

Shuttle bus services at Hong Kong Port of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge operate smoothly

The Transport Department (TD) today (November 4) said that since the implementation of new measures at Hong Kong Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge this weekend, the cross boundary transport services have been operating smoothly in general, and the queuing and boarding situation has also been improved.

A spokesman for the TD said that the passenger traffic recorded yesterday was over 86 000, which is about 50 per cent higher than last Saturday (over 58 000) and last Sunday (over 77 000).

The shuttle bus fleet has increased from 120 to 138 with the extra deployment of over 30 additional buses since yesterday, increasing the carrying capacity of shuttle bus services to more than 170 buses to meet passenger demand. Moreover, crowd management measures have also been implemented at Hong Kong Port during peak hours in the evening. Queue of tour groups and individual visitors going to Zhuhai are separated, resulting in marked improvement in the order and efficiency.

From 10am to noon today, the average hourly passenger traffic was about 7 000. Passengers only waited for an average of about 10 minutes and 20 minutes at the pick-up areas for taking shuttle buses to Zhuhai and Macao respectively. From 6pm to 8pm today, the average waiting time for shuttle buses to Macao was less than 5 minutes, and the average waiting time of tour groups and individual visitors for shuttle bus to Zhuhai were about 30 minutes and 5 minutes respectively.

Meanwhile, the "pre-booked cross-boundary coach service" has started to operate this evening to make better use of the carrying capacity of cross-boundary coaches. According to the information provided by operators of cross-boundary coaches, more than 50 trips have been operated to carry about 2 500 passengers of tour groups from Hong Kong Port to Zhuhai Port so as to meet passenger demand at peak hours. Based on on-site observations, passengers got on coaches swiftly and orderly which showed the service can effectively divert passengers of tour groups.

To facilitate the implementation of the above-mentioned new measures, directional signs have been erected at the pick-up areas for shuttle buses and cross-boundary coaches at Hong Kong Port to remind passengers of the diversion arrangements.

Regarding the local public transport services, the spokesman said that the TD and bus companies have been closely monitoring the demand of various feeder bus routes ("B" route). B6 route going to Tung Chung operated an additional of about 40 trips yesterday. As there were more passengers waiting

for B5 route going to Sunny Bay and B6 route going to Tung Chung today, an additional of over 90 trips have been operated up to 8pm to accommodate passengers and the average waiting time was about 15 to 20 minutes during peak hours.

The TD will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the new measures and the local public transport arrangements at Hong Kong Port.

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session after attending a public event today (November 4):

Reporter: When will the high risk pool be setting up? Even that it can't be implemented in a few years, how do the Government ensure that the Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme (VHIS) is attractive enough?

Secretary for Food and Health: The Government has just passed the law to (allow) reduction in tax (in connection with the premiums paid) for VHIS, so it will be launched on April 1, 2019. As far as the basic requirement is concerned, we have already achieved 10 basic requirements. For the high risk pool, we will continue to look into it because we were not able to reach a consensus at the time when we did the consultation. Therefore, we may take a few years, to first launch the VHIS and gain some experience in this insurance scheme. There are lots of work that our VHIS office would have to do in the coming few years. So building on the experience, we will see how best to move forward including looking into the possibility to create a high risk pool.

Reporter: With respect to the Japanese research, would the Government have any respective measures to prevent the outbreak of the virus?

Secretary for Food and Health: As far as the avian flu risk is concerned, the Government has been doing a lot, both in the local farms as well as in the markets selling live poultry. A lot of bio-security measures and surveillance are already on-going. We will continue to communicate with the international organisations and health organisations to understand more about avian flu and the risk. We will continue to do our surveillance, our work and bio-security measures in terms of live poultry.

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

Hospital Authority launches Locum Recruitment Website to strengthen healthcare manpower

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (November 4) announced the launching of Locum Recruitment Website tomorrow (November 5) to enhance the flexibility and efficiency in attracting doctors and nurses to provide part-time services in public hospitals in order to strengthen manpower and alleviate the work pressure of frontline healthcare staff.

The HA Head of Human Resources, Dr Pang Fei-chau, explained that the functions of Locum Office, which is responsible for Locum employment, have been enhanced to build up the talent pool of healthcare employees who are credentialed and flexible for part-time employment. "The talent pool will enable public hospitals to increase the short-term supply healthcare manpower to cope with seasonal service surge and other ad-hoc situations."

"The Locum Office has further simplified the recruitment processes by consolidating the job requirements of different departments and standardising the hourly pay rate of Locum Staff according to their years of relevant experience. Interested healthcare professionals could register with the Locum Office and submit the necessary credentials for vetting to register as Locum Staffs. They will need to attend mandatory online trainings, such as infection control, prior to providing service in public hospitals."

"Public hospitals will post up the available part-time service locations and timeslots in the Locum Recruitment Website. Locum Staffs could browse the Website to choose their preferred locations and timeslots. It is convenient and time-saving because they will not need to submit applications individually to each hospital." Dr Pang added.

Apart from launching the Locum Recruitment Website, the HA is dedicated to strengthening healthcare manpower in public hospitals by implementing various measures to recruit and retain staff, inter alia, recruiting full time healthcare professionals, increasing promotion and training opportunities, and rehiring appropriate retired healthcare staff, etc. Meanwhile, the HA continues to recruit overseas doctors to serve in public hospitals with limited registration.

Doctors and nurses who are interested in part-time jobs of public hospitals can visit the Locum Recruitment Website at www.ha.org.hk/goto/locum for details.

Liquor Licensing Board to meet on Tuesday

The following is issued on behalf of the Liquor Licensing Board:

The Liquor Licensing Board will meet on Tuesday (November 6) to consider six applications for renewal, transfer or amendment of liquor licences.

The applications are (not in order of discussion):

Hong Kong:

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Missy Ho's and 11 Westside in Kennedy Town
Cassio in Central
DJIBOUTII in Wan Chai

Kowloon:

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WIFI CLUB in Tsim Sha Tsui
Cali-Mex in Tai Kok Tsui

The meeting will be held at 9.45am in the conference room, Room 102, 1/F, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai. Members of the public are welcome to attend, except during the private session on confidential items.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Sha Tin

Police advise motorists that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Sha Tin to facilitate the race meeting today (November 4).

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.