

Transcript of remarks by SLW on adjusting eligible age for elderly CSSA

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on adjusting the eligible age for elderly Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) after attending a special meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services of the Legislative Council today (January 28):

Reporter: All the political parties are actually asking the Government to shelve the age change. Why does that not warrant the Government to consider shelving the whole idea?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: The policy decision has been made for more than two years already. The discussion has been thoroughly discussed and options have been considered, and the Government considered the present decision is proper. The only thing that we need to improve is the way that we are going to deliver, and to help those who are needing help to assist them to find jobs. I think that is the reason why we are making some of the refinements, so to speak, to accommodate the views of the community.

Reporter: Even though you are worsening the relationship with all the political parties, it is still good for you to go ahead with this policy change?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: We will try our very best to improve the working relationship between the executive and the legislature.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, January 28, 2019 is 103.3 (down 0.2 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, January 26, 2019 was 103.5 (down 0.2 against last Friday's index).

Hong Kong Customs successfully prosecutes nail parlour staff member for engaging in misleading omission commercial practice

Hong Kong Customs has successfully prosecuted a manicurist of a nail parlour for engaging in misleading omission commercial practice under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TD0). The manicurist was sentenced today (January 28) at Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts to carrying out community service of 80 hours. She was also ordered to pay the victim \$300 in compensation.

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information alleging that a staff member of a nail parlour had engaged in unfair trade practices in the sale of nail beautifying services. After investigation, the manicurist was suspected of misleading a customer to believe that a series of nail treatments were included in the purchased treatment plan. After delivering some of the treatments, the manicurist told the customer that additional charges would be required to complete the remaining procedures. A prosecution was subsequently made.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TD0 and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TD0, any trader commits an offence of engaging in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information or provides material information in a manner that is unclear, unintelligible, ambiguous or untimely and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 to the Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Cross-boundary passenger traffic estimation and arrangements for Lunar New Year festive period

The Immigration Department (ImmD) estimates that around 7.32 million

passengers (including Hong Kong residents and visitors) will pass through Hong Kong's sea, land and air control points during the upcoming Lunar New Year festive period (from February 4 to 10). Among them, about 75 per cent, or around 5.47 million passengers, will pass through land boundary control points. The number of outbound passengers will be at its highest on February 6 (Wednesday) with over 454 000 passengers departing Hong Kong, while the number of inbound passengers using land boundary control points will reach its peak on February 7 (Thursday), with around 506 000 passengers arriving in Hong Kong.

Lo Wu will be the busiest control point, and it is estimated that there will be around 1.69 million passengers, with a daily average of about 242 000 passengers, travelling via this control point during the festive period. The passenger traffic at the Shenzhen Bay and Lok Ma Chau Spur Line control points will also be heavy, with daily average forecasts of about 141 000 and 132 000 passengers respectively.

To cope with the anticipated heavy traffic during the festive period, the ImmD has redeployed additional staff to reinforce various control points and has minimised leave for frontline officers for flexible deployment and operation of extra clearance counters and kiosks. Additional security guards will also be deployed to provide crowd management support.

Furthermore, the ImmD, the Police, the Customs and Excise Department and the MTR Corporation Limited will set up a joint command centre at Lo Wu Control Point to make necessary arrangements. The ImmD will also establish close communication with the Mainland frontier inspection authorities. To ensure smooth passenger traffic flow, passenger conditions will be closely monitored and appropriate traffic diversion plans will be adopted when necessary.

To avoid congestion and a longer than usual waiting time for immigration clearance, the ImmD advises all land boundary passengers to plan in advance and avoid making their journeys during busy periods, and to keep track of radio and TV broadcasts on traffic conditions at the various control points. The expected busy times at boundary control points are available on the website of the ImmD at www.immd.gov.hk. Furthermore, passengers may also check the estimated waiting times of all land boundary control points at any time or place via the Immigration Mobile Application (ImmD Mobile App). They can then plan their trips effectively and save time queuing up at control points. The ImmD Mobile App can be downloaded free of charge from the Apple App Store (supports iOS version 9.0 or above) and Google Play (supports Android version 5.0 or above). The links for downloading can also be found on the ImmD website, www.immd.gov.hk. In addition, information on public transport services to and from various control points is available on the Transport Department website at www.td.gov.hk.

The ImmD will upload daily passenger statistics for the above festive period to its website at www.immd.gov.hk for public reference.

For travellers making journeys to the Mainland, the ImmD reminds them to

carry their proof of identity and valid travel documents for crossing the boundary. Hong Kong residents should also check the validity of their Home Visit Permits. Non-permanent residents must carry their valid smart identity card as well as their Document of Identity for Visa Purposes or valid travel document.

Holders of the acknowledgement receipt issued due to reported loss or replacement of their Hong Kong identity cards, or children under 11 years old who hold Hong Kong identity cards, should carry a valid travel document or Re-entry Permit.

About 700 e-Channels have been installed at various control points. Hong Kong residents enrolled for the Express e-Channel should re-enrol if they have been issued with a new identity card. Furthermore, re-enrolment is required for enrolled Mainland visitors holding a booklet-type Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao who have changed their enrolment information, e.g. having renewed their exit endorsement. Eligible Mainland holders of the electronic Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (e-EEP) can enrol for the e-Channel service by using their e-EEP and undergoing the enrolment process at a traditional entry counter on their first visit to Hong Kong. Eligible Mainland visitors who have renewed their e-EEP have to go through the aforesaid enrolment process again before they can use the e-Channel.

In addition, all control points have introduced self-service departure for visitors to Hong Kong (Smart Departure) which provides greater travel convenience for visitors. The service employs facial recognition technology for identity verification, which allows eligible visitors holding electronic travel documents to perform self-service departure clearance through Smart Departure e-Channels without prior enrolment.

Hong Kong residents who require assistance while travelling outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the ImmD at (852) 1868.

Public library opening hours during Lunar New Year holidays

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department today (January 28) announced that Hong Kong public libraries, including the Hong Kong Central Library and the mobile libraries, will be closed at 5pm on Lunar New Year's Eve (February 4), except for those libraries closed on Mondays and the Provisional North Lamma Public Library Service Stop which will close at 4.30pm.

All public and mobile libraries and students' study rooms will be closed from February 5 to 7.

Moreover, due to the periodic inspection and testing for electrical installations, the following services will be suspended from 5.30pm on February 4 to 7:

- library mobile app services as well as Internet and telephone renewal services;
- other online library services, including the library catalogue, borrowers' record enquiries, reservation of library materials and Internet and Digital Service Workstations, the Multimedia Information System and electronic resources (e-Books and e-Databases); and
- the self-service library stations (readers may return books to the stations before the due date, and the loan records will be updated on the next working day).

Details can be obtained from notices posted at all public libraries and the website at www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/library-notices/library-notices-list.html. For enquiries, please call 2921 0208.