

Transcript of remarks by CS (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session after attending the "Opportunities for Youth Development in the Greater Bay Area" Youth Forum today (December 28):

Reporter: So what do you want to say about criticisms of Ms Cheng not following Prosecution Code?

Chief Secretary for Administration: I think the Secretary for Justice had made it quite clear in her media stand-up on return from leave at the airport. I want to make three points. First of all the Basic Law itself, Article 63 stipulates clearly that it is the role of the Department of Justice to conduct prosecution independently in Hong Kong without any interference. This is very important. The second point is that I think we should respect the professional judgement of the Department of Justice. And finally, as stated by the Secretary for Justice in her media stand-up, she will consider seriously the possibility of attending the Legislative Council panel on judicial administration and legal services scheduled for January 28 next year, okay. I really want the community to respect the professional judgement of the Department of Justice on this particular case.

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

Appointments to Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee

The Government today (December 28) announced the appointment of four new members and the re-appointment of three incumbent members to the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee (BLPSC) for a term of two years with effect from January 1, 2019.

The four new members are Ms Teresa Au Pui-yee, Dr Wendy Hong, Ms Clara Shek Ka-lai and Mr Clement Woo Kin-man.

The three re-appointed incumbent members are Mr Thomas Cheung Tsun-yung, Mr Johnny Mok Shiu-luen, SC and Dr David Wong Yau-kar.

The BLPSC thanked outgoing members Mr Peter Ho Siu-ping, Ms Elaine Ma Kwai-yee and Professor Wang Guiguo for their contributions and dedication to the work of the BLPSC during their term of service.

The BLPSC was established in January 1998. It provides the necessary steer on the overall programme and strategy for promoting the Basic Law, and provides an organisational focus for co-ordinating the efforts of various parties concerned, both in the Government and in the community.

Following is the membership list of the BLPSC with effect from January 1, 2019:

Chairperson

Chief Secretary for Administration

Non-official Members (In alphabetical order of family names)

Ms Teresa Au Pui-yee
Ms Karen Chan Ka-yin
Mrs Viola Chan Man Yee-wai
Mr Thomas Cheung Tsun-yung
Mr Henry Ho Kin-chung
Dr Wendy Hong
Mr Lau Ping-cheung
Dr Simon Hoey Lee
Mrs Clarie Lo Ku Ka-lee
Mr Thomas Lo Sui-sing
Ms Esther Ma
Mr Johnny Mok Shiu-luen, SC
Ms Clara Shek Ka-lai
Mr Laurence Tang Yat-long
Ms Carol Wong
Dr Wong Kwok-keung
Dr David Wong Yau-kar
Mr Clement Woo Kin-man
Mr Clifton Yeung Kin-chung
Mr Yu Tai Wai

Official Members

Secretary for Home Affairs
Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
Secretary for Education
Secretary for the Civil Service
Director of Home Affairs
Solicitor General
Director of Information Services
Director-General of Trade and Industry

Special traffic and transport arrangements for New Year's Eve

The Transport Department (TD) today (December 28) reminded the public to take note of the special traffic and transport arrangements to be implemented on New Year's Eve (December 31) to facilitate holiday celebrations. Members of the public are urged to make use of public transport services as far as possible to avoid traffic congestion.

Road closures and traffic diversions will be implemented in phases from late afternoon on New Year's Eve in districts including Central, Causeway Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui and Hung Hom. Road closure arrangements have already been put in place in the vicinity of Victoria Park for the Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo. Roads in the vicinity of these areas are busier than usual during the holiday. Members of the public are advised to make use of public transport, avoid driving to busy areas and stay alert to the latest traffic news.

The TD reminds pedestrians to pay attention to road safety during the festive holiday by observing traffic light signals and walking on the pavement. Pedestrians should be considerate, patient and follow the advice or instructions given by the Police. Motorists are advised to drive with care and patience, especially in busy areas. They should also be aware that on-street parking spaces will be suspended due to road closures and traffic diversion arrangements.

The MTR Island Line, Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Tung Chung Line, East Rail Line (except to Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau), Ma On Shan Line, West Rail Line, South Island Line and Light Rail Routes 505, 507, 610, 614P, 615P, 705, 706, 751 and 761P will operate around the clock on December 31.

