

[Hongkong Post holiday arrangements for Easter holidays](#)

Hongkong Post today (April 10) announced the postal service arrangements for the Easter holidays from April 19 to 22. No mail delivery and no mail collection will be provided. All post offices will be closed except for the General Post Office and the Airport Post Office. The business hours of these two offices will be from noon to 5pm and 8am to 5pm respectively. General postal services will be provided. Details of services available will be advertised at the respective post offices.

For more information, customers may visit the Hongkong Post website at www.hongkongpost.hk or call the Hongkong Post enquiry hotline at 2921 2222.

[Speech by FS at Cathay Pacific Connecting Hong Kong – Seattle Business Seminar in Seattle \(English only\) \(with photo\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at Cathay Pacific Connecting Hong Kong – Seattle Business Seminar: The Future of Travel and Nurturing Entrepreneurship in Seattle during his visit to the US today (April 9, US West Coast time):

Rupert (Chief Executive Officer of Cathay Pacific, Mr Rupert Hogg), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I am delighted to be here this exciting morning in Seattle, a millennial city virtually surrounded by water, craft beer and coffee.

My thanks to Cathay Pacific Airways for organising today's Connecting Hong Kong-Seattle Business Seminar, and the support of our Economic and Trade Office in San Francisco. Cathay's launch of direct passenger flights brings more than our two cities together. The new service will create connections well beyond our respective airports – connections in business, government, culture and more. And they will, I'm confident, help us all excel.

Our two cities, and the business and people who drive them, believe in

the promise of innovation and technology (I&T). And I'm sure today's panel discussions will kindle expanded co-operation and collaboration between us in the months and years to come.

When it comes to Hong Kong and I&T, our airport is a good place to begin. One of the world's top three passenger hubs, Hong Kong International Airport welcomed almost 75 million passengers last year, connecting them to more than 220 destinations around the world.

As good as those numbers are, they are bound to soar in the coming years, thanks to the Three-runway System now under construction at our airport. The project is equivalent to building a brand-new mega airport. It involves expanding the current Terminal 2 and creating a new Third Runway Passenger Building with a floor area of more than 3 million square feet. That's a lot of space to cover and, with some 100 million passengers a year expected by 2030, it's a lot of people to manage between the arrival and departure gates.

We'll make that expansion happen thanks to I&T, just as we're doing now. I&T are helping the airport create a more convenient and hassle-free journey for its passengers.

It begins with the "HKG My Flight" mobile app, which provides personalised, real-time flight information and boarding alerts. And, thanks to iBeacon and augmented reality technologies, passengers can make their way from kerb to gate easily, as the app translates airport signage into any of nine popular languages.

The mobile app also monitors real-time, car-park space availability and you can book a parking space in advance through this app. No small triumph for a major international airport.

Once paired with MyTAG, an RFID-embedded smart luggage tag, the mobile app also lets passengers know when their luggage is at the baggage claim carousel, putting passengers at ease.

Furthermore, last September, the airport launched the e-Security Gates. Using facial recognition technology, the system verifies identity of departing passengers before they enter the restricted area.

Our Airport Authority is now exploring the use of passengers' facial biometrics as a single token from check-in to boarding.

Technology is humming behind the scenes as well. Hong Kong International Airport's trolley tracking system employs video analytic technology to manage more than 13 000 trolleys. And it's also testing the use of an autonomous tractor to enhance efficiency.

That's only a sampling of how technology is transforming Hong Kong International Airport but that speaks volume of how technology can do us a world of good. Acknowledging that, we are committed to developing Hong Kong

into a world-class smart city. Our Smart City Blueprint, published in 2017, includes more than 70 initiatives covering six major areas, namely Smart Mobility, Smart Economy, Smart Environment, Smart People, Smart Living, and of course, Smart Government. Many of the technologies in use at the airport are some key components underpinning Smart Mobility.

I must also highlight that many of these technologies were developed in collaboration with local companies and R&D institutions based in Hong Kong, which brings me to the second focus of today's seminar – nurturing entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurs flourish in an enabling environment, one that allows them to focus on what matters: building their business. Hong Kong offers that and a great deal more.

Our unique "one country, two systems" arrangement is supported by an established common law legal system backed by the rule of law and reassuring intellectual property protection. Our financial services sector competes with London and New York for global business. And our universities are world class, with four among the top 100 globally.

You can also count on our low and simple tax regime and sophisticated communications and logistics infrastructure. Add it all up and you know why Hong Kong's start-up scene is booming.

At last count, more than 2,600 start-ups called Hong Kong home. That's up 18 per cent over 2017. We are now among the world's five fastest-growing start-up centres.

