

STH's opening remarks at press briefing on preparation work of Government for commissioning of HZMB

Following is the opening remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a press briefing today (October 19) on preparation work of the Government for the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge:

Good afternoon. I am pleased to announce that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will commence operation on October 24 at 9am. The opening ceremony will be held one day earlier on October 23 at 9am at the passenger clearance building of the Zhuhai Port.

The Bridge is not just a mega transport infrastructure jointly built by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. The Central Authorities also attach great importance to it. With the unfailing efforts of the engineering teams, and as demonstrated by the outcome of the joint trial last month, the Bridge is now ready for commissioning.

The Hong Kong Port of the Bridge is situated in Lantau and next to the Hong Kong International Airport. It will serve as the focal point between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, thereby further consolidating Hong Kong's position as a regional aviation and logistics hub.

The Bridge, apart from being a new land-based boundary crossing between Hong Kong and Guangdong, is also the first land transport link between Hong Kong and Macao.

With the Bridge, the travelling time between Hong Kong and the Western Pearl River Delta region will be shortened significantly, thereby bringing the Western Pearl River Delta region within three hours' drive from Hong Kong. For instance, the travelling time between Zhuhai and Hong Kong International Airport is about four hours at present. It will be shortened to roughly about 45 minutes. Similarly, the travelling time between Zhuhai and Kwai Tsing Container Terminal will be shortened from 3.5 hours to only 75 minutes.

It is envisaged that the collaboration between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in terms of trade, finance, logistics and tourism will be strengthened. Hong Kong will assume a more proactive role in the development of the Greater Bay Area.

Similar to many other infrastructures, the utilisation rate of the Bridge will increase gradually given more time and experience.

In light of the development of the Greater Bay Area, the Bridge will be

instrumental in enhancing the flow of people, goods and capital, as well as technological collaboration within the region. The Government will closely monitor the utilisation rate of the Bridge and actively explore measures in conjunction with our counterparts with a view to optimising the utilisation and benefits of the Bridge.

The mission to construct the Bridge has been accomplished. Our next mission is to make the best use of the topside development at the artificial island and to capitalise on the strategic advantage of the Bridge.

The Policy Address 2018 has proposed to enhance the function of Lantau as a "Double Gateway" connecting Hong Kong to the world and other cities in the Greater Bay Area. We have invited the Airport Authority Hong Kong to study and submit a proposal for the topside development at Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities Island. The Government has previously conducted public consultation on the topside development and has received preliminary ideas and direction.

With a view to building an Aerotropolis as a next step, we will progressively take forward the topside development as well as the airport and aviation-related businesses, so as to create synergy with the operation and development of the Hong Kong International Airport. All these are part and parcel of the Lantau Tomorrow Vision. Thank you.

[Tung Chung Swimming Pool temporarily closed](#)

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (October 19) that Tung Chung Swimming Pool in Islands District has been temporarily closed for cleaning and superchlorination following the discovery of a small amount of faeces in the pool.

It will be reopened at 9.45pm today.

The department appeals to swimmers to be considerate and to keep the swimming pools clean. They are advised not to swim after a full meal and should use the toilet facilities if necessary before swimming.

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (October 18) seized about 700 grams of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$850,000 at Hong Kong International Airport.

A male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Sao Paulo, Brazil via Dubai, the United Arab Emirates yesterday afternoon. Customs officers intercepted the passenger, who was about to depart for Siem Reap, Cambodia for inspection. Upon examination, the batch of suspected cocaine was found concealed inside the metal frame of the suitcase he was carrying. The man was then arrested.

The arrested man, aged 35, has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (October 20).

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty 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 its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Relief fund for farmers and fishermen](#)

affected by Super Typhoon Mangkhut being issued

Local farmers and fishermen who suffered serious losses caused by Super Typhoon Mangkhut and registered with and are eligible for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) assistance from an emergency relief fund can successively receive funds after being notified by the department.

An AFCD spokesman said today (October 19) that an appropriate amount of the relief fund would be released for the affected farmers and fishermen according to established criteria. During the application period, the department received applications from 1 649 farmers, 478 marine fish farmers and 54 pond fish farmers. As at today, the department has granted a total of \$760,422.50 to 147 farmers, and \$1.54 million and \$262,405.30 to 99 marine fish farmers and 25 pond fish farmers respectively. Due to the large number of applications, the department has been stepping up its efforts to process the remaining cases, in order to provide assistance to eligible local farmers and fishermen as soon as possible.

Moreover, farmers who require further assistance can apply for farming loans at the office of the AFCD's Agricultural Extension Section at 5/F, Yuen Long Government Offices, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, or call 2476 2424 for enquiries.

Capture fishermen can still apply for the relief fund on or before October 31 at 8/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, or the Fisheries Liaison Assistants' Offices at the Wholesale Fish Markets of the Fish Marketing Organization and the Cheung Chau Liaison Office, or call 2150 7099 for enquiries. Fish farmers and fishermen who need further assistance can apply for fisheries loans at the above offices, or call 2150 7095 for enquiries.

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (October 19) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From October 12 to 18, the CHP recorded eight imported DF cases. The patients had been to Mainland China (five cases, including two epidemiologically linked cases), India (one case), Thailand (one case) and

Vietnam (one case) during the incubation period.

A spokesman for the DH advised members of the public that according to the health authority of Guangdong, increasing numbers of local DF cases have been recorded in Guangdong recently, from 204 local cases in August to 948 local cases in September. The health authority of Guangdong announced that Guangdong has entered the peak season of DF and the number of local cases recorded was higher than the average in the same period from 2015 to 2017. Members of the public are reminded to adopt personal protective measures against mosquitoes to prevent mosquito-borne diseases such as DF when visiting Guangdong.

As of yesterday (October 18), 128 cases had been confirmed this year, of which 29 were local cases and 99 were imported cases. The imported cases were mainly imported from Thailand (31), Mainland China (19) and the Philippines (16).

DF remains endemic in some areas of Asia and beyond. The latest figures for 2018 revealed that 66 372 cases had been recorded in Thailand, 2 252 in Singapore (since December 31, 2017) and 145 in Japan. In Taiwan, 153 local cases have been recorded to date in 2018. In the Americas, the latest figures indicated that 44 048 cases have been filed in Mexico in 2018.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from general measures, travellers returning from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days (DF) or at least 21 days (Zika virus infection) upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;

- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public may refer to the CHP's tips for using insect repellents for details.