

Release of interim report of CoI into Construction Works at and near Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project

The following is issued on behalf of the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project:

The Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project submitted its interim report to the Chief Executive on February 25, 2019, on its findings and recommendations on matters covered by its original terms of reference.

The Commission notes that today (March 26) the Government has published the interim report in redacted form on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/coi-hh/).

At the invitation of the Government, the redacted interim report has been uploaded to the Commission's website (www.coi-hh.gov.hk/eng/).

Following the Chief Executive in Council's earlier approval for an expansion of its terms of reference on February 19, 2019, the Commission will endeavour to accomplish its tasks within the given time frame.

Release of Interim Report of Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, received on February 25 the Interim Report submitted by the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project (the Commission). The Government released today (March 26) the Interim Report in redacted form.

In commenting on the release of the Interim Report, Mrs Lam again expressed her deep appreciation to the Chairman and Commissioner of the Commission, Mr Michael Hartmann, and the Commissioner of the Commission, Professor Peter Hansford, for their dedicated work.

"I have personally studied the Commission's Interim Report. The Commission's determinations have understandably assuaged our concern during the past few months about the structural safety of the relevant construction works. Nevertheless, as the Commission has pointed out, the entire episode has not yet drawn to a close. There are a number of ongoing collateral investigations. Moreover, there remain extensive public concerns. We consider it appropriate to exercise particular caution. I have therefore accepted the advice of the Secretary for Transport and Housing and his professional colleagues, including the advice of the Expert Adviser Team comprising three retired senior government officers, that the MTR Corporation Limited should continue to implement its proposed Holistic Assessment Strategy for the Hung Hom Station Extension, with a view to completing it as expeditiously as possible," Mrs Lam said.

The Government's redaction of parts of the Interim Report is based on legal consideration to avoid any prejudice (actual or perceived) to any ongoing criminal investigations and any potential prosecutions of any criminal offences in the future (if so decided to be justified after the relevant investigations). The Government understands that the public would like to see the Interim Report in full, and the redactions to the Interim Report have been kept to a minimum as permitted by law. The Government will release the Interim Report in full after the relevant criminal investigations and criminal prosecutions (if any) have been concluded. This is to safeguard the fairness of the criminal justice system, in accordance with the public interest.

The Interim Report in redacted form has been uploaded to the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/coi-hh/).

Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers submits report to EDB

The Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers submitted its report to the Education Bureau (EDB) today (March 26).

The Task Force has reviewed the current state of play regarding teachers' professional development. After extensive consultation with stakeholders, an in-depth study and much deliberation over the past year or so, the Task Force has made a total of 18 recommendations, which include the establishment of a Professional Ladder for Teachers to be further steered by

the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP), implementation of the "all-graduate teaching force" policy, enhancement of the manpower arrangements for senior teachers and vice-principals, enhancement of the ranking arrangements of vice-principals and principals of primary schools and principals of secondary schools, and establishment of commendation schemes at multiple levels to acknowledge teachers with outstanding performance. Of them, the Government, having regard to the views of the Task Force, has earlier undertaken to implement the all-graduate teaching force policy in public sector primary and secondary schools in one go in the 2019/20 school year.

The Chairman of the Task Force, Dr Carrie Willis said, "The Task Force envisages that establishing the Professional Ladder for Teachers in Hong Kong will deepen the positive impact of the policies on teachers' professional development that have been implemented so far, open up new directions for promoting the professional growth and development of teachers, enhance public recognition of the teaching profession and raise its professional status."

She added that the Task Force recommended a series of multi-faceted strategies aimed at supporting the establishment of the Professional Ladder for Teachers, which she believed would vigorously steer those in the teaching profession towards continuously renewing their professional knowledge and skills, upholding their professional values and conduct and scaling up their professional capacity and management effectiveness, and ultimately provide students with a quality education to better prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Having received the report, the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung said, "Since it was set up in November 2017, the Task Force has actively engaged different stakeholders in thoroughly reviewing the professional development of teachers in Hong Kong. The report has far-reaching influence on the promotion of professional development of our teachers and enhancement of their professionalism and professional status. I deeply thank the Chairman, Dr Carrie Willis, and all the members of the Task Force, for their hard work and contribution to the review. The Education Bureau will study the report carefully and put the feasible recommendations into practice."

The full review report can be viewed on the EDB's website (www.edb.gov.hk/en/teacher/report-tftpd/index.html).

Exchange Fund Bills Tender Results

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Exchange Fund Bills Tender Results

Tender date : March 26, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q1913
Issue date : March 27, 2019
Maturity date : June 26, 2019
Amount applied : HK\$102,050 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$43,056 MN
Average yield accepted : 1.60 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 1.62 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 56 PCT
Average tender yield : 1.65 PCT

Tender date : March 26, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H1942
Issue date : March 27, 2019
Maturity date : September 25, 2019
Amount applied : HK\$47,980 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$11,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 1.56 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 1.59 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 19 PCT
Average tender yield : 1.68 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning April 1:

Tender date : April 2, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q1914
Issue date : April 3, 2019
Maturity date : July 3, 2019
Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$56,252 MN

Tender date : April 2, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H1943
Issue date : April 3, 2019
Maturity date : October 2, 2019
Tenor : 182 Days

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (March 26):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, is the Government likely to drop the tunnel toll motion and any obstacles that the officials and the administration are encountering on this matter now? Secondly, an official from Taiwan did say it may issue a travel alert to Hong Kong if Hong Kong goes ahead with the extradition law amendment. Would you take it as a warning in a legitimate way to even change the plans that the Government is proposing now?

The Chief Executive: As far as the Government's position on the rationalisation of cross-harbour traffic through the three tunnels, since my announcement in the Policy Address last October, for over four, five months, the Secretary for Transport and Housing and his colleagues have made huge efforts to explain, to clarify, to address concerns and also lately to introduce an additional improvement by setting up the smart traffic fund. At the end of day, if members of the Legislative Council for various reasons could not support the current proposal, then what we could do as the Government is to respect that particular decision. But what I'm saying is that should not be interpreted as a means of Government weakening her governance because this is a very practical way of taking forward things that have been bothering people for a long time. As to what will then happen with the traffic congestion in Hong Kong, you have to wait a while. We will find an opportunity, an early opportunity, to give a detailed account of the present situation and the future measures that we will adopt to address this traffic congestion problem.

As far as the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance amendments are concerned, I do not wish to comment on any particular comments made by external parties, except to say that we are doing it really to ensure public safety and to ensure justice is done. So, we will continue with our work. The Secretary for Security has run round various chambers and organisations to listen to their views and concerns. When we are in a position to announce what then will happen, as far as the legislative amendments are concerned, we will do so in an early opportunity.

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