last year. As at June 25, 2018, installation was completed at around 600 bus stops. As for the display panels, the first phase installation works commenced in end-March 2018. As at June 25, 2018, around 20 bus stops were installed with display panels. The overall first phase installation works for seats and display panels at bus stops are expected to be completed in 2018, while the remaining installation works will be implemented in two phases for scheduled completion in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

LCQ6: Parking arrangements at Hong Kong Port of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So Wai-man, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

Regarding the parking arrangements at the Hong Kong Port (HK Port) of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge upon the latter's commissioning, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) among the 661 private car parking spaces at HK Port, of the number of those which will be made available for online booking, and the relevant parking fees and the maximum parking time allowed;

(2) of the number of vehicles which may be parked temporarily at the waiting area of HK Port; how the authorities will handle prolonged occupation of the waiting area by vehicles, and whether the authorities will issue warnings and fixed penalty tickets to the drivers concerned and tow away the vehicles concerned; and

(3) of the measures formulated by the authorities to deal with the situation in which a large number of vehicles need to make use of the waiting area to pick up and drop off passengers during peak travel seasons, in order to avoid the occurrence of serious traffic blockages?

Reply:

Acting President,

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) is the first cross-boundary land transport infrastructure project linking Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macao. In the course of planning the transport facilities at the Hong Kong Port, the Government expected and encouraged the majority of the travellers to use public transport, including franchised bus, green minibus, taxi and non-franchised bus, and then take cross-boundary shuttle bus at the Hong Kong Port to travel to Zhuhai and Macao via the HZMB. Upon the commissioning of the HZMB, the Transport Department (TD) will strengthen public transport feeder service by introducing three new franchised bus routes and one green minibus route.

Besides, there are five public car parks at the Hong Kong Port,

providing a total of 661 parking spaces for private cars, 25 parking spaces for motorcycles, 12 parking spaces for the disabled, 14 parking spaces for light goods vehicles and 21 parking spaces for out-of-service taxis.

The Civil Engineering and Development Department and the Planning Department are conducting a feasibility study for topside development at the artificial island where the Hong Kong Port is located to explore how to optimise the land on the island for topside and underground development for commercial and other economic uses. The Government will study the provision of parking spaces at the topside development to further meet the parking demand of Hong Kong residents and inbound visitors.

My reply to the Hon Holden Chow's question is as follows:

(1) Half of the various types of parking spaces in the public car park at the Hong Kong Port will be available for booking. The operator of the car park will introduce an online booking system for motorists to make bookings before parking.

To encourage booking of parking spaces by motorists, the parking fees of private cars will be HK$20 per hour and HK$160 per day, which are concessionary rates as compared with those of non-reserved parking spaces. Parking of vehicles in excess of the time reserved will be subjected to an hourly fee at HK$40, which is a double of the fee of a reserved parking space. The length of each parking booking is subject to a minimum of two hours and a maximum of three days.

A progressive scale of hourly parking fees will be adopted for non-reserved parking spaces to increase the turnover rate, thereby making the parking spaces available to more motorists. The fees for non-reserved parking spaces for private cars will be HK$20 per hour for the first two hours, HK$30 for the third hour and HK$40 per hour starting from the fourth hour. Parking at non-reserved parking spaces is available only on an hourly basis but not on a daily basis, and will cost HK$910 for the first 24 hours of occupation.

(2) At the area adjacent to the Passenger Clearance Building of the Hong Kong Port, there are 24 pick-up and drop-off spaces for franchised buses, 124 pick-up and drop-off spaces for coaches (including cross-boundary coaches, cross-boundary shuttle buses and domestic non-franchised buses), 6 pick-up and drop-off spaces for green minibuses, 20 pick-up spaces for taxis and 20 drop-off spaces for taxis and private cars.

Moreover, with reference to the car park arrangements for private cars at the Hong Kong airport, private cars bound for the Hong Kong Port can pick up passengers at public car park no. 1 close to the Passenger Clearance Building. Apart from parking spaces for private cars, there will also be pick-up and drop-off spaces for use by private cars in Public Car Park No. 1. Vehicles can stay for free for not more than 30 minutes for any continuous period of three hours in the car park. The parking fee beyond the 30-minute period will be the same as the fee for parking without reservation.

The drop-off area for taxis and private cars outside the Passenger Clearance Building has been designated as restricted zone, permitting the setting down of passengers only. Should any vehicles stay or pick up passengers in the area, the Police could take enforcement action, such as giving warning or issuing fixed penalty tickets. The vehicles concerned may be towed away if severe obstruction is caused.

(3) The TD, the contractor of the Hong Kong Port and the public car parks will closely monitor the utilisation of drop-off and pick-up areas, public car parks and nearby roads. To facilitate orderly use of drop-off and pick-up facilities by non-franchised buses, the TD has put in place a booking system for non-franchised buses picking up travellers at the Hong Kong Port. Additionally, there will be a taxi queuing area outside the Passenger Clearance Building to accommodate a maximum of around 220 taxis to ensure that no traffic obstruction will be caused by taxis waiting for passengers.

Subject to the traffic condition at the Hong Kong Port, the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre of the TD will adopt appropriate traffic management measures in co-ordination with the Police for on-the-spot traffic control and diversion to ensure smooth traffic flow. The TD will also liaise with public transport operators for appropriate adjustments to service frequencies to improve the traffic condition. Meanwhile, the Government and the MTR Corporation Limited are exploring the possibility of increasing the number of train frequencies of Tung Chung Line.

In addition, the TD's Hong Kong eRouting website and mobile application will provide the public with real-time traffic information at the Hong Kong Port and the availability of parking spaces at the public car parks there. This will help alert drivers and travellers as promptly as possible for early journey planning, such as switching to public transport for travelling to the Hong Kong Port. In case the private car parking spaces are almost fully occupied, the TD will disseminate such information through message signs on major roads in various districts. The Government will also make continuous publicity efforts to encourage travellers to use public transport for access to the Hong Kong Port.

