

Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after attending the public hearing of the Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee today (May 29):

Reporter: What do you think of the MTR Chairman Frederick Ma's earlier comments that there is no need for the MTR to reveal more details about the construction of the XRL? What do you think of his comments? Do you think it is appropriate? And secondly, are you confident that the MTR Corporation can successfully roll out the XRL in September as scheduled, given the serious hiccups that have been found recently?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: As far as I understand, so far the MTRC (MTR Corporation Limited) and the Government have been embracing openness and transparency as far as the incidents are concerned, particularly when the community and the media are interested and expressed a kind of worry. Therefore I would expect both the MTRC and the Government team will continue to embrace openness and transparency, so that the community and friends from the media are comfortable and confident about the opening of the XRL (the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link) in the future.

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

Hong Kong Monetary Authority Exchange Fund Bills tender results

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

Hong Kong Monetary Authority Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: May 29, 2018
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q1822
Issue date	: May 30, 2018
Maturity date	: August 29, 2018
Amount applied	: HK\$91,426 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$43,142 MN
Average yield accepted	: 1.16 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 1.18 PCT

Pro rata ratio : About 99 PCT
Average tender yield : 1.23 PCT

Tender date : May 29, 2018
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H1851
Issue date : May 30, 2018
Maturity date : November 28, 2018
Amount applied : HK\$42,019 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$15,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 1.46 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 1.50 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 73 PCT
Average tender yield : 1.54 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning June 4, 2018 :

Tender date : June 5, 2018
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q1823
Issue date : June 6, 2018
Maturity date : September 5, 2018
Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$48,632 MN

Tender date : June 5, 2018
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H1852
Issue date : June 6, 2018
Maturity date : December 5, 2018
Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$15,000 MN

[Transcript of remarks by CE at media](#)

session before ExCo meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (May 29):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, does the report say that the Government is intending to, well, have an all-graduate teaching force in primary and secondary schools? So, does the Government have any timetable, and when is that going to happen? And if there is any rapid changes, would that affect the schools' management in some way or another? And the second question is about express rail. How would you assess the company's performance so far, in terms of transparency and do you think it's satisfactory that Mr Ma said something like that?

Chief Executive: On the XRL, I hope the public will appreciate that this is a major piece of infrastructure and in the course of commissioning there is a lot of preparatory work and testing work to be done, and so colleagues in the MTR Corporation are under extreme pressure to achieve that objective, and I want to assure you that we will work very closely, we means the Transport and Housing Bureau and also the two relevant departments – the Highways Department and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. They will work very closely with the railway corporation to provide the needed information, the results of any investigation and to ensure that people have confidence in the operation of this railway.

About the all-graduate teacher objective, I understand that this is a long-standing aspiration of the teachers in Hong Kong. As you are aware, I attach a lot of importance to quality education in Hong Kong. At a recent public occasion, I said that the one single impression I had during my election campaign in interacting with the teachers is we should value Hong Kong's teachers more. So if our teachers have this common aspiration that they should be turned into graduate teacher positions, I would certainly accord importance to addressing this aspiration. But for the time being, this matter, together with other issues, relating to the professional development of teachers, is being considered by a task force set up after we came to office on July 1. So I will await recommendations from this task force, but I can assure you that we are very determined to improve quality education in Hong Kong, and we have set aside a recurrent expenditure provision of \$3.4 billion every year, so we would have that capacity to meet the needed improvements in the education sector.

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

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in first quarter of 2018

A total of 142 additional cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) in the first quarter of 2018, bringing the cumulative total of reported HIV infections to 9 233 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong at a press conference today (May 29), the Consultant (Special Preventive Programme) of the CHP, Dr Kenny Chan, said that sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission.

"HIV is the cause of AIDS and, without treatment, about half of HIV-infected people will progress to AIDS within 10 years. On the contrary, early HIV treatment prevents AIDS and significantly prolongs survival," he said, urging HIV-positive people to seek specialist care as soon as possible.

Dr Chan also stressed the importance of proper use of condoms in reducing the risk of contracting HIV. Men who have sex with men (MSM), who dominate the epidemic, are strongly urged to use a condom for safer sex.

Of the 142 HIV cases, 122 males and 20 females, reported in the above quarter, 71 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, and 20 via heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of the remaining 51 cases have yet to be determined due to inadequate information.

