

# Coin Collection Programme

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today announces a new service schedule of the two Coin Carts under the Coin Collection Programme, for the period of December 31, 2018 up to March 10, 2019. The schedule and other details of the Programme are shown on the HKMA webpage ([coincollection.hkma.gov.hk](http://coincollection.hkma.gov.hk)).

Since the launch of the Programme in October 2014, the two Coin Carts have completed 22 cycles of serving the 18 districts on October 28, 2018. The Carts had carried out 500 000 transactions, collecting 416 million coins with a total face value of HK\$574 million during the period. The collected coins are re-circulated to meet demand.

The Coin Carts provide service at locations that are convenient to the public without affecting the normal flow of traffic and pedestrians. Locations that have suitable power supply facilities, such as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department mobile library service locations, are preferred so as to reduce the need for using the Coin Carts' own stand-by generators. This makes the Programme more environmentally friendly. In selecting the service locations, the HKMA has taken into consideration comments and suggestions given by district councils and members of public; and has consulted the Transport Department and the Hong Kong Police Force as necessary.

The two Coin Carts collect coins from members of public in the 18 districts of Hong Kong on a rotating basis. Under normal circumstances each Coin Cart will stay at a location for a week, subject to availability of the parking space and the maintenance schedule of the Cart. Service hours are from 10 am to 7 pm. Each vehicle is equipped with two coin counting machines and operational staff will be present to provide assistance. An electrical wheelchair lift is available for use. Users can choose to exchange coins for banknotes or adding value to their stored value facilities, such as Octopus Cards or e-wallets (including AlipayHK, Octopus 0! ePay, Tap&Go, TNG Wallet and WeChat Pay). There is also a Community Chest donation box inside each vehicle. The coin collection service is free of charge.

The HKMA will review the Programme from time and time; and will regularly update the service schedule to give advance notice to the public.

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# Budget public consultation launched

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government today (December 5) commenced the public consultation exercise for the 2019-20 Budget.

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan said, "Affected by international trade conflicts and other factors, Hong Kong's economic growth slowed down in the third quarter of this year, and the economic outlook for the next year is full of uncertainties. In preparing the 2019-20 Budget, I will carefully consider the risks of the macro economy, with a view to supporting enterprises, preserving employment and stabilising the economy. I will also consider measures to relieve the impact on citizens' daily lives brought about by external economic changes, as well as to seize opportunities. I sincerely invite members of the community to express their views to assist us to better prepare the Budget."

To facilitate expression of views by the community, the Government has introduced a social media platform as an additional way for collecting opinions this year. Members of the public can find relevant information at the website [www.budget.gov.hk](http://www.budget.gov.hk) and give their comments through the said website, the dedicated Facebook page for the Budget ([www.facebook.com/Budget19to20](https://www.facebook.com/Budget19to20)), by email ([budget@fstb.gov.hk](mailto:budget@fstb.gov.hk)), by phone (2810 3768), by fax (2147 5770) or by post (Budget Consultation Support Team, 24/F, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong).

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## LCQ10: External transport services for Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 5):

Question:

It has been reported that with the intake of more than 20 housing estates in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun in the past five years, the population of the two districts has increased by 67 000 in the past decade. Some residents of Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan who travel daily to Hong Kong Island for work have relayed that the traffic congestion along Tuen Mun Road and the crowdedness in train compartments of the West Rail Line during peak hours every day are aggravating, making it both time consuming and very tiring for them to commute to and from work. They hope that the Government will introduce measures expeditiously to improve the external transport services for those

districts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has surveyed the respective average times taken by members of the public to commute, by various means of transport, (i) between Tuen Mun and Central and (ii) between Tsuen Wan and Central, during peak and non-peak hours in each of the past five years; if so, of the details;

(2) whether it has surveyed the (i) average daily vehicular traffic flow of Tuen Mun Road and (ii) average daily patronage of the West Rail Line in each of the past five years; if so, of the details; whether it has projected the relevant figures for each of the coming five years; if so, of the details;

(3) whether it will re-commission the ferry route between Central and Tsuen Wan as well as that between Central and Tuen Mun to provide service full-day or during peak hours; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) of the specific plans and measures, implemented now and in future, to alleviate the hardship suffered by Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan residents in commuting to and from work?