Some bus and minibus services will be extended or augmented on New Year's Eve. Hong Kong Tramways and the Central to Mid-Levels escalator and walkway system will also provide extended services.

It is expected that many passengers will travel via the land boundary control points during the New Year holiday period. Passengers are advised to plan in advance and make their journeys during non-peak hours. As the waiting time for cross-boundary public transport services may be longer than usual if traffic is busy at the control points, passengers should maintain order and heed advice from the Police and on-site staff of the public transport service operators. They are also advised to keep track of the latest traffic news.

The TD and the Police will closely monitor local and cross-boundary traffic during the holidays and take appropriate action as necessary.

Details of the special traffic and transport arrangements on New Year's

Eve are available at the department's website (www.td.gov.hk).

Marine traffic control and safety measures to be followed at New Year's Eve countdown celebrations

With regard to the New Year's Eve countdown celebrations to be held by the Hong Kong Tourism Board on December 31, the Marine Department (MD) will implement marine traffic control and strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels on the event day to ensure that safety requirements are met.

Closed Areas will be established in two stages on the event day in the waters where barges for the fireworks display will be anchored. All vessels will be prohibited from entering these designated areas. The Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai will be established from 1pm on the event day to about 5am on the following day (January 1), while the Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui will be established from 11pm to about 1am on the following day. A Restricted Area will be established in the Central Harbour from 11pm to about 1am on the following day. Other than authorised vessels, no vessels will be allowed to enter. Scheduled ferry vessels with permission may continue services until 11.40pm.

For landside crowd control, all public landing steps within the Restricted Area will be progressively closed temporarily starting from 10pm on the event day to about 1am on the following day. Buffer Zones at Kowloon Public Pier, Kwun Tong Public Pier and Central Piers 9 and 10 will be established immediately after the event for safe and orderly disembarkation of passengers.

In addition, to ensure vessels disperse in an orderly manner, the Eastern and Western Cordon Lines of the Restricted Area will be lifted in stages after the event. The Western Cordon Line will be lifted first at about 1am on January 1. Spectator vessels behind the Western Cordon Line and those wishing to move to the east must follow the instructions of officers from the MD and the Police at the scene. The Eastern Cordon Line will be lifted later depending on traffic conditions in Victoria Harbour. It is anticipated that the Restricted Area will be lifted by about 1.15am.

Officers from the MD and the Police will also maintain order at major landing facilities after the event. In order to ensure the smooth and safe disembarkation of passengers, coxswains and crew members should remind passengers to pack their personal belongings early before the vessels arrive

alongside the landing steps, as well as assist passengers to disembark. Coxswains and passengers should follow the guidance of the MD and the Police at the scene.

The MD and the Marine Police will also strengthen law enforcement, especially on speeding and overloading. Coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels should check again and reconfirm that the operating licence, the certificate of survey and the third party risk insurance are valid before setting sail.

Officers from the MD will strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels. Requirements include providing sufficient life-saving appliances on board, ensuring that children wear a lifejacket at all times and that coxswains keep a passenger and crew list on board.

If any vessel fails to meet these requirements, inspecting officers will issue directions at the scene and request the person-in-charge of the vessel to take remedial action. If the person-in-charge of the vessel refuses to comply with the directions, the department will take the necessary follow-up action, such as prohibiting the vessel from departing or considering prosecution.

MD Notice No. 196 of 2018 on the marine traffic control and safety measures has been issued and is available for viewing on the MD's website (www.mardep.gov.hk).

Wage and payroll statistics for September 2018

Overall wage and payroll statistics

According to the figures released today (December 28) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the average wage rate for all the selected industry sections surveyed, as measured by the wage index, increased by 4.1% in nominal terms in September 2018 over a year earlier.

About 64% of the companies reported increase in average wage rates in September 2018 compared with a year ago. 33% of the companies recorded decrease in average wage rates over the same period. The remaining 3% reported virtually no change in average wage rates.

After discounting the changes in consumer prices as measured by the Consumer Price Index (A), the overall average wage rate for all the selected industry sections surveyed increased by 0.8% in real terms in September 2018 over a year earlier.

As for payroll, the index of payroll per person engaged for all the industry sections surveyed increased by 4.6% in nominal terms in the third quarter of 2018 over a year earlier.