The new cases were reported by three major sources: public hospitals and clinics (64 cases), the DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (21 cases) and private hospitals and clinics (20 cases). Among them, 79 (58 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 28 new cases of AIDS were reported in the above quarter, bringing to 1 885 the total number of confirmed AIDS cases reported since 1985. Among the new cases, 71 per cent were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact and 18 per cent were related to heterosexual contact.

In the above quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness was Pneumocystis pneumonia, a kind of chest infection.

The findings of the latest community-based HIV Prevalence and Risk Behavioural Survey of Men who have sex with men (PRiSM) conducted by the CHP in 2017 were also announced at today's press conference. PRiSM 2017, which was the fourth since the survey was first conducted in 2006, recruited some 4 100 MSM and 100 male-to-female transgender persons via websites, mobile applications, venues serving sexual minorities and AIDS organisations. Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire on an anonymous, confidential and voluntary basis. Results of the latest PRiSM found that the

HIV prevalence for sexually active MSM was 6.54 per cent while that for male-to-female transgender women was 5.11 per cent. The HIV testing rate in the past 12 months among MSM (52.6 per cent) was higher than that of the last survey in 2011 (41 per cent).

Dr Chan pointed out that the percentage of consistent condom use (defined as using a condom every time) in the preceding six months among MSM remained unsatisfactory (52 per cent). The percentage of recreational drug/substance use before and during sex (commonly known as "chemsex") in the past six months (16.2 per cent) was higher than that of the previous round of PRiSM conducted in 2011 (12.3 per cent). Of note, "chemsex" increases the risk of transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections between sexual partners.

"With respect to the latest findings, we will step up our efforts in promotion and public education in the MSM community in order to make them aware of the importance of safe sex in preventing AIDS. We will also remind members of the public, particularly high-risk groups, to use a condom consistently and properly. Those with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early," Dr Chan said.

"Drug users should avoid sharing needles with others and receive methadone or other appropriate treatment as soon as possible," Dr Chan stressed.

Other findings and further details of the PRiSM survey have been uploaded to the DH's [Virtual AIDS Office](#). The public can call the DH's AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV test. The public may visit the Red Ribbon Centre (www.rrc.gov.hk), the AIDS Hotline website (www.27802211.com), the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.com) and the Harm Reduction website (www.harmreduction.gov.hk) for more information on HIV/AIDS.

[Spanish handcrafted leather brand Lottusse opens flagship store in Hong Kong \(with photo\)](#)

Lottusse, a Spanish handcrafted leather brand with its heritage dating back to 1877, opened its flagship retail store in Hong Kong today (May 29), as part of its regional business expansion via Hong Kong following its successful showroom operations in the city.

The new store is located at the newly reopened heritage site of the former Central Police Station and Victoria Prison compound. Lottusse, a Fluxa

family-owned handcrafted leather brand, takes quality at the heart of its business philosophy, according to the company's Asia Area Manager, Mr Yuji Yosumi.

In the retail shop, customers can order Lottusse shoes with personalisation options, which will then be handcrafted by masters at Lottusse's own factory based in Mallorca, Spain, so as to ensure the family craftsmanship tradition is strictly followed in detail. Customers can also buy ready-made shoes in a wide range of designs.

In 2014, the brand opened a showroom in Hong Kong where personalised shoes can be ordered. Mr Yosumi said the company sees good timing now to commence retail operations with the new shop in Central to tap Hong Kong's growing status as an international retail hub in the region.

He said, "Hong Kong as the gateway to Asia is the ideal place for us to test the markets in the region. We initially set up a showroom in the city four years ago and from there we have developed solid clientele from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore through Hong Kong. It is the right time in the right place for us to move to the retail business with this new shop."

He added, "Hong Kong's retail industry is sophisticated with a good diversity of discerning clientele in terms of both locals and visitors from around the world. Our Hong Kong retail store not only manages the city's retail operations but also will develop wholesale business across Asia."

Associate Director-General of Investment Promotion Dr Jimmy Chiang welcomed the opening of Lottusse's flagship store in Hong Kong. He said, "It shows a vote of confidence in our retail industry. Apart from participating in the vibrant retail sector in Hong Kong, the brand can also make good use of the city's advantages including a free port, a low tax base and the absence of sales tax to expand its business in the region."

About Lottusse

Founded in 1877 in Mallorca, Spain, Lottusse is owned by the founding Fluxa family. Now under the fourth generation, the family business is an artisanal shoes manufacturer and international brand specialising in high-quality leather products. For more information, please visit www.lottusse.com.

About Invest Hong Kong

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