LCQ21: Escalators in MTR Lam Tin Station

Following is a question by the Hon Jeremy Tam and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So Wai-man, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Some residents in Lam Tin have relayed to me that MTR is the major

external means of transport for them. They usually commute to and from the concourse of MTR Lam Tin Station using the two sets of escalator systems (escalator systems) which connect Hong Tin Court and Lei Yue Mun Road respectively with the Sceneway Plaza. However, the escalator systems are overcrowded during peak hours in recent years and their services are frequently suspended pending repairs, causing inconvenience to the residents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows (i) the design capacity and (ii) the peak-hour loading of the escalator systems; if it does not know the peak-hour loading, whether it will compile statistics in this respect;

(2) whether it knows (i) the manufacturers and (ii) the repair and maintenance contractors of the escalator systems;

(3) whether it knows (i) the number of hours spent on repairing the escalator systems and (ii) the number of days on which services of the escalator systems were suspended, in each of the past three years;

(4) whether it will follow up the problem of frequent suspension of service of the escalator systems for a prolonged period of time pending repairs, including giving advice to the persons concerned, with a view to shortening the time taken and reducing the need for repairs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it has studied the retrofitting of escalators or lifts at the passageway connecting Kai Tin Road with Lei Yue Mun Road, so that whenever the service of any one of the aforesaid escalator systems is suspended, the residents may commute to and from the station concourse conveniently via the new facilities and the other set of escalator system; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Jeremy Tam's question is as follows:

(1) The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has been committed to providing a safe and reliable travelling environment for passengers. The Lam Tin Station was commissioned in 1989. At its Entrance/Exit A, there are a total of nine escalators, which are divided into three groups at three sections (i.e. the upper, middle and lower sections) and connect the station's concourse with Kai Tin Road. The design capacity is around 120 commuters per minute for each escalator. While the MTRCL does not have statistics on the actual escalator throughput, it observed that the escalators had been operating smoothly and able to effectively ease passenger flow during peak and non-peak hours. In fact, at times of major refurbishment, the MTRCL will adopt appropriate passenger flow management measures to facilitate passenger movement. The escalators at the upper and middle sections were respectively refurbished under a total of three major refurbishment projects (each time

for a group of two escalators) from end-2015 to early 2018. Despite so, the remaining seven escalators still managed to ease passenger flow effectively.

(2) to (4) The design, manufacture, examination, testing, operation and repairing of all escalators within the MTR network shall comply with the requirements of the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) and the Code of Practice formulated by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). Escalators should not be put in service unless they have been issued with relevant permits upon their passing safety checks conducted by the EMSD. According to the EMSD, the MTRCL is the owner of these escalators. Under section 44 of the Ordinance, the MTRCL must ensure that these escalators and all its associated equipment or machinery are kept in a proper state of repair and in safe working order. The Corporation has put in place a stringent system of repair and maintenance for escalators within the MTR network, and will conduct regular examinations and maintenance work to ensure safe and reliable escalator operation that complies with statutory requirements.

In general, escalators within the MTR network have a design lifespan of over 40 years. Apart from routine inspection and maintenance, at around their 25th year of use, the escalators will undergo a major mid-life refurbishment by the MTRCL. Contractors have to repair and maintain each component of the whole escalator thoroughly during the major refurbishment. Worn-out components will have to be replaced as well. Each major refurbishment takes around three months, with only one escalator or a group of two escalators undergoing the refurbishment at a time. During the refurbishment, the MTRCL will closely monitor the work progress and ensure smooth flow of passengers. Relevant measures will also be implemented to minimise the impact on passengers. At the same time, the MTRCL will provide to stakeholders information on the works by various means so that the latter can make corresponding arrangements.

The manufacturer and the current maintenance contractor for the escalators in Lam Tin Station are CNIM and Otis Elevator Company (HK) Limited respectively. The mid-life refurbishment for the escalators in Lam Tin Station was commenced in 2015, lasting for about three months each time. The refurbishment for the six escalators at the middle and upper sections was completed in November 2015, June 2017 and March 2018 respectively. The MTRCL is now carrying out refurbishment for an escalator at the lower section at Entrance/Exit A, which is scheduled for completion by the end of next month. Refurbishment for the remaining two escalators will be carried out at a later time.

The MTRCL points out that in the past three years, the nine escalators at Entrance/Exit A of Lam Tin Station functioned normally in more than 99 per cent of their operational time. According to the record of the Corporation, the frequency of failure to provide service due to malfunctioning of the escalators in Lam Tin Station is comparable to that of other similar escalators within the MTR network. These malfunctioning cases were mostly caused by external factors such as foreign objects caught at the edge of the steps.

(5) At present, there are no lifts or other barrier-free facilities connecting MTR Lam Tin Station with Kai Tin Road. People with impaired mobility who wants to use the MTR or go to Lei Yue Mun Road have to take a circuitous route via a steep section of Kai Tin Road. The MTRCL appreciates the request of the local community for improving barrier-free facilities at Entrance/Exit A and strives to make suitable arrangements. Since September 2016, the MTRCL has launched barrier-free connection services at Lam Tin Station free of charge which enable wheelchair passengers to travel conveniently to the station entrances/exits on Kai Tin Road and Lei Yue Mun Road. The services are generally welcomed by the local community and people with disabilities.

To further improve the situation, the Government is considering conducting feasibility study on the provision of barrier-free pedestrian link for Lei Yue Mun Road and Kai Tin Road and will report to the District Council at appropriate time.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, July 11, 2018 is 102.6 (up 0.5 against yesterday's index).