

CE visits Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and Transport Department (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and the Transport Department (TD) today (December 30) to learn more about the measures and recovery work taken by the two departments in response to the protests and vandalistic acts in recent months. She also expressed her gratitude to colleagues for their dedication to duty and concerted efforts to maintain the operation of Hong Kong during the current serious situation.

Accompanied by the Acting Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services, Mr Pang Yiu-hung, Mrs Lam visited a traffic light workshop and the Customer Service Centre. Since June, approximately 750 sets of signalised junctions across the city have been vandalised more than 1 400 times. To enable the speedy recovery of the damaged traffic lights before the morning peak hours, the EMSD deployed additional experienced manpower from various units to the recovery team, increasing the number of staff from about 80 to 160 during peak repair periods. As at today, all damaged traffic lights have resumed operation.

Mrs Lam noted that the EMSD also works closely with various government departments and suppliers to substantially shorten the overall time required for parts procurement, delivery and on-site repair works. The team has also proactively conceived, tested and implemented various designs to enhance the protection of the traffic lights and their controllers.

Mrs Lam then visited the TD to keep abreast of the department's work on monitoring and handling traffic and transport emergency incidents, and to note the progress in taking forward measures to enhance the operational safety of franchised buses.

Accompanied by the Commissioner for Transport, Ms Mable Chan, Mrs Lam was briefed on how the department co-ordinates with various government departments and public transport operators to handle traffic incidents swiftly to enable the resumption of traffic and public transport services as soon as possible. In particular, she was briefed on the department's contingency measures to steer and co-ordinate public transport during the closure of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel last month including the provision of special ferry services, re-routing of cross-harbour bus routes and the co-ordination of relevant government departments and public transport operators to implement repair works properly and prepare for the re-opening.

Mrs Lam also received a briefing on initiatives to enhance franchised bus safety including supervising franchised bus operators to install safety seat belts in all seats on new buses and retrofit seat belts in all seats on

the upper decks of existing double-decker buses. Together with the newly procured double-decker buses, there will be more than 3 000 buses equipped with seat belts in 2022, and they will be deployed with priorities for long-haul routes operated via expressways with relatively fewer bus stops. Mrs Lam then toured the Commute with "Ease" Roving Exhibition which showcases how the department leverages innovation and technology to promote smart mobility, enhance road safety and transport efficiency.

Mrs Lam said that during the social unrest, which has persisted for more than six months, wanton vandalism by rioters on transport facilities gravely affected people's commutes. Taking traffic lights as an example, over the past few months, more than 5 000 lamps and 100 controllers have been replaced. The amount of parts used would be adequate for 10 years under normal situations and the estimated additional recovery cost has exceeded \$30 million.

"In fact, every Government department is affected by the social unrest to different degrees. Colleagues are required to allocate resources effectively, deploy manpower flexibly, enhance communication with various departments and walk an extra mile to respond to different situations proactively with new thinking. I express gratitude to colleagues who have been standing fast at their posts during the past months, working together to minimise the impacts of the protests and vandalistic acts on the public, while striving to maintain effective public services," Mrs Lam said.



