

International Conference on Roads and Railways 2025 opens today (with photos)

The International Conference on Roads and Railways 2025 co-organised by the Highways Department and the Hong Kong Institution of Highways and Transportation opened today (June 12). Themed on "Building Smart and Green Transport Infrastructure", the conference takes place on two consecutive days at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, with over 30 Mainland, overseas and local experts in road and railway development and industry leaders leading nearly 700 participants to jointly explore the latest worldwide practices and technological advancements of smart and green transport infrastructure, as well as the development direction of future major transport infrastructure in Hong Kong through thematic speeches and panel discussions. Representatives from various consulates, industry leaders, scholars and government officials also attended the conference this morning.

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, officiated at the ceremony and said that roads and railways have long been the backbone of economic growth and social advancement. In the era of rapid technological advancement and growing climate urgency, the infrastructure has to be built smarter and greener, and the key strategy amidst is the planning approach of transit-oriented development which integrates high-density urban development with efficient public transport systems. Mr Chan also said that Hong Kong is happy to share the experiences on professional knowledge and expertise in transport infrastructure with the world. Taking the Northern Metropolis as an example, he mentioned that the development of this future major innovation and technology hub of Hong Kong with a projected population of 2.5 million and over 650 000 new jobs will be "infrastructure-led" and "capacity-creating". He indicated that Hong Kong is committed to making the transport systems smarter and greener, and the Government also invests heavily in technology areas, including AI and robotics, new energy and new materials, and more; they will contribute to enhancing the efficiency and reliability of the transportation system. He also pointed out that Hong Kong is Asia's leading green bond market, accounting for nearly half of the region's total issuance. The city is also pioneering innovative financing models to unlock capital for global infrastructure development.

The President of the Hong Kong Institution of Highways and Transportation, Mr Alfred Leung, welcomed industry practitioners and scholars for attending the conference and hoped to explore the potential of integrating technology and sustainable development solutions into road and railway projects, and to enhance connectivity and collaborations around the world through communication.

The first day of the conference mainly focused on discussing Planning and Policy for Smart and Green Transport Infrastructure and Smart Technologies for Sustainable Road and Railway Systems. In her keynote speech,

the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, said that the vision of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is to be committed to establishing a diverse and highly efficient public transport and road system, and promoting cross-boundary integration with the Greater Bay Area through the planning principles of "infrastructure-led" and "capacity-building". She emphasised that the Government adopts a "policy innovation" and "technological innovation" dual-innovation mindset and approach in actively reviewing the regulatory frameworks, administrative procedures, design standards, guidelines, etc to enhance the efficiency and quality of transport infrastructure, and applying advanced technologies to reshape road and railway development, thereby enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of transport infrastructure development, with a view to realising the vision of building a livable, competitive and sustainable Hong Kong.

In addition, the Director of Highways, Mr Tony Yau, also elaborated on how Hong Kong adopts the strategies of forward planning, policy innovation, new transport model and technological innovation in responding to challenges in project implementation under the unique environment of Hong Kong, while achieving the goal of compressing construction time and reducing construction costs. Deputy Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Darryl Chan, gave a detailed overview of the relationship between debt capital markets and infrastructure investment. The Chairperson of the Building Technology Research Institute, Mr Hon Chi-keung, shared experience on effectively advancing transport infrastructure through innovations. Other speakers from around the world also gave speeches on the latest developments in smart and green technologies, as well as their applications in maintenance and monitoring of bridges and other important transport infrastructure facilities.

During the conference, Ms Chan, accompanied by Mr Yau and Mr Leung, had an interaction session with young engineers to understand the visions and expectations of the new blood in the industry regarding infrastructure development in Hong Kong, and share with them experiences on formulation of related policies. She also visited booths of the industry at the venue to understand the application of the latest technologies in construction and maintenance of transport infrastructure, and was glad to learn that local traditional contractors are actively applying innovative technologies to enhance the quality and efficiency of relevant work.

The conference tomorrow (June 13) will focus on two main themes of Smart and Green Transport Infrastructure – Planning, Design and Construction and Green Solutions for Smart Transport Infrastructure. Vice President of the Research Institute of Highway of the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China, Mr Wang Shuiyin, will deliver an opening speech.

Furthermore, visits to the works sites of the Central Kowloon Route and the MTR Tung Chung Line Extension will respectively be arranged for the participants on June 14 to understand the unique challenges and solutions on planning and construction of major roads and railway systems, as well as the way to connect with the community, care for community needs and conserve traditional culture during construction.

For conference details, please visit the designated website: icrr2025.com/en/index.html.



