

Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session at the lobby of the West Wing in Central Government Offices today (January 22):

Reporter: Secretary, could you first explain why there is a sudden change? Because just hours earlier you were saying that you still had the slightest hope that the proposal will win enough votes in the Legislative Council. My second question is that you mentioned that there could be room for some minor changes, some concessions, small concessions. What sort of concessions are you talking about? Because you said the big framework, the tolls, shouldn't be changed. So are you thinking about subsidies or allowances for drivers, the transitional period? What do you have in mind? And thirdly, you mentioned that you are trying to persuade lawmakers, to spend the next two months to try to persuade the lawmakers. If you don't win enough support after two months, what's next?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: As you would be aware that throughout the process when we started promoting and campaigning for the acceptance of the motion by our friends in the legislature, we have been taking a very positive and very proactive approach to explain and earn their trust and acceptance of the proposal. But so far as you would appreciate, every one of them is speaking not because of something fundamental of difference, but rather focusing on the toll of the Cross Harbour Tunnel and the Eastern Harbour Crossing. That is why if these are the only differences or the major concerns they have, I would think that there are rooms for further discussion and agreement, and that is the belief we have in mind. Of course, when you ask whether or not there are rooms for changes, be it minor or major, we are rather open in that aspect because so far when we talked with our friends in the legislature, not many of them have come up with a concrete proposal per se. Instead, they would suggest us to lower the toll of the Cross Harbour Tunnel and the Eastern Harbour Crossing. Since these are things that we can't change unilaterally, I have explained to them that if they are agreeable to keeping these agreements in principal intact, perhaps we can focus on things that we can talk about, which are of value and benefit to the community at large. Therefore, we do have a hope and belief that we would be able to make it. Of course, whether or not we could make it depends on the reception and responses of friends in the legislature.

Reporter: What are things...

Secretary for Transport and Housing: We haven't come to that yet, I must say. Because since the time we introduced the motion, we haven't had that much of time to talk about whether or not and how we are going to make compromises. As you have reported during the past few months, the focus is mainly on toll. So there had not been any concrete suggestion or proposal put forward, and we are looking into that with an open mind.

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

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 22) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection.

The case involves a 35-month-old boy with good past health, who has presented with fever and cough since January 19. He developed convulsions on January 21 and attended Hong Kong Adventist Hospital – Tsuen Wan. He was transferred to the Accident and Emergency Department of Yan Chai Hospital and was subsequently admitted to the paediatric intensive care unit of Princess Margaret hospital for further management on the same day.

His nasopharyngeal aspirate tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalitis. He is now in a stable condition.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had not received seasonal influenza vaccination for the current season and had no travel history during the incubation period. His elder brother also had influenza A, but did not require hospitalisation and has been in a stable condition. His other home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

"The latest surveillance data indicated that the local seasonal influenza activity may continue to rise in the period ahead. We urge the community to continue heightening its vigilance against seasonal influenza. As young children are particularly affected in this influenza season, we appeal to parents who have not yet arranged vaccination for their children in this season to do so as soon as possible to strengthen their personal protection," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Apart from children, people aged 50 to 64 years, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses who have not yet received influenza vaccination this season are also urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. Medical advice should be sought promptly if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications. Parents and carers are reminded to render assistance in prevention, care and control for vulnerable people," the spokesman added.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the public should maintain good personal and

environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses. For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).

Traveller sentenced to imprisonment for smuggling incense tree wood chips (with photos)

A traveller who illegally exported incense tree wood chips has been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 24 months at the District Court today (January 22).

A spokesman of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that Customs officers intercepted an outbound male passenger, aged 30, at Shenzhen Bay Control Point and seized about 2.6 kilograms of incense tree (*Aquilaria sinensis*) wood chips from his backpack on July 4, 2018. The estimated market value of the wood chips was about \$207,000.

Upon investigation by the AFCD, the man was charged with illegal export of endangered species. He was convicted at the court today. The court handed down 36-month imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing. The defendant was sentenced to 24 months behind bars after one-third reduction as he pleaded guilty.

All *Aquilaria* species, including the native incense tree, are listed in Appendix II to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. They are regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance.

The penalties under the Ordinance have been drastically increased since May 1 last year. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction.