Internationally celebrated innovation laboratories and accelerator programmes such as the Accenture FinTech Innovation Lab and the SuperCharger fintech accelerator have also established a presence in Hong Kong.

It helps that our investment promotion agency, Invest Hong Kong, runs the StartmeupHK programme, which encourages innovative and scalable start-ups to look to Hong Kong for their business future.

Not surprisingly, venture-capital investment in our start-ups is soaring. Last year, it reached US\$2.3 billion – some 13 times more than that in 2014.

The Hong Kong SAR Government is also a factor, enabling and promoting targeted economic sectors. That certainly includes I&T, a central policy priority.

To encourage more private venture capital funds to invest in Hong Kong start-ups, we have established the US\$250 million Innovation and Technology Venture Fund. It invests with private venture capital funds on a matching basis.

Over and above that, in just the past two years, we have committed over

US\$12 billion to a raft of initiatives and programmes for boosting our I&T sector. They include expanding our focus on infrastructure and R&D, developing talent, supporting I&T companies and institutions and driving re-industrialisation .

At the Hong Kong boundary with the mainland of China, we are now developing the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park on a space some four times the current size of our Science Park, that means over 13 million square feet. It's expected that the first-batch land parcels will be made available for construction by 2021.

The new Park will take full advantage of its proximity to the supply chain, manufacturing capabilities and technology talent pool across the boundary in Shenzhen.

R&D is also a priority. And we have committed about US\$1.2 billion to establish two innovative clusters at our Science Park. Health@InnoHK will target healthcare technology, while AIR@InnoHK will specialise in artificial intelligence and robotics.

The two R&D centres will give Hong Kong an edge – a powerful selling point – in attracting top international universities, research institutions and technology companies.

And to ensure that innovative proposals stand a better chance of winning government contracts, we are introducing a pro-innovation government procurement policy.

There's more government incentives in our enhanced tax deductions – offering companies deductions of up to 300 per cent for their R&D expenditure.

To ensure a continuing flow of talent, our Technology Talent Admission Scheme , established last year, expedites the admission of individuals with R&D expertise to Hong Kong.

Furthermore, our Talent List system provides fast-track approvals for I&T experts, data scientists and cyber-security specialists, financial technology experts and others with the specialisations we need to realise the boundless opportunities for Hong Kong to seize.

That certainly includes the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, a cluster city development embracing Hong Kong, Macao and nine flourishing cities in Pearl River Delta in Guangdong. Together, the Greater Bay Area presents an enormous market, with a population of more than 70 million consumers and a collective GDP of US\$1.6 trillion.

The Bay Area's Outline Development Plan released in February looks to Hong Kong to play a lead role in several sectors, including financial services, trade, transport – and that includes aviation of course – as well as I&T.

Indeed, the Bay Area is expected to rise as an international I&T hub, connecting the region's upstream, midstream and downstream sectors. And that, ladies and gentlemen, can expand the opportunities for Hong Kong – and the companies that work with us.

On that note of co-operation and boundless promise, I think it's time for this morning's panellists – high-profile business and non-governmental players – to give us their considered take on travel, entrepreneurship, I&T and the future of the two world's great cities: Seattle and Hong Kong.

I wish you all a rewarding seminar and a very enjoyable direct flight to Hong Kong in your future.

Thank you.



[Government welcomes pop concert organiser's co-operation in implementing measures to combat ticket scalping](#)

Regarding media enquiries today (April 9) on the ticketing sales of the "#FOLLOWMi Sammi Cheng World Tour – Hong Kong 2019" concert (Sammi Cheng's concert) through the URBTIX, a spokesman for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) gave the following response:

The Government has implemented a series of measures to facilitate the orderly and fair sales of tickets through official channels. Before the ticket sales of large-scale or very popular events commence, the URBTIX proactively discusses with organisers on feasible ticketing arrangements that suit the needs of individual programmes. The Government, with the consent and co-operation of organisers, has introduced two measures for very popular events held at the Hong Kong Coliseum (HKC) since the fourth quarter of 2018:

1. No counter booking at the URBTIX outlets on the first day or throughout the whole period of ticket sale. Only Internet, mobile app and credit card telephone bookings are available; and
2. Ticket collection will be delayed. People who purchased tickets will have to collect their tickets from the 14th day before and up to the day of the respective performances with the same credit card that they used for ticket purchase.

The Government welcomes the organiser of Sammi Cheng's concert to adopt the above measures, and is pleased to note the organiser has offered a higher proportion of tickets to the public so that more citizens could have chances to purchase tickets through official channels.

