

Transcript of remarks by SLW on abolishing “offsetting” arrangement under MPF Scheme and maternity leave in Policy Address

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on abolishing the "offsetting" arrangement under the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Scheme and maternity leave after attending a radio programme on "The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address" this morning (October 12):

Reporter: Mr Law, can you speak about the legislative timetable for the scrapping of the MPF "offsetting" mechanism? My second question is about maternity leave because the HA has announced yesterday that it would very soon, it seems that it would very soon implement the extended maternity leave following the footstep of the government. Do you hope other statutory bodies to follow the government's footstep as soon as possible?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: We definitely welcome all employers to follow the practice of the government in the civil service, that is to extend the maternity leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks. If they can afford, I would actually ask them if they can do more and the more, the better. So looking at what the response is from various bodies – in fact some employers are doing more than 14 weeks already – we will encourage all employers in Hong Kong to consider before the implementation of the amendment of the legislation on maternity leave if they can do a step very much like what the Hong Kong Government is doing right now. That would be better.

Reporter: How about the legislative timetable in scrapping the MPF "offsetting" mechanism?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: As for the timetable in abolishing the "offsetting" mechanism for MPF and the severance payment and long service payment, we will try our very best to complete the drafting of the legislative amendment. However, because I would consider this as a complicated amendment, we should allow the Legislative Council (LegCo) sufficient time to go over the bill and to deal with some of those controversial parts of the bill. Therefore, if we can't table the bill before the end of 2019 or end of next year, it will be unlikely for the bill to be passed before this term of the Legislative Council. We then have to wait until the election of LegCo members in 2020. Hopefully if we can complete the legislative process before 2021, then it will take another two years for us to implement the whole thing. Then the earliest time for the implementation would be 2023.

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

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 (October 13).

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.

Missing man in Kwai Chung located

A man who went missing in Kwai Chung has been located.

Hou Po-hing, aged 53, went missing after he was last seen in a hostel on Shek Yam Road on October 10 evening. The staff of the hostel made a report to Police yesterday (October 11).

The man was located on Kau Yuk Road, Yuen Long last night. He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

List of environmental impact assessments in third quarter 2018 released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (October 12) released a list of completed and newly commenced statutory environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and non-statutory environmental study for major development projects between July 1 and September 30, 2018.

Updated information related to the EIA Ordinance is available on the EIA Ordinance website at www.epd.gov.hk/eia.

Completed statutory EIAs and non-statutory environmental studies in the third quarter of 2018 include:

A. Statutory EIAs:

1. Intermodal Transfer Terminal – Bonded Vehicular Bridge and Associated Roads (Airport Authority Hong Kong)

2. Proposed Interim Sewage Treatment Plant and Effluent Reuse Facility at Wo Shang Wai, Yuen Long (Profit Point Enterprises Limited)

B. Non-statutory Environmental Studies:

Nil

Newly commenced statutory EIAs and non-statutory environmental studies include:

A. Statutory EIAs:

Nil

B. Non-statutory Environmental Studies:

Nil

Alan Kwan and friends to host jazz

Lecture demonstration series

Local renowned jazz guitarist Alan Kwan will host a lecture demonstration series entitled "Jazz Classics: Let's Listen, Let's Jam!" in November and December.

In a series of six lectures, Kwan will talk about the influences behind and share some interesting stories about various modern jazz masters. Participants can also listen to the legends' classic works and learn about their performing styles and techniques. The lectures will be conducted in Cantonese and supplemented with live demonstrations by Kwan, as well as Patrick Lui (piano), Wong Tak-chung (double bass) and Ted Lo (drums). All of the lectures will be held at 8pm at GR3, 8/F, Backstage, Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Details are as follows:

November 13 (Tuesday)

Topic: "Miles Davis"

Picks of the day: "So What" and "Four"

November 22 (Thursday)

Topic: "John Coltrane"

Picks of the day: "Mr. PC" and "Central Park West"

November 29 (Thursday)

Topic: "Bill Evans"

Picks of the day: "Autumn Leaves" and "Waltz for Debby"

December 6 (Thursday)

Topic: "Nat King Cole"

Picks of the day: "But Beautiful" and "Unforgettable"

December 13 (Thursday)

Topic: "Wes Montgomery"

Picks of the day: "Four on Six" and "West Coast Blues"

December 20 (Thursday)

Topic: "Wayne Shorter"

Picks of the day: "Infant Eyes" and "Footprints"

Alan Kwan studied and developed his career in jazz music in New York. He has performed in New York, Texas, Tokyo and Taiwan with well-known jazz musicians including Dayna Stephens, Fabian Almazan and Paul Bollenback, as well as Grammy award nominee Gene Aitken.

"Jazz Classics: Let's Listen, Let's Jam!" is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Tickets priced at \$80 (for each lecture) are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7321 or visit

www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/music/programs_633.html.