Reply:

President,

Residents of Yuen Long, Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, which are located in New Territories West and Kowloon West, are served by various kinds of convenient public transport modes connecting to the city. They may commute by means of railway lines, including Tsuen Wan Line, Tung Chung Line and West Rail Line; and depending on availability of services in their localities, residents in Tuen Mun may take light rail and transfer to the West Rail Line. Franchised buses and non-franchised buses are plying between Yuen Long/Tuen Mun/Tsuen Wan and Central via Route 3, Tuen Mun Road, Ting Kau Bridge and Western Harbour Crossing.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Steven Ho's question is as follows:

(1) The Transport Department (TD) does not have statistics on the average time taken by members of the public to commute, by various means of transport between Tuen Mun/Tsuen Wan and Central during different periods of a day. The actual time for journeys are subject to a host of factors, including modes of commuting, road traffic, rail passenger flow, and the actual places where the journeys start and end. The public may make use of the all-in-one mobile application "HKeMobility" launched by the TD to search for routes of different transportation modes, journey times and fares, and obtain real-time traffic news to plan for the most appropriate travel arrangements.

According to information available, a journey during peak hours between Tuen Mun and Central, by means of railway with interchange at Nam Cheong to Tung Chung Line or West Rail Line, generally takes about 50 minutes; and a journey between Tsuen Wan and Central via Tsuen Wan Line takes about 29 minutes. Journey time for non-peak hours is more or less the same. As for the

franchised bus services connecting Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan with Central during peak hours, KMB Route No. 961 (Shan King Terminus – Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai), for example, takes about 60 minutes to get to Central. City Bus Route No. 903 (Tsuen Wan West Station/Discovery Park – Wan Chai North) takes about 45 minutes to get to Central.

(2) The annual average daily traffic volume of Tuen Mun Road (between Sham Tseng and Tsing Long Highway) over the past five years and the estimated annual average daily traffic volume between 2018 and 2022 are respectively set out in the Annex. We anticipate that upon full commissioning in 2020, the Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link will provide another trunk road for linking up New Territories West and Lantau and help divert traffic on Tuen Mun Road. The average daily patronage of the West Rail Line in each of the past five years is also set out in the Annex.

As regards the patronage for the West Rail Line in the coming five years, much will depend on the impact of the commissioning of the Tuen Ma Line under the Shatin to Central Link, which is under construction, on the existing West Rail section. But, in general, the flow of passengers does not stabilise during the early stage of commissioning of new railway lines. Thus, the Government will normally conduct continuous monitoring of the flow of passengers after commissioning and then assess future patronage. If the factor of the opening of the Tuen Ma Line is discounted and on the basis of the data for the past five years, the flow of passengers for the West Rail Line generally rises in the range of 0.6 per cent to 2.3 per cent every year.

(3) In tandem with the continuous enhancements in traffic network and ancillary transport facilities in recent years, the two ferry routes, "Central – Tsuen Wan (via Tsing Yi)" and "Central – Tuen Mun", ceased operation in July 2000 as a result of inadequate patronage. The TD invited tenders for the two ferry routes of "Central – Tsuen Wan (via Tsing Yi)" and "Central – Tuen Mun" in March and April 2000 respectively with a view to selecting suitable ferry operators to provide licensed ferry services for the above routes. Yet, no tender submission was received. In August 2010, at the request of members of the local community, the TD conducted a new round of tender exercise for the "Central – Tuen Mun" route. Despite the relaxation of the tender requirements, no tender submission was received. The TD considered that the results of the tender exercises reflected the market assessment that the operation of the two services was not financially viable under the operating environment at that time with low patronage. Nevertheless, the Government welcomes application from operators interested in launching new licensed ferry services. However the TD has not received any proposal to operate new licensed ferry services between Tsuen Wan/Tuen Mun and Central up till now. In case a proposal is received, the TD will assess the service proposal having regard to such factors as passenger demand, financial and operational viability of the abovementioned ferry services.

(4) At present, the external public transport services for Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun are generally adequate for meeting passenger needs.

