

Appeal for information on missing man in Chai Wan (with photo)

Police today (November 28) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Chai Wan.

Cheung Wing-ki, aged 77, went missing after he left his residence on Shau Kei Wan Road on November 25 morning. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.65 metres tall, 54 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a round face with yellow complexion and short straight grey hair. He was last seen wearing a pair of brown-rimmed glasses, a black peaked cap, a blue long-sleeved T-shirt, blue jeans, grey jacket, white sports shoes and carrying a brown shoulder bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Hong Kong Island on 2860 1040, 9886 0034 or email to rmpu-hki@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



LCQ7: Ferry services

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Priscilla Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (November 28):

Question:

Due to a continuous decline in patronage, the Central-Hung Hom ferry route ceased operation in March 2011. The Government indicated last month that it intended to re-commission the ferry route in the second quarter of next year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will adopt measures (e.g. lowering pier rentals or providing other concessions) to enhance the financial viability of the ferry route so as to attract more operators to submit bids for tender; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will provide financial incentives (e.g. installing "MTR Fare Saver" readers at the piers or providing interchange discounts) to attract more members of the public to take the ferries of the route; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will adopt measures to enhance the land transport connectivity with and pedestrian accessibility to the relevant ferry piers so as to facilitate members of the public to take the ferries of the route; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The "Star" Ferry Company, Limited (Star Ferry) started to operate the "Hung Hom – Central" and "Hung Hom – Wan Chai" licensed ferry services on April 1, 1999. In tandem with the enhancement of the public transport network and the relocation of the ferry pier in Central in 2006, the average daily patronage of the "Hung Hom – Central" route kept dropping and the patronage of the "Hung Hom – Wan Chai" route was also on the low side. Given the prolonged operating deficits of the two routes, and in anticipation of a lack of significant growth in patronage, the Star Ferry ceased operating the two routes upon licence expiry on March 31, 2011.

Between September and December 2010, the Transport Department (TD) conducted two tender exercises in a row with a view to selecting suitable ferry service operators to continue the services of the two routes. Prior to the second tender exercise, the TD consulted District Councils and locals of the concerned districts on how to enhance the viability of the two routes so as to attract operators to bid for the operation. Subsequently, the service requirements for the two routes were relaxed. Nevertheless, no tender submission was received by the TD when the two tenders closed.

The Government has noticed that in recent years, there are views among the community suggesting that more in-harbour ferry routes should be explored. The TD is making preparation for re-commissioning the "Central – Hung Hom" ferry route. Meanwhile, in view of the recommendations made in the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry, the TD is preparing for launching a pilot "water taxi" service plying between Kai Tak, Hung Hom,

Tsim Sha Tsui East, West Kowloon and Central. The Government expects that this will inject commercial elements into the Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier, thereby enhancing vibrancy of the Hung Hom harbourfront.

My responses to the various parts of the question raised by the Dr Hon Priscilla Leung are as follows:

(1) & (2) Between August 27 and September 27, 2018, the TD invited interested parties to submit expression of interest for operating the "Central – Hung Hom" ferry route and the "water taxi" service. Having received two submissions during the specified period, the TD is reviewing the submissions and will consult relevant stakeholders so as to formulate more specific ferry service proposals. Subject to progress of the consultation, the TD is working towards carrying out a tender exercise for the two ferry services in early 2019, with a view to commencing the services of the "Central – Hung Hom" route and "water taxi" (Note 1) in the second quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 at the earliest respectively.

It is the Government's established policy that public transport services should be run by the private sector in accordance with commercial principles to enhance efficiency and cost effectiveness. The established policy is that, basically, in-harbour routes are not subsidised (Note 2) as there are a variety of land (and railway) transport alternatives available. That said, to help reduce the operating costs of ferry services, the Government has implemented various measures in recent years as and when needed, such as reimbursing pier rental and exempting vessel licence fees under the Elderly Concessionary Fares Scheme, taking up the responsibility of pier maintenance and waiving fuel duty, etc. The Government also allows ferry operators to sub-let premises at piers for commercial purposes to generate non-fare box revenue for cross-subsidising the ferry operation so as to alleviate the pressure for fare increases. On the other hand, licensed ferry operators can be reimbursed for the difference between the full fare and the concessionary fare of \$2 for elderly and disabled persons under the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities. The above measures will be applicable to the "Central – Hung Hom" ferry route being operated in the form of licensed ferry service.

In addition, the Government will implement the non-means tested Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme (PTFSS) with effect from January 1, 2019 to relieve the fare burden of commuters who travel on local public transport services for daily commuting and whose public transport expenses are relatively high. Ferry services are among the public transport services covered under the PTFSS. Commuters may collect the public transport fare subsidy for January 2019 starting from February 16, 2019. As for the operator and fare levels (including whether and how fare concessions are offered) of the "Central – Hung Hom" ferry route, these will be subject to the outcome of the tender exercise.

