

# Hong Kong SAR Government warmly welcomes introduction of sleeper trains for XRL service to/from Beijing and Shanghai

A Government spokesman said today (June 4) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government warmly welcomes the introduction of sleeper trains on the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL). This new service between the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station and the Beijingxi Station/Shanghai Hongqiao Station will commence on June 15, with trains departing in the evenings and arriving the following mornings. The initiative marks another significant milestone in the over five-year operation of the XRL Hong Kong Section.

The HKSAR Government has long been maintaining close communication with relevant Mainland authorities as well as the railway operators of the two places. Various measures such as increasing the number of stations directly connected with the West Kowloon Station and train frequencies, as well as introducing the Same-day Flexi-trip Arrangement and multi-ride tickets, have facilitated the flow of people by the XRL between Hong Kong and the Mainland, giving full play to the advantages of interconnectivity between the XRL Hong Kong Section and the national high-speed rail network.

The China State Railway Group Co., Ltd (China Railway) announced this morning that the ordinary-speed train services between the Hong Kong Hung Hom Station and Beijing/Shanghai will be upgraded to XRL sleeper train services. The new sleeper trains to be introduced to the XRL Hong Kong Section will significantly reduce rail travel times, almost by half, between Hong Kong and Beijing from over 24 hours to about 12.5 hours and between Hong Kong and Shanghai from 19.5 hours to about 11 hours. With the number of passenger seats largely increased to 600, the comfortable XRL sleeper trains will take the cross-boundary rail service experience to a new level. The operation mode of evening departures and morning arrivals will allow passengers to arrive at their destinations after a comfortable overnight journey, enriching travel options for both leisure and business travellers as well as saving a night of hotel charges.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said, "I wish to express my gratitude for the Central Government's care for Hong Kong, as well as the strong support from China Railway and various Mainland authorities. The train service to be introduced is a high-speed rail train with sleeper berths, departing in the evenings and arriving in the mornings. It will be more comfortable and faster, reducing the travel time by about half, and will cover a wider range of destinations, including popular tourist attraction cities. The upgraded train service will further meet the travel demand of wide-ranging passengers for cross-boundary journeys. It carries great significance in facilitating the cross-boundary flow of people, solidifying

the people-to-people bonds between the Mainland and Hong Kong, and enabling Hong Kong to better integrate into the national development."

The launch of the XRL sleeper train service will further leverage the advantage of the "co-location arrangement" at the West Kowloon Station. In the past, the Intercity Through Train (ITT) service adopted the "separate-location arrangement" immigration clearance procedure, which limited the number of Mainland destinations that could be connected, constraining the development potential of the services. The new sleeper trains connecting the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station and the Beijingxi Station/Shanghai Hongqiao Station will fully capitalise on the advantage of the "co-location arrangement". The trains will also stop at intermediate stations including Shijiazhuang in Hebei and Hangzhou in Zhejiang, providing cross-boundary travellers a more comfortable long-haul experience and enhancing the economic and trade co-operation as well as people-to-people exchanges between Hong Kong and a wider range of provinces and cities on the Mainland.

The Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, said, "This is the second announcement on the enhancement of the XRL Hong Kong Section services within less than a week, which is truly heartening. Last Thursday (May 30), the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), after discussion with China Railway, announced the commissioning of a new long-haul route to Hunan Province with six new destinations that directly connect to popular tourist destinations including Zhangjiajie and Fenghuanggucheng, adding impetus to the economic and tourism development of Hong Kong and Hunan. The new sleeper trains will operate from Fridays to Mondays, tailored to meet the passenger needs and provide them with a more convenient, comfortable and high-quality cross-boundary rail service, enhancing the travel experience for both business and leisure passengers."

The XRL Hong Kong Section connects to the 45 000-kilometre nationwide XRL network. The number of destinations directly connected to the XRL Hong Kong Section has progressively increased from 44 since its commissioning to 78 starting from June 15, including all stations covered by the ITT. With at least 200 XRL train trips running every day, passengers of Hong Kong and the Mainland are provided with a convenient and fast cross-boundary transport service.

The MTRCL will soon announce the details and ticketing arrangements of the XRL sleeper train service. The HKSAR Government will continue to work with the MTRCL to maintain close communication and co-ordination with the relevant Mainland authorities and railway operators to enhance the services of the XRL Hong Kong Section, so as to provide a more efficient, convenient and safe cross-boundary railway service for passengers and travellers of the two places. Committed to living up to the trust placed by the Central Government, the HKSAR Government will make comprehensive preparations and co-ordination on all fronts to ensure that through this new service, Hong Kong residents and visitors can fully experience the vast and superior XRL network of the Mainland through the connection of the XRL Hong Kong Section, and feel the importance and care that the Central Government attaches to Hong Kong.

Since the commissioning of the XRL Hong Kong Section in 2018, the cross-

boundary rail service between the Mainland and Hong Kong has entered a new era. The XRL Hong Kong Section, which connects to the nationwide high-speed rail network with convenient, efficient and comfortable services and the advantage of great efficiency of the "co-location arrangement" at the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station, has attracted a large number of passengers. It also plays an important role in the highly accessible transport network and economic circle in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and strengthens Hong Kong's position as a regional transport hub.

