

Interdepartmental working group on festival arrangements reminds public and visitors about local large-scale celebrations, boundary control points and traffic and public transportation arrangements during Chinese New Year Golden Week of Mainland

The interdepartmental working group on festival arrangements, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, today (January 28) reminded the public and visitors about information on arrangements for large-scale local celebrations, boundary control points (BCPs) and traffic and public transport during the Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland (January 28 to February 4):

Large-scale celebrations during Chinese New Year

There will be a rich array of celebratory activities across the territory during the Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland. Major events include the Cathay International Chinese New Year Night Parade on January 29 (Lunar New Year's Day) and the Lunar New Year Fireworks Display on January 30 (the second day of Lunar New Year). The Hong Kong Police Force will ensure sufficient police manpower to implement corresponding crowd management measures and special traffic arrangements as necessary for all celebrations to be conducted in a safe and orderly manner. District offices will also closely monitor the flow of visitors within their respective districts and notify relevant departments having regard to the actual circumstances with a view to strengthening management of the relevant spots.

Co-ordinate control points, traffic and public transport facilities

During this Chinese New Year holiday, the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Port will maintain a 24-hour operation as usual, and other BCPs will maintain the existing operating hours. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government appeals to visitors to plan their itineraries ahead, and stay overnight after participating in various local celebratory activities for the Chinese New Year to fully enjoy the rich and diverse celebratory activities to be held across various districts in the city and experience Hong Kong's unique city charm.

Relevant departments have minimised leave for frontline officers to enable flexible deployment of manpower and operation of additional counters and channels, with a view to diverting passenger and vehicular flow. The

Inter-departmental Joint Command Centre set up by the Police, the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), and other relevant departments has been activated from today to February 4 to monitor the real-time situation at various control points. The Joint Command Centre will maintain close liaison with the Mainland port authorities through the established port hotlines and real-time notification mechanism, and take timely contingency actions to flexibly deploy manpower at BCPs to ensure smooth operation of the land control points.

For transport arrangements, the Transport Department (TD) will enhance transportation services connecting various BCPs, including increasing the frequency of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge shuttle bus (Gold Bus) and the Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang cross-boundary shuttle bus (Yellow Bus), and issuing additional cross-boundary coach quotas to enhance services; as well as formulating a contingency plan by establishing a dedicated passage at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Port, Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port and Shenzhen Bay Port, when necessary, to ensure the smooth operation of public transport services. Regarding local public transport services, the TD has approached various public transport operators proactively to enhance their capacity, and reserve vehicles and manpower to meet the travel needs of visitors. Among them, the MTR Corporation Limited has enhanced train services of various railway lines from last Friday (January 24) to February 4 (the seventh day of Lunar New Year) for the convenience of residents and visitors. Today, Lunar New Year's Eve, all local railway lines will operate overnight (except for the East Rail Line between Sheung Shui Station and Lo Wu Station or Lok Ma Chau Station, the Airport Express and the Disneyland Resort Line). Furthermore, in the early hours tomorrow, Lunar New Year's Day (January 29), to January 31 (the third day of Lunar New Year), after the service hours of the East Rail Line trains to Lo Wu Station, special enhanced bus service (KMB Route No. N73) will be provided at the MTR Sheung Shui Station to carry passengers to interchange to the Yellow Bus for their journey to the Mainland via the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port, which operates round-the-clock. The TD's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre will operate 24 hours to closely monitor the traffic conditions and public transport services of different districts including various BCPs and major stations. The TD will adopt timely measures to cope with the service demand, and will disseminate the latest traffic information through various channels.

Management of tour groups and protection of visitors

The Travel Industry Authority (TIA) has reminded travel agents receiving Mainland inbound tour groups to stagger arrival times as far as possible, and will co-ordinate with relevant agencies such as tourist spots to adopt appropriate diversion measures to enable proper management of visitor flows and tour buses, with a view to offering a pleasant travel experience to visitors. The TIA will also conduct inspections in districts where relatively more registered shops for inbound tour groups are located, and offer assistance to visitors and tourist guides to protect inbound tour group visitors' rights. Additionally, the Police will continue to step up enforcement actions against illegal acts of taxi drivers including overcharging and refusing hires. The C&ED will also step up inspection of

shops serving visitors to combat unfair trade practices.

Information dissemination

To assist visitors in planning their itineraries, the interdepartmental working group will strengthen information dissemination including the latest inbound visitor arrivals, the situation at various BCPs, information on celebratory events, transport arrangements etc, to enable residents and visitors to plan their itineraries according to the latest situation.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has also launched the ultimate guide to Chinese New Year in Hong Kong

(www.discoverhongkong.com/hk-eng/what-s-new/events/chinese-new-year.html), a dedicated webpage on the HKTB's website that serves as a one-stop platform for Chinese New Year celebrations. This webpage consolidates various useful information for the Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland, including the operating arrangements of major tourist attractions in Hong Kong, details of various unique celebratory events, special discount and promotional activities around the Chinese New Year Golden Week to enable residents and visitors to plan their itineraries more conveniently. The HKTB has also stepped up promotions on the Mainland to promote large-scale events with Hong Kong characteristics and explore the unique cultural and tourism experiences in Hong Kong with a view to boosting spending of more Mainland visitors in Hong Kong and enhancing visitors' experiences.