Regarding the "MTR Fare Saver" mentioned in the question, it is a business promotion scheme launched by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) based on commercial considerations. Its objective is to encourage more

people to opt for walking from places farther away from MTR stations to nearby MTR stations for using railway services. By offering passengers with promotional concessions, it helps expand the MTR's passenger base, leading to a win-win situation. To set up a Fare Saver, the MTRCL will consider several factors including the distance between the proposed location and the nearest MTR station, whether new passengers can be attracted, and whether there are already discounts offered by other means of connecting public transport to MTR stations, etc. As for interchange discounts, it is the commercial decision of individual operators. Nevertheless, to alleviate the burden of public transport expenses on members of the public, the Government will continue to encourage public transport operators to provide fare concession schemes as far as practicable, having regard to their individual operational and financial positions, the market situation and passenger demands, etc.

(3) The proposed "Central – Hung Hom" ferry route will berth at the Central Pier No. 8 (western berth) and Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier (eastern berth). To meet operational needs of the ferry service, the TD is co-ordinating with the works departments concerned to conduct basic maintenance works for these piers. Such works include renovation works for the interior and exterior walls of the piers, waterproofing works for their roofs, lift and ramp system maintenance works, and retrofitting for addition of breastfeeding rooms at the piers, etc. Enhancement to the Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier in the long run will be subject to recommendations, and their feasibility, to be made by the ferry service operator to be selected through the tender exercise mentioned in item (1) above. By then, the TD and relevant Government departments will study the operator's recommendations in detail. The TD will duly consult stakeholders such as relevant District Councils and the Harbourfront Commission when preparing for the tender exercise, and when a more concrete pier enhancement proposal is available.

Currently, access to the Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier is easy and convenient. The pier is within five to ten minutes' walk from the major housing estates in Whampoa. In future, ferry passengers may use the nearby Hung Hom (Hung Luen Road) Public Transport Interchange, to be in service soon, to interchange for various routes of franchised bus and green minibus for direct access to Wong Tai Sin, Kwun Tong, Sha Tin, Yuen Long and Tseung Kwan O, etc. Ferry passengers may also walk for a few minutes to the Whampoa MTR Station to go to places in Kowloon and the New Territories by rail. The TD will continue to keep in view the region's development and consider transport measures and adjustments to public transport services as necessary in a timely manner.

Note 1: The operator's gearing up time required (and hence the commencement timeframe) of the "water taxi" service might vary depending on the specific features of the new service.

Note 2: There is basically no subsidy for public transport services save for the six major outlying ferry routes. Special Helping Measures (SHM) are provided to these routes by the Government because for the islands in question there is basically no alternative to the ferry services as a means of public transport, and short of the SHM, the ferry services will not be

commercially viable without periodic hefty fare increases. SHM is provided to keep fare increases moderate, while keeping the ferry services commercially viable.

LCQ6: Restriction on carrying or posting dried seafood into the Mainland

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (November 28):

Question:

According to the Catalogue of Animals and Plants, and Animal and Plant Products Prohibited from being Carried or Posted into the People's Republic of China (the Catalogue), aquatic animal products are prohibited from being carried or posted into the Mainland. It is learnt that business turnover of the local dried seafood industry has dropped in recent years, with the spending of Mainland travellers at local dried seafood shops during this year's National Day long holidays dropping by more than 30 per cent as compared with that in the same period of last year. This is reckoned to be related to the enforcement of the Catalogue at Mainland ports. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that dried seafood, being dried food that has gone through work processes such as sun-drying, oven-drying, cooking and dehydration, is completely different from fresh and live seafood in nature, whether the Government has gained an understanding from the Mainland authorities as to whether the Catalogue only restricts the entry of fresh and live seafood but not dried seafood;

(2) whether the Government discussed with the Mainland authorities in the past three years the setting up of a quarantine system to be implemented in Hong Kong which is recognised by the Mainland authorities, so that quarantine dried seafood sold in Hong Kong are exempted from the restrictions of the Catalogue; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as some members of the industry have pointed out that quite a lot of local dried seafood comes from the Mainland and is thus believed to be able to meet the Mainland quarantine and hygiene requirements without difficulties, whether the Government will discuss with the Mainland authorities allowing travellers to carry into the Mainland a reasonable quantity of dried seafood for personal use?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai is as follows:

(1) According to the Catalogue of Animals and Plants, and Animal and Plant Products Prohibited from being Carried or Posted into the People's Republic of China (the Catalogue) revised by the Mainland authorities in 2012, an array of animals and plants and their products are prohibited from being carried or posted into the Mainland. The Catalogue mainly covers three types of products, namely "animals and animal products", "plants and plant products" and "others". "Animals and animal products" include live animals (except cat and dog), bird's nests (except canned ones) and aquatic animal products, etc. We are given to understand that aquatic animal products prohibited from being carried or posted into the Mainland include dried seafood products.