The spokesman also pointed out that according to the Forests and Countryside Ordinance, felling of trees on government land without permission is an offence. The maximum penalty is a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for one year.

The spokesman appealed to the public not to defy the law by smuggling agarwood or illegally felling incense trees. To enquire about the importation or exportation of endangered species and to report illegal cases, the public can call the AFCD at 1823 or visit the website www.cites.hk.



[CE meets government officials and business community in Zurich \(with photos/videos\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, arrived in Zurich, Switzerland yesterday morning (January 21, Zurich time) and met with the Mayor of Zurich and members of the Swiss Bankers Association, briefing them on the latest developments in Hong Kong before proceeding to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting.

Accompanied by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, Mrs Lam called on the Mayor of Zurich, Ms Corine Mauch yesterday morning. Mrs Lam said she was pleased to meet Ms Mauch for the third time in three years, which was testimony to the importance that both Hong Kong and Zurich attach to the relationship between the two places. Pointing out that Switzerland and Hong Kong have always enjoyed close trade ties and that both Hong Kong and Zurich are international financial centres, she said that the two cities could learn from each other. Mrs Lam also shared with Ms Mauch details of Hong Kong's latest developments in finance, innovation and technology (I&T), design and smart city, and expressed the hope that collaboration in these areas as well as exchanges between young people of the two cities could be enhanced.

Mrs Lam and the Hong Kong delegation then joined a lunch meeting organised by the Swiss Bankers Association. During the meeting, Mrs Lam and the Head of the Swiss State Secretariat for International Financial Matters, Mr Jörg Gasser, the Chairman of the Swiss Bankers Association, Mr Herbert Scheidt, and other association members exchanged views on financial technology, private wealth management, the opening-up of the financial markets in the Mainland and the Belt and Road Initiative. Mrs Lam said that in order to create a favourable environment for the development of different trades in Hong Kong including the financial sector, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government would not only assume the roles of service provider and regulator, but would also act as facilitator and

promoter. Noting that she had witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding on the promotion of private wealth management between the Swiss Bankers Association and the Private Wealth Management Association of Hong Kong in Switzerland in January last year, she said she hoped the two organisations could build on this solid foundation to explore co-operation on wealth management businesses in Asia and leverage the opportunities arising from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development. The Swiss Bankers Association is the largest banking association in Switzerland, with more than 250 member institutions.

In the afternoon, Mrs Lam went to Davos, where she attended an entrepreneur dinner on artificial intelligence co-hosted by the Canton of Zurich and the Canton of Grisons, Switzerland. Addressing the representatives of I&T enterprises, Mrs Lam said that the HKSAR Government is keen to advance I&T development, and has in the past 18 months committed a total amount equivalent to US\$10 billion towards an array of I&T programmes and initiatives, including the establishment of two world-class research clusters specialising in healthcare technologies and artificial intelligence and robotics at the Hong Kong Science Park. She added that she would welcome Swiss I&T enterprises, startups, scientists, researchers and innovators to come and make use of the two research clusters and collaborate with Hong Kong to jointly shape the future of artificial intelligence and technology.

Mrs Lam and Mr Chan met with the President of the National Academy of Medicine of the United States, Dr Victor Dzau, this morning (January 22, Davos time) to keep abreast of the latest developments of healthcare technologies in the United States.

Mrs Lam and Mr Chan also met with the President of the New York Stock Exchange, Ms Stacey Cunningham, and exchanged views on the latest developments in the securities industry, as well as exploring ideas for co-operation. Mrs Lam noted that Hong Kong and New York are international financial centres, and that the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited and the New York Stock Exchange ranked top globally in terms of funds raised through initial public offerings last year. Adding that Hong Kong strives to attract more overseas enterprises to list in Hong Kong and provides a fundraising platform for new economy companies, she expressed the hope that the two places would enhance exchanges and collaboration in relevant aspects.

Mrs Lam is continuing her visit to Davos today.



Agenda of tomorrow's LegCo meeting revised

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The agenda of the Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting, scheduled for tomorrow (January 23) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex, has been revised. The Secretary for Transport and Housing has withdrawn his notice of Motion on implementing the Toll Adjustment Proposal. The item has therefore been deleted from the agenda.

For the latest agenda items of tomorrow's LegCo meeting, please refer to the LegCo Website:

www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/counmtg/agenda/cm20190123.htm.