

Chief Executive officiates at Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link Northern Connection Commissioning Ceremony (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, officiated at the commissioning ceremony of the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (TM-CLKL) Northern Connection today (December 26).

Mrs Lam, accompanied by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan; the Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport), Ms Mable Chan; the Director of Highways, Mr Jimmy Chan; and the Commissioner for Transport, Miss Rosanna Law, took a bus ride through the TM-CLKL Northern Connection, and was briefed on the project and the relevant traffic arrangements by Mr Jimmy Chan and Miss Law respectively.

The Northern Connection is 5.5 kilometres long, of which about 5km is the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Tunnel, a subsea road tunnel connecting Tuen Mun South and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Port. Upon the opening of the Northern Connection, the TM-CLKL will be fully commissioned. The driving distance between Tuen Mun South and Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) will be reduced by some 22 kilometres and the journey time by about 20 minutes. The TM-CLKL provides an alternative road access between HKIA and the urban area in addition to the Lantau Link. It will help divert traffic to and from Lantau. A decision was made for the Northern Connection to be toll-free after an earlier review. The freed up area modified from the original toll plaza will be used as a temporary franchised bus depot and franchised bus parking site in the short to medium term.

Mrs Lam said, "The commissioning of the Northern Connection has created an opportunity for the 'Quota-free scheme for Hong Kong private cars travelling to Guangdong via the HZMB'. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, together with the Guangdong Government, is pressing ahead with the scheme to allow eligible Hong Kong private cars to travel between Hong Kong and Guangdong via the HZMB without a quota. The scheme will assist Hong Kong residents to drive to Guangdong Province for business, visiting families or sightseeing on a short-term basis. In addition, the commissioning of the Northern Connection will provide better and more reliable transport infrastructure to Lantau, the aviation and land transport 'double gateway' connecting Hong Kong to other parts of the world and Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, thereby reinforcing Hong Kong as an international and regional hub."

The Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Tunnel is the longest and deepest subsea road tunnel in Hong Kong, and also the first local subsea tunnel constructed with the tunnel boring method. Its construction has deployed the world's largest

tunnel boring machine with a diameter of 17.6 metres. This is also the first-time application of the saturation diving technique in Hong Kong, which allows a safer and more efficient working environment at about 60 metres below sea level. The tunnel is also the first in Hong Kong to include a service gallery underneath the tunnel carriageway, making it more convenient to carry out maintenance works in the future.

Mrs Lam expressed her gratitude for the devotion of the project team, contractors, government departments and organisations, as well as the contributions of thousands of workers. She said, "The completion and commissioning of the TM-CLKL Northern Connection has once again demonstrated Hong Kong's capability in taking forward large-scale infrastructure projects."

The toll-free Northern Connection will open to traffic at 8am tomorrow (December 27) and the tolls of the Lantau Link will be waived from 0.00am on the same day.



