

Government to move motion on implementing toll adjustment proposals for traffic rationalisation among the three road harbour crossings

The Government announced today (January 3) that it will move a motion (see Annex) at the meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on January 23, 2019 relating to the proposal to adjust the tolls of private cars, taxis and motorcycles for using the three road harbour crossings with effect from January 1, 2020 (Toll Adjustment Proposal).

Since the Chief Executive's announcement of the Toll Adjustment Proposal in the 2018 Policy Address, the Government has introduced it to the community through various channels. In addition to attending meetings of LegCo's Panel on Transport and a number of district councils, the government officials concerned have also met with various stakeholder groups. In parallel, the Government has provided the general public with information relating to the Toll Adjustment Proposal, including the study report and the projected effects of traffic re-distribution for various tolling scenarios, through blog posts, social media and the Transport Department's dedicated website (www.td.gov.hk/en/benefit_traffic_dist_3hc/index.html).

"There is general consensus on the direction to rationalise traffic among the three road harbour crossings, and that the Proposal received support from many stakeholders including academics, professional institutions, and the taxi and transport trades," a Government spokesperson said.

The implementation of the Toll Adjustment Proposal is expected to bring about the following four benefits:

- (1) The Proposal can effectively alleviate cross-harbour congestion, shorten the aggregated peak-hour traffic queues at the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (CHT) and the Eastern Harbour Crossing (EHC) from 10 per cent to over 40 per cent, and reduce travelling time for crossing the tunnels by as much as 13 minutes;
- (2) The Proposal can release 10 traffic junctions which are currently obstructed by traffic queues on the connecting roads of the CHT and EHC, reducing the impact on passengers of non-harbour-crossing public transport vehicles and other vehicles;
- (3) The Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) Toll Compensation Scheme can freeze the WHC tolls. From 2020 until the expiry of the WHC franchise, drivers of private cars and motorcycles as well as taxi passengers would be relieved from the pressure of WHC toll increases;

(4) The Proposal will bring benefits to society as a whole. Apart from bringing convenience to drivers, the Proposal can save 19,400 hours of daily commuting time of citizens using public transport, generate about \$800 million of social cost savings per year, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles by about 3,800 tonnes per year, which is equivalent to the effect of air quality improvement by planting 160,000 trees.

"Since the implementation of the Toll Adjustment Proposal involves a legislative exercise and a funding application, as well as finalising a formal agreement with the WHC franchisee, we need to affirm the support of LegCo before taking forward these follow-up tasks. By moving this motion, we aim to facilitate a thorough discussion of the Proposal by LegCo, and hope that Members will support the motion for the overall interest of Hong Kong," the spokesperson added.

After obtaining LegCo's support for the motion, the Government will shortly introduce subsidiary legislation into LegCo to amend the toll levels of the CHT and EHC, and submit a funding application to the LegCo Finance Committee for the WHC Toll Compensation Scheme. At the same time, the Government will work with the WHC franchisee on the detailed agreement.

DH investigates suspected illegal possession of unregistered proprietary Chinese medicine (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) is today (January 3) investigating a shop at Plover Cove Garden Arcade in Tai Po for suspected illegal possession of an unregistered proprietary Chinese medicine (pCm) called Namman Muay Cream.

Acting upon intelligence, the DH conducted a field investigation and seized the above unregistered pCm. Preliminary investigations revealed that the product concerned had been imported from Thailand for local sale. Its label claimed that the product is to be used for relieving muscle pain. According to the record of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong (CMCHK), the English name of the above product is the same as that of another locally registered pCm (registration number: HKC-16527). However, the product concerned is not a registered pCm in Hong Kong.

"Unregistered pCms may pose threats to public health as their safety, quality and efficacy are not proven. Our investigation is ongoing. So far, no related adverse reports have been received," a spokesman for the DH said.

According to section 119 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap 549), no person shall sell, import or possess any pCm unless it is registered. The

maximum penalty is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment. The DH will seek advice from the Department of Justice on prosecution matters upon completion of the investigation. In addition, the DH will also consider referring the case to the relevant law enforcement agency to follow up on other suspected offences.

Members of the public who have purchased the above unregistered pCm should stop using it immediately. Those who have used it and are feeling unwell should seek advice from healthcare professionals. People who have the product can submit it to the DH's Chinese Medicine Division on 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong, during office hours for disposal.

"The public should not buy or use products of doubtful composition or from unknown sources. All registered pCms should carry a Hong Kong registration number on the product label in the format of 'HKC-XXXXX' or 'HKP-XXXXX'. The list of registered pCms is published on the website of the CMCHK (www.cmchk.org.hk/pcm/eng/#main_listpcm.htm) for public reference," the spokesman added.



[SED deeply saddened by death of Bishop Michael Yeung](#)

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, today (January 3) expressed his profound sadness at the passing of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, the Most Reverend Michael Yeung.

Mr Yeung said that the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong is not only a religious body but also an important organisation providing social services in Hong Kong. On the education front, there are some 250 Catholic schools in Hong Kong. Having been led by Bishop Yeung, Catholic schools are determined to carry on the contribution of the Catholic church to education and pass on the core values of truth, justice, love, life and family to young people to

prepare them properly for their life and future responsibilities.

"Over the years, Bishop Yeung has devoted himself to serving the disadvantaged and made significant contributions in building up a caring community. In his Christmas greetings last month, he also reminded us of being lovingly attentive to the needs of others, especially the most vulnerable."

Mr Yeung said he believed that while Bishop Yeung's soul, through the mercy of God, will rest in peace, his spirit of service will continue to lead Catholics and others to take the Hong Kong community forward.

CE expresses sorrow over passing of Bishop Michael Yeung

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (January 3) expressed deep sorrow over the passing of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, the Most Reverend Michael Yeung.

"Bishop Yeung devoted all his life to the Catholic Diocese. Since taking over as the Bishop in 2017, he had led the Diocese to make significant contributions to Hong Kong in areas including medical care, education and welfare services, and guided the Hong Kong Catholics to actively care for and serve the community.

"I had known Bishop Yeung, who took charge of the welfare services of Caritas Hong Kong, since my tenure as the Director of Social Welfare. I was greatly inspired by his benevolence and concern for people from all walks of life, especially the young people and the disadvantaged.

"Since becoming the Chief Executive, I had met Bishop Yeung several times to listen to his concerns about society and attended together with him the launch ceremony of the new campus of my alma mater, St Francis' Canossian College, at the beginning of last month.

"I am deeply saddened by the passing of Bishop Yeung. On behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Bishop Yeung's family and the Catholic community," Mrs Lam said.

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected pangolin scales (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 440 kilograms of suspected pangolin scales with an estimated market value of about \$2.2 million at Hong Kong International Airport, To Kwa Wan and Yau Tong from December 29 to today (January 3).

Customs officers inspected 12 express air parcels declared as containing mascara originating from Malaysia on December 29 and December 30. About 240kg of suspected pangolin scales were found inside.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers arrested one man and three women, aged 43 to 63, in To Kwa Wan yesterday (January 2) and today. About 200kg of suspected pangolin scales were further seized in the district and Yau Tong.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting an endangered species without a licence is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