After reviewing the proportion of public sale and consignment tickets for paid-admission events at the HKC and the Queen Elizabeth Stadium, the Government has formulated a proposal to lower the ceiling ratio of consignment tickets gradually. To balance the views of the public and the performing industry, the Government announces the new measure of lowering the overall ceiling proportion of consignment tickets from 80 per cent to 70 per cent for events with four or more performances. That means the lower limit of the proportion of tickets for public sale will be increased to 30 per cent. The related measure is planned to be implemented from July 2019, applicable to booking applications received from July 2019 onwards, and not limited to paid admission events using URBTIX for sale of tickets. The Government will continue to encourage event organisers to increase the ratio of public sale tickets so that more tickets of this kind will be available. The LCSD has sent a letter to the Performing Industry Association (Hong Kong) Limited informing the industry of the related proposal and will arrange to meet with industry representatives to brief them the details.

Besides, to ensure a smooth operation of the URBTIX system and prevent online ticket purchases by bots, LCSD has also been enhancing the system functions, such as introducing multi-layered setting and programmes to prevent purchases by bots, increasing the number of servers and the amount of bandwidth to strengthen the system processing ability and improve network traffic. In fact, the URBTIX system has been operating normally and selling tickets for the Sammi Cheng's concert continuously since the ticket sales started today. Around 70 000 tickets from 13 shows were available for sale today and they were almost sold out by 3pm. Nearly 40 per cent of the tickets were sold in the first hour (10am to 11am) and nearly 90 per cent were sold

at 1pm. Online sale of tickets has been smooth in general throughout the day.

[Transcript of remarks by SCMA at media session on Register of Electors case](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip, at a media session today (April 9) at the Central Government Offices on the latest situation of the search by the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) for a Register of Electors relating to the 2016 Legislative Council (LegCo) General Election:

Reporter: Mr Secretary, over the weekend you called this incident unacceptable, so what steps are being taken now in going forward to address the situation? This is the second time electors' data have been lost in recent years. Do you have confidence in the leadership of the REO?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: As I said, this incident is of course unacceptable so we have taken proactive ways to handle the matter and we will handle it in a very serious manner. So the follow-up actions we are going to do – as I said – the REO has already reported the incident to the Police, and also notified the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data. The REO will also notify the affected electors about the incident and issue letters to government departments and organisations which have frequent contact or handling of personal data so that they are aware of the incident. Also, the REO will review the voter registration information of about 8,000 affected electors and if there were unusual changes to their registrations, the REO will take proactive steps to contact the concerned electors, verify the registrations and follow up as appropriate.

The REO will compile and submit a full report to my bureau and also to the Electoral Affairs Commission on the incident. If, arising from the investigation, there are deliberate cover-up or human errors involved, we would act in strict accordance with the established disciplinary mechanism. Apart from that, the Electoral Affairs Commission will also conduct an investigation on the incident and try to locate problems and loopholes related to the electoral arrangements and also the management within the REO, and would suggest improvement measures. We would take forward these various steps earnestly and also in a very serious manner.

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

Third-term Commission on Poverty convenes fifth meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the fifth meeting of the third-term Commission on Poverty (CoP) this afternoon (April 9).

At the meeting, members noted the implementation progress of various assistance programmes and the financial position of the Community Care Fund (CCF). The CoP endorsed the follow-up arrangements for an existing CCF assistance programme, the extension of two programmes and the introduction of new drugs and expansion of coverage for a medical device for three Medical Assistance Programmes as well as their revised budget proposals. Details are as follows:

Follow-up arrangements for an existing assistance programme

(1) The CoP endorsed the follow-up arrangements for the purchase of new devices by students receiving half grant from the School Textbook Assistance Scheme (half grant students) upon changing schools under the Provision of Subsidy to Needy Primary and Secondary Students for Purchasing Mobile Computer Devices to Facilitate the Practice of e-Learning Programme. Under normal circumstances, the maximum subsidy provided to half grant student beneficiaries only covers half of the cost of the device. Their parents would have to pay for the cost difference. The CoP agreed that if a student changes to a school where a different device is used and needs to apply for an extra subsidy to acquire a new device, the CCF should pay for the full cost of the new device not exceeding the subsidy limit in order to allow the student to continue e-learning effectively. It is estimated that about 1 000 half grant students would benefit. The approved total disbursement for the Programme should be sufficient to cover related expenses and no additional funding is required for the above arrangement;

Extension of two existing assistance programmes

(2) The CoP endorsed the extension of the Providing hostel subsidy for needy undergraduate students programme for two more years covering the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years to continue supporting financially needy undergraduate students to meet hostel expenses. The extension is expected to benefit around 11 000 person-times. The CoP also endorsed an additional funding provision of \$68.4 million and the revised total provision is \$263.1 million.