With regard to railway service, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has

been committed to enhancing the capacity of its network. The Corporation has increased the train frequency during peak hours where possible, and has adopted various passenger flow management measures to alleviate crowdedness during peak hours. On the West Rail Line, the current train frequencies for the morning and evening peak hours are around 3 and 3.5 minutes respectively. During the busiest period of the morning peak hours, the MTRCL additionally provides a regular special train trip departing from Tin Shui Wai Station for Hung Hom. To dovetail with the Shatin to Central Link project, the West Rail Line has deployed 8-car trains on a full scale since late May this year, resulting in an increase of around 14 per cent in the overall capacity of the line. The above measures were observed to effectively alleviate crowdedness at the busiest sections during the said hours. As regards the Tsuen Wan Line, the MTRCL is currently proceeding with the replacement of the signalling systems of the line, the completion of which will help increase both the capacity and efficiency of train service. Moreover, during the evening peak hours, the MTRCL currently arranges individual direct train trips to Admiralty Station without pick-up at Central Station so as to ease passenger flow at the platform of Admiralty Station, where numerous passengers are waiting to board trains bound for Tsuen Wan. The Corporation also deploys platform assistants to platforms of busy stations on all lines with a view to assisting passengers with orderly and smooth boarding and alighting, thereby enabling on-time departures and efficient operation of trains.

The MTRCL will continue to closely monitor the loading of relevant lines. To cope with demand generated by future patronage, the Corporation will review and consider proposals from time to time, including enhancing station management measures to ease passenger flow, increasing train frequency where practicable, and offering fare concessions to alleviate the heavy loading of trains during peak hours.

In respect of franchised bus services, the TD and franchised bus companies jointly formulate bus route planning programmes on an annual basis. As for Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun districts, the franchised bus companies concerned will adjust their bus services in the light of the needs of passengers in these two districts. The TD will continue to keep in view the developments in Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun, and will consider supportive transport measures and adjustments to public transport services where necessary.

In the long term, the Chief Executive just mentioned the Lantau Tomorrow Vision in the Policy Address, in which a part of the proposed railway corridor as referred to in the Lantau Tomorrow Vision is similar to the alignment of Tuen Mun-Tsuen Wan Link (Tuen Mun to Tsing Lung Tau). The Transport and Housing Bureau plans to take forward the Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030 (RMR2030+ Studies) on the conceptual spatial requirements to be firmed up under the Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030 (Hong Kong 2030+ Study), which is being conducted by the Development Bureau and the Planning Department. Based on the latest planning information, RMR2030+ Studies will examine the demand for and supply of transport infrastructure, including

railways and major roads, in Hong Kong between 2031 and 2041, and study the loading of the heavy rails in the Northwest New Territories beyond 2030. We will consider the planning studies and the recommended strategic transport corridors in relation to the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, as well as look into the layout of the proposed railway and major road infrastructure with regard to the transport infrastructure required for the longer-term strategic growth areas of Hong Kong 2030+ Study (including the New Territories North), to ensure that the planning of large scale transport infrastructure can meet the needs of the overall long-term land use developments of Hong Kong. RMR2030+ Studies will also examine the impact of the proposed transport infrastructure on the existing transport network (including the West Rail Line) and formulate corresponding strategies. The Legislative Council Panel on Transport expressed support for the above studies in June 2017. Since Hong Kong 2030+ Study has not yet been completed, we will seek funding approval in due course for implementing RMR2030+ Studies.

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## LCQ18: Pleasure vessels

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 5):

Question:

It is learnt that at present, quite a number of owners of pleasure vessels (PVs) provide, at the same time when renting out PVs to customers, water play equipment such as jet-skis or inflatable banana boats to them. Under the existing legislation, jet-skis are required to be issued with a relevant licence while non-mechanised inflatable vessels such as banana boats are not required. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether vessel owners providing jet-skis or banana boats are required to take the initiative and expeditiously report to the Marine Department (MD) after any accident involving such equipment has occurred; if so, of the details (including the reporting mechanism and penalty for non-compliance); if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that PV owners who intend to use their vessels for towing inflatable vessels such as banana boats, must apply in writing for and obtain the approval of MD, of the penalty to be imposed on those PV owners who do not comply with this requirement; and

(3) of the number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted in each of the past five years by MD against the persons concerned for contravention of the law involving jet-skis or banana boats?

Reply:

President,

My responses to the question raised by the Hon Holden Chow are as follows:

(1) The existing Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap. 548) (the Ordinance) does not require non-mechanised inflatable vessels including banana boats to obtain an Operating Licence for Local Vessel. However, under section 57 of the Ordinance, where a local vessel (including jet-skis and pleasure vessels towing banana boats) is involved in any incident within the waters of Hong Kong, the owner or person-in-charge of the vessel shall report in writing to the Marine Department (MD) within 24 hours after the occurrence of the incident, providing details such as basic particulars of the vessel and the coxswain concerned, type of the incident (e.g. collision, contact, stranding or machinery damage), location, time, sequence of events, as well as number of vessels and casualties involved, etc.. Any owner or person-in-charge of the vessel contravening the requirements on reporting marine incident(s) will be liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$10,000.

