

## **Third round of Midstream Research Programme for Universities opens for applications**

The Innovation and Technology Commission today (December 18) launched the third round of the Midstream Research Programme for Universities. Funding applications from universities for research projects under the theme "Health Technologies for Diagnosis" are welcome. The deadline is March 13, 2020.

Health technologies for diagnosis cover a wide range of technology areas, for example biotechnology, biomedical imaging, diagnosis using artificial intelligence, microfluidic chips, health information technology systems and automation.

Launched in 2016 under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF), the Programme aims at encouraging universities funded by the University Grants Committee to conduct more theme-based midstream research in focused technology areas, so that more research outcomes could be made available for downstream research or product development.

The funding ceiling for each project is \$5 million. Projects involving collaboration across multiple disciplines, universities or research institutes will be accorded priority and a higher funding ceiling of \$10 million per project.

Further information on the Programme is available on the ITF website ([www.itf.gov.hk](http://www.itf.gov.hk)). For enquiries, please contact the ITF Secretariat (Tel: 3655 5678; email: [enquiry@itf.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@itf.gov.hk)).

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## **Cross-boundary passenger traffic estimation and arrangements for Christmas and New Year festive periods**

The Immigration Department (ImmD) estimates that around 10.65 million passengers (including Hong Kong residents and visitors) will pass through Hong Kong's sea, land and air control points during the upcoming Christmas and New Year festive periods (from December 21, 2019 to January 1, 2020). Among them, about 75 per cent, or around 8.03 million passengers, will pass through land boundary control points. The number of outbound and inbound passengers using land boundary control points will be relatively higher on December 21 (Saturday) and December 26 (Thursday), with around 433 000 and

455 000 passengers respectively.

The ImmD estimates that there will be around 2.67 million passengers, with a daily average of about 223 000 passengers, travelling via the Lo Wu Control Point during the festive periods. Also, the daily average forecast of the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line and Shenzhen Bay control points will be about 136 000 and 106 000 passengers respectively.

The ImmD, the Police, the Customs and Excise Department and the MTR Corporation Limited will set up a joint command centre at the Lo Wu Control Point, whereas operations of the control points and passenger conditions will be closely monitored to ensure a smooth passenger traffic flow. Moreover, the ImmD will upload daily passenger statistics for the above festive period to its website at [www.immd.gov.hk](http://www.immd.gov.hk) for public reference.

For travellers making journeys to the Mainland, the ImmD reminds them to carry their proof of identity and valid travel documents for crossing the boundary. Hong Kong residents should also check the validity of their Home Visit Permits. Non-permanent residents must carry their valid smart identity card as well as their Document of Identity for Visa Purposes or a valid travel document.

Holders of an acknowledgement receipt issued due to a reported loss or replacement of their Hong Kong identity cards, or children under 11 years old who hold Hong Kong identity cards, should carry a valid travel document or Re-entry Permit.

Over 700 e-Channels have been installed at various control points. Eligible Mainland holders of the electronic Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (e-EEP) can enrol for the e-Channel service by using their e-EEP and undergoing the enrolment process at a traditional entry counter on their first visit to Hong Kong. Eligible Mainland visitors who have renewed their e-EEP must go through the aforesaid enrolment process again before they can use the e-Channel.

Hong Kong residents who require assistance while travelling outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the ImmD at (852) 1868.

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## **[SWD launches residential respite services and emergency placement vacancy enquiry system](#)**

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (December 18) launched the website "Vacancy Enquiry System for Residential Respite Service for Persons

with Disabilities, Residential Respite Service for the Elderly and Emergency Placement for the Elderly" ([vesrrsep.swd.gov.hk](http://vesrrsep.swd.gov.hk)).

This website facilitates the public and service referral units to check online vacancy and service information on designated residential respite places for persons with disabilities, designated residential respite places for the elderly and emergency placements for the elderly. It provides a dedicated search function for the public to look for vacancy situations of the relevant residential care units through filtering criteria such as gender, age range, type of disability/care level of the applicant, type of residential care home and location preference so as to facilitate the making of requests to the service units concerned.

To ensure that the website contains the latest information, persons-in-charge of the service units providing designated residential respite places for persons with disabilities, designated residential respite places for the elderly and emergency placements for the elderly may upload the updated vacancy information to the website at any time. The SWD will regularly remind the persons-in-charge to provide up-to-date information to the website for public access and will keep in view its usage and explore areas for improvement.

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## **Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley**

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley today (December 18). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

### A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

#### 1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

#### 2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Traffic along eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;

- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

## B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

### 1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

### 2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic diversions will be implemented from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

### C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

### D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.

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## [Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.