

More units of online training course for enhancing service quality of in-service taxi drivers rolled out

The Transport Department (TD) and the Committee on Taxi Service Quality (CTSQ) rolled out today (December 31) the fourth and fifth units of the online training course to enhance the service quality of in-service taxi drivers. The units are introduction to the relationship between taxi owners/management agents and drivers, and knowledge about wheelchair-accessible facilities in taxis.

The training course is composed of five units of short videos. The first three units, namely communication skills and building relationships with passengers; handling customer conflicts; and basic customer service skills, were rolled out in November.

All the units are now available at the webpages of the [TD](#) and the [CTSQ](#), as well as the [TD's YouTube channel](#). In-service taxi drivers can at any time view the videos and download them free of charge.

To encourage taxi drivers' active participation in the training course, taxi drivers who have completed the training course may opt to attend a written test arranged by the TD free of charge. They will be presented with a certificate of recognition by the TD and the CTSQ if they have passed the test as a token of encouragement. The TD and the CTSQ will announce the enrolment details at their websites in January 2019.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, December 31, 2018 is 104.8 (down 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, December 29, 2018 was 104.9 (up 0.2 against last Friday's index).

Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 31) closely monitoring eight additional cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), including two deaths, reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) between October 31 and November 30, 2018. The CHP again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, among the seven male patients and one female patient, aged 29 to 75, five had underlying illnesses and two had contact with previously confirmed patients.

According to the latest information, 2 274 cases have been reported to the WHO (with 806 deaths), including 2 055 in 10 Middle East countries comprising 1 896 in the KSA, 87 in the United Arab Emirates, 28 in Jordan, 19 in Qatar, 11 in Oman, six in Iran, four in Kuwait, two in Lebanon, and one each in Yemen and Bahrain.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus," the spokesman said.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

Special traffic arrangements for race

meeting in Sha Tin tomorrow

Police advise motorists that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Sha Tin to facilitate the race meeting tomorrow (January 1).

The arrangements will come into effect two hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

Appropriate traffic signs will be put up and police will be on hand to guide motorists.

The Police also appeal to people going to Sha Tin Racecourse for the race meeting and to Happy Valley Racecourse for cross betting to make maximum use of public transport.

Parking spaces at the two racecourses are available only to holders of appropriate permits issued by Hong Kong Jockey Club and any vehicles illegally parked will be towed away.

Exchange Fund Bills Tender Results

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Hong Kong Monetary Authority Exchange Fund Bills Tender Results

Tender date	: December 31, 2018
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q1901
Issue date	: January 2, 2019
Maturity date	: April 3, 2019
Amount applied	: HK\$127,595 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$55,987 MN
Average yield accepted	: 1.91 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 2.05 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 23 PCT
Average tender yield	: 2.12 PCT

Tender date	: December 31, 2018
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H1930
Issue date	: January 2, 2019
Maturity date	: July 3, 2019
Amount applied	: HK\$48,010 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$15,800 MN
Average yield accepted	: 1.83 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 1.86 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 73 PCT
Average tender yield	: 1.99 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning January 7, 2019:

Tender date	: January 8, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q1902
Issue date	: January 9, 2019
Maturity date	: April 10, 2019
Tenor	: 91 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$57,413 MN

Tender date	: January 8, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H1931
Issue date	: January 9, 2019
Maturity date	: July 10, 2019
Tenor	: 182 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$18,000 MN