(2) The coxswain of a Class IV vessel (i.e. pleasure vessel) will be liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$5,000 if he uses the vessel to tow inflatable vessels such as banana boats without the permission of the Director of Marine.

(3) During the period from 2012 to 2017, MD had taken prosecution actions against 14 cases of owners or persons-in-charge of Class IV vessels failing to report details of marine incident to MD after occurrence of an incident. None of these cases involved jet-ski or banana boat. In addition, MD had also taken prosecution actions against five cases of illegal use of pleasure vessels for towing purpose during the five-year period.

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## **LCQ5: Boundary control and monitoring of lands in the frontier closed areas**

Following is a question by the Hon Claudia Mo, and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (December 5):

Question:

Last month, the media uncovered that the Guangdong Border Defence Corps (the Corps) had, since 2012, occupied and cultivated a land parcel with an

area of about 20 000 square feet in the Sha Tau Kok Frontier Closed Area (FCA) and built, without permission, a pedestrian bridge straddling the Shenzhen River. Moreover, members of the Corps from time to time commuted, via that bridge, to and from the land parcel which was located within the territory of the Hong Kong SAR. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of the Government's current work on the management of the lands in FCAs;

(2) as the Government had been ignorant of the aforesaid land occupation and bridge building incidents for six years, whether the Government has reviewed if there was maladministration and ineffective monitoring on the part of the relevant departments, and the improvements to be made in this respect; and

(3) notwithstanding that the Corps has stopped using the occupied land parcel for the time being, whether the Government will request the Mainland authorities to return the land parcel in question to the landowner(s) concerned, hold the relevant persons responsible and apologise to Hong Kong people; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attaches great attention to the suspected occupation of land in the vicinity of the Sha Tau Kok River by the Mainland. The Development Bureau, the Security Bureau, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and their relevant departments have been liaising closely with one another to follow up on this matter.

The site inspections conducted by the relevant departments including the Lands Department (LandsD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) have found a new water channel to the south of the Sha Tau Kok River. The area between the new water channel and the Sha Tau Kok River is encircled by wire fences and covered with artificial vegetation. A bridge straddling the Sha Tau Kok River was found adjacent to the area.

The LandsD has looked up the relevant information including past land boundary records, aerial photos, and works records. According to the past land boundary records, the land in question falls within the Sha Tau Kok River and the southern area thereof as demarcated on the map of the LandsD. The aerial photos show that in recent years there have been changes to the conditions of certain areas to the south of the Sha Tau Kok River, including removal of vegetation and appearance of a new water channel. But the HKSAR Government has no record of river training works in the vicinity of that section of the Sha Tau Kok River.

In early November 2018, the LandsD received an enquiry from an owner of one of the private lots concerned, who said that he suspected that his lot



was occupied by the Mainland. Promptly afterwards, the HKSAR Government communicated with the relevant Mainland parties. The Mainland side expressed that river channel works had been conducted at the tributary of the Sha Tau Kok River due to flood control considerations, and the boundary was taken to be the centre line of that tributary. At that time, the HKSAR Government explained to the Mainland that we considered the land in question to fall within the boundary of HKSAR, because the relevant section of the boundary of HKSAR at the location in question was "Sha Tau Kok Town to Pak Kung Au", and the boundary line thereat should run along the centre line of the Sha Tau Kok River according to the Order of the State Council of the People's Republic of China No. 221 of 1997 (hereafter referred to as State Council Order No. 221) promulgated on July 1, 1997. From the perspective of the HKSAR Government, the course of the Sha Tau Kok River has not changed over the past years.

The HKSAR Government and the relevant Mainland parties agreed to work together towards the accurate implementation of the provisions of the State Council Order No. 221. The two sides are currently engaged in active dialogue with a view to reaching an accurate understanding on the boundary issue and following up on other related matters as soon as practicable. The two sides have also agreed that, to allay public concerns, Mainland personnel would refrain from using the land in question before a consensus is reached on the boundary issue.

In consultation with the Security Bureau and other relevant departments, our consolidated reply to the three-part question is as follows:

(1) and (2) To reduce the coverage of the Frontier Closed Area (FCA) to the minimum necessary for ensuring public order, from 2008 to 2016 the Government substantially reduced the land coverage of the FCA from about 2 800 hectares at the time to about 400 hectares in three phases, thereby releasing 2 400 hectares of land for various uses. Currently, the reduced FCA covers the HKPF's boundary patrol roads (BPRs) and the areas to its north, border-crossing facilities, Sha Tau Kok Town, Starling Inlet and parts of Mai Po.