After discounting the changes in consumer prices as measured by the Composite Consumer Price Index, the average payroll per person engaged increased by 2.1% in real terms in the third quarter of 2018 compared with a year earlier.

The wage rate includes basic wages and other regular and guaranteed allowances and bonuses. Payroll includes elements covered by wage rate as well as other irregular payments to workers such as discretionary bonuses and overtime allowances. The payroll statistics therefore tend to show relatively larger quarter-to-quarter changes, affected by the number of hours actually worked and the timing of payment of bonuses and back-pay.

Sectoral changes

For the nominal wage indices, year-on-year increases were recorded in all selected industry sections in September 2018, ranging from 3.2% to 5.8%.

For the real wage indices, year-on-year increases were recorded in all selected industry sections in September 2018, ranging from 0.4% to 2.4%, except the import/export, wholesale and retail trades where a year-on-year decrease of 0.1% was recorded.

The year-on-year changes in the nominal and real wage indices for the selected industry sections from September 2017 to September 2018 are shown in Table 1.

As for the nominal indices of payroll per person engaged, year-on-year increases were recorded in all selected industry sections in the third quarter of 2018, ranging from 3.1% to 7.8%.

For the real payroll indices, year-on-year increases were also recorded in all selected industry sections in the third quarter of 2018, ranging from 0.6% to 5.2%.

The year-on-year changes in the nominal and real indices of payroll per person engaged for selected industry sections from the third quarter of 2017 to the third quarter of 2018 are shown in Table 2. The quarterly changes in the seasonally adjusted nominal and real indices of payroll per person engaged between the third quarter of 2017 and the third quarter of 2018 are shown in Table 3.

Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that overall nominal wages continued to record above-inflation year-on-year growth in September 2018 on the back of tight labour market conditions. Solid wage increases were generally observed across selected industries, particularly so in the transportation sector due

to improved pay package for bus drivers offered by the major franchised bus companies this year.

Payroll per person engaged, which covers discretionary bonuses and other irregular payments, likewise posted an across-the-board increase in the third quarter of 2018, translating into real improvements in all selected industries. Among the major industries, notable increases in payroll were recorded in the sectors of social and personal services, and accommodation and food service activities.

The spokesman added that the low unemployment environment should bode well for the overall earnings situation in the near term. Nonetheless, the Government will stay vigilant and monitor the impacts of various external headwinds on the local economy closely.

Other information

Both wage indices and payroll indices are compiled quarterly based on the results of the Labour Earnings Survey (LES) conducted by the C&SD.

Wage statistics are conceptually different from the payroll statistics. Firstly, wage rate for an employee refers to the sum earned for his normal hours of work. It covers basic wages and other regular and guaranteed allowances and bonuses, but excludes earnings from overtime work and discretionary bonuses, which are however included in payroll per person engaged. Secondly, the payroll index of an industry is an indicator of the simple average payroll received per person engaged in the industry. Its movement is therefore affected by changes in wage rates, number of hours of work and occupational composition in the industry. In contrast, the wage index of an industry is devised to reflect the pure changes in wage rate, with the occupational composition between two successive statistical periods being kept unchanged. In other words, the wage index reflects the change in the price of labour. Thirdly, wage index only covers employees up to the supervisory level (i.e. not including managerial and professional employees), whereas payroll index covers employees at all levels and proprietors actively engaged in the work of the establishment. Because of these conceptual and enumeration differences between payroll and wage statistics, the movements in payroll indices and in wage indices do not necessarily match closely with each other.

It should also be noted that different consumer price indices are used for compiling the real indices of wage and payroll to take into account the differences in their respective occupation coverage. Specifically, the Composite Consumer Price Index, being an indicator of overall consumer prices, is taken as the price deflator for payroll of workers at all levels of the occupational hierarchy. The Consumer Price Index (A), being an indicator of consumer prices for the relatively low expenditure group, is taken as the price deflator for wages in respect of employees engaged in occupations up to the supervisory level.

Detailed breakdowns of the payroll and wage statistics are published in

the "Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics, September 2018". Users can download this publication free of charge from the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp210.jsp?productCode=B1050009).

For enquiries on wage and payroll statistics, please contact the Wages and Labour Costs Statistics Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5550 or email: wage@censtatd.gov.hk).