The restriction laid down in the Catalogue aims at preventing animal and plant diseases and pests from spreading into the Mainland, and protecting the production of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery as well as public health and safety on the Mainland. The restriction applies to all exporting places, including Hong Kong.

(2) and (3) Over the years, local dried seafood industry has been exporting dried seafood products to the Mainland and other places. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has communicated with the relevant Mainland authorities regarding the carrying and posting of dried seafood products into the Mainland by travellers. Since dried seafood products involve various types of aquatic animal products, there is no common quarantine system applicable to all these products. Members of the industry may provide AFCD with specific details of those dried seafood products they intend to sell to travellers for carrying or posting into the Mainland, so as to facilitate AFCD's liaison with the Mainland authorities.

The local trade of bird's nests has also raised the concern that the Mainland authorities' inclusion of bird's nest in the Catalogue has caused certain impact on the trade. In this connection, we have been relaying to the relevant authorities the trade's appeal for exporting bird's nest products to the Mainland. The Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government and the Mainland have been following up on the arrangements on inspection and quarantine for the importation of bird nest products from Hong Kong, initialled last December. The formal signing of the agreement on the implementation of the above arrangements with the General Administration of Customs during my visit to Beijing at the end of October this year will foster the trading of bird's nests between the Mainland and the SAR.

We will continue to maintain liaison with the relevant Mainland authorities and the trade on this matter.

FSDC releases report on ESG strategy

The following is issued on behalf of the Financial Services Development Council:

The Financial Services Development Council (FSDC) today (November 28) released a research report entitled "Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Strategy for Hong Kong". The report sets out key recommendations for fostering the development of an ESG ecosystem in Hong Kong.

The Chairman of the FSDC, Mr Laurence Li, said, "ESG investment has become a mainstream investment area which many developed economies strive to seize through a combination of incentives and regulations. An optimal balance between the two is not easy to achieve but there is a need for Hong Kong to take this into serious consideration in order to not be left behind."

The report seeks to present the value proposition of ESG integration from the perspectives of both financial investors and investee companies. The report recommends (i) the Government to take the leadership role in encouraging public funds' support for ESG integration; (ii) the Hong Kong Monetary Authority to scale up ESG requirements on its external investment managers; (iii) the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority to incorporate ESG factors into its trustee approval and monitoring process and to encourage trustees to take into account international ESG standards; (iv) the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) to strengthen the emphasis on ESG through upgrading the Principles of Responsible Ownership to at least "comply or explain"; (v) the SFC and the other regulators to provide more guidance on ESG thematic investment products; and (vi) the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong to strengthen the emphasis on ESG for both listing applicants and listed companies.

The full version of the report can be downloaded from the FSDC website: www.fsd.org.hk.

About the FSDC

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government established the FSDC in 2013 as a high-level, cross-sectoral advisory body to engage the industry in formulating proposals to promote the further development of Hong Kong's financial services industry and to map out the strategic direction for development.

The FSDC set up five committees, namely the Policy Research Committee, the Mainland Opportunities Committee, the New Business Committee, the Market Development Committee and the Human Capital Committee, as the five streams of its work.

SHA to attend youth event in Shenzhen

â€‹The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, will depart for Shenzhen tomorrow morning (November 29) to join a visit to youth innovation and entrepreneurship bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area conducted by the Hong Kong United Youth Association (HKUYA). Mr Lau will meet with representatives of Hong Kong non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in relation to innovation and entrepreneurship as well as the youth innovation and entrepreneurship bases on Mainland.

The HKUYA will launch a pilot scheme with its own resources to recruit and lead Hong Kong young entrepreneurs to settle in Shenzhen's innovation and entrepreneurship bases. Organised by the HKUYA, this delegation aims to enable NGOs in relation to innovation and entrepreneurship from Hong Kong to keep abreast of the latest developments, the ancillary facilities and services and more of the innovation and entrepreneurship bases. The delegation will also exchange views with staff at the entrepreneurship bases.

Hong Kong non-governmental representatives from universities, scientific research institutions, youth entrepreneurship organisations and operators of youth innovation and entrepreneurship bases in Hong Kong will also join the visit.

Mr Lau will return to Hong Kong in the afternoon on the same day.