To prevent illegal immigration and combat other cross-boundary criminal activities, the HKSAR Government constructed BPRs and erected fences along the 35-kilometre land boundary of Hong Kong. Where site conditions permit and works are technically feasible, BPRs will be constructed as close to the boundary bordering Shenzhen as possible. The HKPF carries out routine patrols mainly along the BPRs, which are also equipped with closed circuit television (CCTV) and surveillance systems including electronic sensors to combat attempts by illegal immigrants to unlawfully enter HKSAR across the land boundary. The set-up of BPRs is to enable police officers to arrive at the scene expeditiously and safely to intercept any illegal immigrant in case CCTV or the surveillance system detects attempts to cross the boundary by illegal immigrants. If site conditions do not permit or works are technically not feasible, there will be distances between the BPRs and the boundary bordering Shenzhen. If there is intelligence of illegal activity outside the BPRs but within the boundary, law enforcement officers will handle such activities according to the laws of Hong Kong having regard to actual circumstances and operational considerations.

From the land management perspective, owing to the large number of government land and private lots in Hong Kong, the LandsD generally acts on complaints or enquiries to follow up on cases of suspected occupation of government land or lease breaches of private lots, and conduct inspections or surveillance at individual locations with high land management risks. The FCA, which is largely uninhabited, is not among the locations considered by the LandsD as high-risk for breach of land-related laws or leases. Nevertheless, the LandsD will handle any cases identified or received by the LandsD or referred by other departments according to the applicable mechanism and having regard to its relative priority and urgency. If non-compliance with relevant legislation or land lease is established upon investigation, the LandsD will take appropriate enforcement actions.

Since the land in question and the nearby BPR are separated by some distance and the area in between is covered by overgrown vegetation, the line of sight between the two is blocked. Police officers are unable to directly observe the status of the land in question during routine patrols. Furthermore, in view of the location and ground conditions of the land in question which is uninhabited and without road access, it is difficult for the LandsD to be aware of the status of the land in question through normal inspections.

As mentioned above, the LandsD received an enquiry only recently from an owner of one of the private lots concerned, who suspected that his lot was occupied. Before that, the LandsD had not received any enquiry or complaint from owners of private lots about the land in question. The LandsD was also not aware beforehand that the Mainland side had conducted river training works near the Sha Tau Kok River.

In view of public concerns caused by this incident, we believe that there is room for improvement in relevant issues. Relevant government departments have started to conduct relevant reviews accordingly. The major directions include: as regards border patrol, the HKPF will suitably examine its work from the usual angles of prevention of illegal immigration and combatting cross-boundary criminal activities; in respect of land administration and management, the LandsD will examine the existing arrangement and explore placing more attention on land near the HKSAR boundary through practical and efficient means, including studying the use of aerial photos to facilitate reconnaissance of changes in usage of land within HKSAR's territory near the land boundary; and the LandsD will also suitably review the current arrangements for masking of aerial photos, with a view to reducing possible human error in the manual masking process; as regards flood control and training works for boundary rivers, the Development Bureau and the Drainage Services Department will explore enhancing the existing liaison mechanism with relevant Mainland parties.

(3) The HKSAR Government has all along been handling border matters with the Mainland through friendly dialogue and conversation. In fact, the experience of the Loop of Shenzhen River shows that such approach can arrive at desirable results.

From the perspective of the HKSAR Government, the relevant section of

the boundary of HKSAR at the location in question has not changed, and the land in question falls within HKSAR territory. There is also no change in land ownership. The HKSAR Government will continue to engage in active dialogue with the relevant Mainland parties in respect of the boundary issue. I believe that both sides are committed to accurately implementing State Council Order No. 221, and what is important is to have a clear understanding of the State Council No. 221 and the relevant facts of the incident through an objective and pragmatic attitude. As mentioned above, to allay public concerns, both sides have agreed that Mainland personnel would refrain from using the land in question before a consensus is reached on the administrative boundary issue. After sorting out the administrative boundary issue, the HKSAR Government will continue to actively follow up on other related matters. In view of the special circumstances of this case, the District Lands Office, North of the LandsD has also taken the initiative to contact the owners of the private lots concerned to understand their requests to facilitate the provision of appropriate assistance.