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## [Appeal for information on missing woman in Mong Kok \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (June 4) appealed to the public for information on a girl who went missing in Mong Kok.

Cheung Sin-yu, aged 12, went missing after she was last seen at MTR Prince Edward Station on June 1 afternoon. Her family made a report to Police on the next day (June 2).

She is about 1.54 metres tall, 34 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a round face with yellow complexion and long black hair. She was last seen wearing a black vest, a white jacket, blue jeans, black and white sneakers and carrying a white tote bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing girl or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Persons Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1173 or 5683 7041 or email to [rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.



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## Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao hold 2024 high-level air traffic management meeting in Zhuhai

The Secretary of the Party Committee of the Air Traffic Management Bureau (ATMB) of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), Mr Wen Xuezheng; the Director-General of Civil Aviation of Hong Kong, Mr Victor Liu; and the President of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Macao Special Administrative Region, Mr Pun Wa-kin, attended the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao 2024 high-level air traffic management meeting in Zhuhai today (June 4).

The senior management of the three parties reviewed the overall progress and work plan of the Airspace Management Technical Sub-group and the Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) Technical Sub-group, including work progress and achievements of airspace optimisation matters, and the ATFM in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). They exchanged views on the feasibility study of the application of advanced navigation capabilities, and shared experiences on measures to consistently enhance the efficiency of the ATFM in the GBA.

With regard to airspace optimisation and air traffic management enhancement, the Tripartite Working Group (TWG) reached consensus on the planning needs of peripheral air routes upon deliberation of a host of optimisation measures, including the establishment of new air routes and the transfer of control points, joint construction of an airspace simulation model and assessments of airspace enhancement plans. The TWG also carried out a feasibility study on the application of advanced air navigation technologies to explore the feasibility of developing a more flexible air traffic management mode by utilising more precise navigation performances of modern aircraft, with an aim to maximise the utilisation of GBA airspace resources. The TWG will, on a continual basis, enhance and strengthen the trilateral co-ordination and operation mechanism in order to jointly build a safe, efficient and sustainable air transport system in the GBA. The Civil Aviation Department (CAD) also updated its counterparts on the latest progress of the Three-runway System (3RS) of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), including the design of flight procedures and air routes, and the latest air traffic control technologies to support the 3RS operations.

For the ATFM, the TWG primarily focused on the development of contingency arrangements to regulate air traffic flow in the GBA, with a view to reducing the airborne holding time and thereby minimising aircraft fuel burning and its consequential impact on the environment, as well as enhancing the sustainability of the aviation industry. The TWG also shared experiences in enhancing its operation and ATFM co-ordination under the situation of

severe thunderstorms and extreme weather conditions in the GBA.

Mr Liu said that the TWG has made promising progress in various aspects. It is implementing planned air traffic management enhancement initiatives in phases while those implemented measures have achieved fruitful results. With the support of the ATMB of the CAAC, the CAD will continue to take forward air traffic management optimisation measures and the 3RS developments in accordance with the directions of the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the GBA to further strengthen and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, as well as to achieve the target runway capacity of 102 flights per hour using the 3RS of HKIA.

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## [Offers of 2024-25 civil service pay adjustment](#)

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) made pay offers to the staff side of the four civil service central consultative councils today (June 4), under which the pay for civil servants in the upper, middle and lower salary bands and the directorate will be increased at the same rate of 3 per cent for 2024-25, effective retrospectively from April 1, 2024.

"The Hong Kong economy came out of the pandemic with strength last year, with an overall upward pay trend in the market. Although it is estimated that there will be a fiscal deficit in 2024-25, the economy is projected to grow further this year with the Government's efforts in boosting sentiment, expanding economic capacity and enhancing competitiveness. After holistic consideration and balancing of all relevant factors, including changes in the economic situation, the increase in the cost of living in the past year, the Government's fiscal position and the principle of prudent financial management, the positive net Pay Trend Indicators in all salary bands and civil service morale, the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-Council) made the offers to increase pay at the same rate of 3 per cent across the board," a CSB spokesman said.

"After the CE-in-Council considers the response from the staff side and makes a decision on the 2024-25 civil service pay adjustment, the Government will submit the pay adjustment proposal to the Legislative Council Finance Committee for consideration as soon as possible," the spokesman added.

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# Judicial appointment

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary today (June 4) announced the appointment of Mr Kwong Ka-tung as a District Judge. The appointment will take effect on June 5, 2024.

The appointment is made by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission.

Further judicial appointments will be announced in due course.

The biographical note of Mr Kwong is as follows:

Mr Kwong was born in Hong Kong in 1981. He obtained a Bachelor of Social Sciences Degree from the University of Hong Kong in 2004. He further acquired an LL.B. and a P.C.LL. both from the University of Hong Kong in 2005 and 2006 respectively, and an LL.M. from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom in 2007. He was called to the Bar in Hong Kong in 2008 and has been in private practice from the same year. He was appointed as Temporary Deputy Registrar, High Court, and Deputy District Judge for periods in 2021, 2023 and 2024.