

# Police conduct anti-illegal gambling operation during World Cup 2022

Police conducted a large-scale anti-illegal gambling operation codenamed "CROWBEAK cum WINDSHIELD" during the World Cup 2022 in November and December, resulting in the arrest of 1,104 persons and seizure of betting records valued over \$560 million and over \$10 million cash.

In this operation, Police conducted a total of 188 raids, leading to the arrest of 1,104 persons, including 645 males and 459 females, aged between 15 and 89, for the offences of "engaging in bookmaking", "betting with a bookmaker", "operating illegal gambling establishments" and "dealing with property known or reasonably believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offence" (commonly known as "money laundering"), etc.

Police also seized over \$560 million of betting records, over \$10 million of suspected crime proceeds in cash, 46 sets of computers and three vehicles suspected to represent crime proceeds.

In addition, Police also carried out the following preventive measures and education campaigns with the theme "Stay Away From Online Illegal Soccer Gambling" before and during the World Cup period:

- anti-illegal gambling publicity through online channels, including launching a promotional video ([fb.watch/gH2skuv7IM/](https://www.facebook.com/watch/gH2skuv7IM/));
- broadcast of promotional video and distribution of posters and banners with anti-illegal gambling messages at entertainment premises and strategic locations; and
- working closely with the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau and the Ping Wo Fund to promote anti-illegal gambling messages through various channels.

Police appeal to the public that under the Gambling Ordinance Cap. 148, anyone who bets with a bookmaker commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and nine months' imprisonment on conviction. Anyone who engages in bookmaking, or promotes or facilitates bookmaking, commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$5,000,000 and seven years' imprisonment on conviction. A person would still be liable to the offences even if the gambling website is hosted overseas yet he/she engaged in its operation in Hong Kong.

The general public are reminded not to engage in illegal gambling and money laundering of any sort.

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## **Update on supplies from Mainland**

The Task Force on Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong.

A spokesperson for the TLB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is rising to increase the supplies of fresh food, other daily necessities and manufacturing materials. The current supply of fresh food from the Mainland is stable.

The spokesperson said today (December 20) that Shenzhen operated 49 cargo vessel trips and transported around 3 780 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water yesterday (December 19), equivalent to about 18 910 tonnes of goods, of which around 10 TEUs (about 110 tonnes) were fresh food and around 3 770 TEUs (about 18 800 tonnes) were non-fresh food, according to information from the Mainland authorities.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 1 396 740 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 6 632 410 tonnes of goods, of which around 3 280 TEUs (about 27 700 tonnes) were fresh food and around 1 393 460 TEUs (about 6 604 710 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) arranges for dedicated staff to conduct rapid nucleic acid tests, using nasopharyngeal swabs for specimen collection, for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. A total of 4 151 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted yesterday, among which 28 cases that tested preliminarily positive or indeterminate were found. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The TLB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure both smooth cross-boundary land transport and a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, while reducing the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong.

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## **Assessment Committee for the Funding**

## **Scheme to Support Transitional Housing Projects by Non-government Organisations convenes meeting**

A meeting of the Assessment Committee for the Funding Scheme to Support Transitional Housing Projects by Non-government Organisations, chaired by the Under Secretary for Housing, Mr Victor Tai, was convened this afternoon (December 20).

The Assessment Committee agreed to subsidise the following two transitional housing projects:

(i) Transitional housing development at vacant residential flats in various tenement buildings on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon by the Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon. With a total funding of \$16 million, the project is expected to provide 80 units.

(ii) Transitional housing development "Light Village" at Sheung Cheung Wai, Ping Shan, Yuen Long (project scope includes two sites at northeast of the Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda but excluding the site south of the Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda) by Light Be (Tin Shui Wai Social Housing) Company Limited. With a total funding of \$37.4 million, the project is expected to provide 68 units.

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## **TAC briefed on proposed toll plans for road harbour crossings and preliminary findings and recommendations of Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030**

The following is issued on behalf of the Transport Advisory Committee:

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) was briefed today (December 20) on the proposed toll plans for road harbour crossings (RHCs), and the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030 (RMR2030+ Study).

The Government will take the opportunity of taking over the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) in August 2023 to adjust the tolls of RHCs. The

Government will adopt a two-step strategy, the first step of which is to adjust the toll differential for private cars at the three RHCs and to set a uniform toll for cross-harbour taxis, so as to rationalise the cross-harbour traffic flow. In taking forward the next step, the Government will, within one year after the WHC takeover, holistically review the impacts on traffic in response to the toll adjustment in the first step and the continued resumption of social activities, the operation of the new "HKEToll" to be implemented at various government tunnels progressively in 2023, as well as the community's reception, and then introduce "time-varying tolls" in a timely manner.

The TAC Chairman, Professor Stephen Cheung, said, "Members welcomed the Government's proposal of adopting a two-step strategy, and to first narrow the toll differential for private cars and taxis among the three RHCs, having regard to the feedback collected from consultations and the fact that the traffic volume is still fluctuating. This would encourage motorists to choose the RHC that suits their destinations, which would probably help alleviate traffic congestion caused by detours while maintaining the overall cross-harbour traffic volume at a similar level as present. Members appreciated the need for the two-step strategy and hoped that the Government would collect the latest traffic data within one year to fully assess the overall cross-harbour traffic situation before finalising the details of 'time-varying tolls'. The TAC will continue to advise the Government on this matter."

The RMR2030+ Study seeks to formulate a forward-looking Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint for Hong Kong up to and beyond 2046 with a view to achieving the goals of "driving development", "strengthening connection" and "improving efficiency". The RMR2030+ Study adopts the "infrastructure-led" and "capacity-creating" planning principles to ensure that the planning of strategic railways and major road infrastructure can drive development or even reserve capacity for new development areas, especially the Northern Metropolis, for the long-term development needs of Hong Kong. The Transport and Logistics Bureau together with the Highways Department and the Transport Department are conducting the public consultation exercise of the RMR2030+ Study. The consultation period will end on March 31, 2023.

"Members supported the three strategic railways and three major roads recommended by the Government, including the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link (Hung Shui Kiu – Qianhai), the Central Rail Link, the Tseung Kwan O Line Southern Extension, the Northern Metropolis Highway, the Shatin Bypass and the Tseung Kwan O – Yau Tong Tunnel. The recommendations will meet long-term transport demand and improve the transport network. Members looked forward to the Government's announcement on the Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint for Hong Kong in the fourth quarter of 2023," Professor Cheung added.

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## Missing woman in Tsuen Wan located (2)

A woman who went missing in Tsuen Wan has been located.

Wong Kwan-yu, aged 37, went missing after she was last seen on Tsuen King Circuit on December 15. Her family made a report to Police on the same day.

The woman was located on Lung Mun Road, Castle Peak today (December 20) afternoon. She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.