

# Government's response to MTRCL's progress on holistic assessment strategy and verification works for Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project

Regarding the progress on the holistic assessment strategy and the verification works for the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) Project announced by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) today (December 24), a spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) responded as follows:

The Government noted that the MTRCL was continuing with its work of the second stage of the holistic assessment strategy and would consolidate test results found in the first two stages and proceed to the third stage as soon as possible to conduct a detailed structural analysis on the works for the Hung Hom Station Extension so as to ascertain if the overall condition of the works is acceptable and determine if it is necessary to conduct strengthening works.

We noted that the MTRCL was gravely concerned and disappointed over the works quality of the main contractor, Leighton Contractors (Asia) Limited (Leighton), considering the deviations of the first batch of coupler connections opened up from the installation requirements specified by the coupler's supplier. According to the Entrustment Agreement signed between the MTRCL and the Government for taking forward the SCL Project, the MTRCL was entrusted by the Government as the project manager to design, construct and commissioning the SCL Project. The MTRCL shall warrant that the entrusted works shall achieve a professional and reasonable level of skill and supervision, including the assurance of quality of works up to the required standards. At the same time, according to the Entrustment Agreement, contractors, including Leighton, having entered into contracts with the MTRCL for the works relating to the SCL Project, have also entered into collateral deeds with the Government. The collateral deed mainly stipulates the legal liabilities and rights between the Government and the contractors in the event of contractors breaching the provisions in works contracts. Subject to the inspection results of the Hung Hom Station Extension works, the Government reserves all the rights to pursue further actions against the MTRCL and the related contractors.

Regarding the installation requirements of a coupler, the Government reiterates that, according to the information from the couplers' supplier, proper installation requirements of a coupler are:

- (1) there shall be a maximum of two full threads exposed; and

(2) the embedded length of the threaded steel bar inside the coupler shall be at least 40 millimetres.

The MTRCL uses the phased array ultrasonic examination to verify the embedded length of the threaded steel bar inside the coupler. As the allowable measurement tolerance of the test is 3 millimetres, equipment readings below 37 millimetres are regarded as failing to meet the installation requirements. The Government considers that in the Hung Hom Station Extension works under the SCL Project, the Contractor should install couplers in accordance with the above requirements.

The MTRCL stated today that workmanship and structural safety are two different concepts, and quoted the information from the coupler supplier to explain that the provision of six full threads of coupler connections could provide the design strength.

The Government considers that when conducting the structural analysis under the third stage of the holistic assessment, the MTRCL should use the information obtained from the first two stages such as as-constructed details of the platforms and quality of works, and take into account the technical data provided by the coupler supplier, so as to ascertain the structural safety of the platforms and determine if it is necessary to conduct strengthening works. Throughout the process, the relevant Government departments will carry out stringent checking.

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## **Missing man in Yau Ma Tei located**

A man who went missing in Yau Ma Tei has been located.

Chiu Yick-biu, aged 60, went missing after he left an elderly home on Reclamation Street on December 16 afternoon. Staff of the elderly home made a report to Police on the same day.

The man was located at Caritas Medical Centre on December 20 afternoon. He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

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## **Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine (with photo)**

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (December 23) seized about 2.1 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$2.4 million at the

Hong Kong International Airport.

A female passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Johannesburg, South Africa last night. During customs clearance, a batch of suspected cocaine was found inside her hand-carried handbag and the false compartments in her shoes' bottom parts.

The woman, aged 43, was then arrested. Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



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## [CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 24) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection.

The 18-day-old baby boy, with good past health, has presented with poor feeding and dullness since December 18. He was admitted to Matilda International Hospital on December 22 and was transferred to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) on the same day. He was subsequently transferred to the Intensive Care Unit of Cardiothoracic Surgery in QMH for further management on December 23. He is now in a critical condition.

His nasopharyngeal aspirate tested positive for influenza A virus upon

laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with severe pneumonia and respiratory failure.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had not yet received seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) for the current season and had no travel history in the incubation period. His parents had upper respiratory tract infection symptoms recently and are in a stable condition. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

"Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, are recommended to receive SIV for personal protection," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As it is already December and Hong Kong will soon enter the winter influenza season, eligible persons are urged to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies. Vaccination among family members is key to protecting their personal and family's health."

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).

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# Suicide case in Wan Chai reclassified as murder

Police today (December 24) reclassified a suicide case happened in Wan Chai on December 20 as murder.

At about 10.48 am that day, Police received a report from a hotel staff that a man and a woman were found collapsed inside a hotel room on Wan Chai Road.

Police sped to the scene and located the duo lying unconscious on bed. The 62-year-old man was certified dead at scene while the 59-year-old woman was rushed to Ruttonjee Hospital for medical treatment in semi-conscious state and was later sent to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital.

Upon further investigation, Police believed that the man had had some drinks with suspected drug inside. The woman had attempted to commit suicide by taking pills.

The woman was arrested today for murder and holding charged with one count of murder. The case will be mentioned in Eastern Magistrates' Courts on December 26.

Post-mortem examinations have been conducted but the cause of death is to be ascertained pending toxicological examinations.

Active investigation by the District Crime Squad of Wan Chai District is underway.