(3) The CoP agreed to the extension of increasing the academic expenses grant under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students Programme for two more years covering the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years to continue providing an additional academic expenses grant for financially

needy students pursuing full-time locally accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes. The extension is estimated to benefit around 29 000 person-times. The CoP also endorsed an additional funding provision of \$56.92 million and the revised total provision is \$233.87 million;

Agreement to approve the introduction of new drugs and expansion of coverage for a medical device for three Medical Assistance Programmes as well as their revised budget proposals

(4) The CoP approved to include a specified self-financed cancer drug (Ribociclib) under the First Phase Programme of Medical Assistance Programmes (First Phase Programme) starting from the third quarter of 2019. In addition, the Hospital Authority (HA) will also introduce a new indication for an existing drug, enzalutamide, under the First Phase Programme. It is expected that the introduction of the new drug and the new indication could benefit around 140 patients in the first 12 months after implementation. In addition, the HA will also reposition pemetrexed, a specified self-financed cancer drug currently supported by the First Phase Programme, to the Special Drugs of the HA Drug Formulary with effect from April 13, 2019. In view of the addition of a new drug, the inclusion of a new indication for an existing drug and the implementation of the enhancement measures for the means test mechanism, the CoP also endorsed the revised budget for the eighth year of the First Phase Programme (from April 2019 to March 2020) with an additional funding provision of \$105.627 million. The revised total provision is \$353.719 million.

(5) The CoP endorsed to include a new drug (Tafamidis) for treating Transthyretin Familial Amyloid Polyneuropathy under the coverage of the Subsidy for Eligible Patients to Purchase Ultra-expensive Drugs (Including Those for Treating Uncommon Disorders) Programme starting from the third quarter of 2019. The drug is indicated for the treatment of transthyretin amyloidosis in adult patients with stage 1 symptomatic polyneuropathy to delay peripheral neurologic impairment. It is expected that the introduction of the new drug could benefit around six patients in the first 12 months after implementation. In view of the addition of a new drug, the CoP also endorsed the revised budget for the second year of the programme (from April 2019 to March 2020) with additional funding of \$7.62 million. The revised total provision is \$151.356 million; and

(6) The CoP endorsed to extend the coverage of the existing medical device Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation under the Subsidy for Eligible Patients of HA to Purchase Specified Implantable Medical Devices for Interventional Procedures Programme to cover "Valve in Valve", which is indicated for patients with severe bioprosthetic aortic valves malfunction and after detailed heart team assessment, considered to be inoperable or having high surgical risks, and start receiving applications from the third quarter of 2019. The extension is expected to benefit about 10 patients in the first 12 months upon implementation. In view of the extended coverage and the implementation of the enhancement measures for the means test mechanism, the CoP also endorsed the revised budget for the second year of the programme (from April 2019 to March 2020) with additional funding of \$10.067 million.

The revised total provision is \$32.244 million.

In addition, members also noted the final report of the evaluation study on the CCF's Dementia Community Support Scheme conducted by the Sau Po Centre on Ageing of the University of Hong Kong which was commissioned by the Food and Health Bureau. In view of the positive impact of the Scheme, the Government has incorporated the Scheme into its regular assistance programmes since February 2019 and will extend the services to all 41 District Elderly Community Centres in the territory in May 2019. The Government will make reference to the recommendations of the final evaluation report and continue to monitor the actual operations through the Task Force of the Scheme with a view to further refining the services.

At the meeting, the Hong Kong Jockey Club briefed members on the KeySteps@JC project. KeySteps@JC is a five-year project supported by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. It aims to build an integrated model involving medical, education and welfare sectors as well as to provide critical support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to build stronger foundations. Members gave views on KeySteps@JC's scope, project model and expected outcome. They also noted the plan of putting in place a cross-disciplinary one-stop web portal and child databank before the end of the five-year project, where big data and evidence-based research can be used to contribute to future policy formulation.

At the meeting, CoP also took note of the update on work progress of the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund). Members noted that the SIE Fund is making preparations for its major work in 2019, including engaging a new batch of intermediaries for the three priority areas of work (innovative programmes, capacity building and research), establishing a "gerontechnology platform" and promoting pilot development of the "Pay-for-Success" model in Hong Kong.

In addition, the Office of the Government Economist also briefed members on an analysis on youth poverty in 2017 under the poverty line framework which focused on the poverty situation of young people aged between 18 and 29 years old. After recurrent cash policy intervention, some 86 000 young people were in poor households in 2017 (accounting for less than 10 per cent of the overall poor population). The respective poverty rate was 8.8 per cent, much lower than the 14.7 per cent of the overall population. The presentation of the analysis has been uploaded to the CoP's dedicated website (www.povertyrelief.gov.hk).