

## CS chairs inter-departmental working group meeting on festival arrangements (with photo)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, today (December 12) chaired a meeting of the inter-departmental working group on festival arrangements (the inter-departmental working group) to holistically co-ordinate and steer the preparatory work of various government departments for welcoming visitors to Hong Kong during the New Year's Eve and New Year holidays. The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law; the Under Secretary for Security, Mr Michael Cheuk; and representatives from the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau, the Transport and Logistics Bureau and other relevant government departments also attended.

Mr Chan said that as Hong Kong enters the high season of travel in December, various districts in the city are hosting a variety of delightful events. Among these, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will present a 12-minute New Year's Eve countdown fireworks display, while various districts across the territory will also feature celebratory events during the countdown, creating a festive atmosphere for both residents and visitors.

Mr Chan said that a notable increase in the number of visitors during New Year's Eve and the New Year holidays is expected. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will make good preparations for receiving visitors, including actively co-ordinating the ancillary arrangements of boundary control points (BCPs) and transportation, as well as maintaining close liaison with relevant organisations and the travel trade to ensure effective crowd management, information dissemination and arrangements of public transportation and BCPs, with a view to ensuring the smooth operation of various aspects of receiving visitors and offering them a high-quality experience. Mr Chan also encouraged Mainland visitors to stay overnight after participating in activities on New Year's Eve to fully experience the rich and diverse charm of Hong Kong.

Special boundary-crossing and corresponding public transport service arrangements

In view of the New Year's Eve countdown fireworks display, the HKSAR Government has discussed with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to extend the service hours of BCPs on New Year's Eve, including the proposal to extend the passenger clearance service at Shenzhen Bay Port from the original closure time at 12 midnight to operating overnight; and to extend the passenger clearance service at Lo Wu Control Point from the original closure time at 12 midnight to 2am the next day. The Mainland port authorities have duly reported to the national port authorities for approval according to the required procedures. Further details will be announced as soon as possible. The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Port and the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port

will maintain a 24-hour operation as usual on New Year's Eve.

For transport arrangements, the Transport Department (TD) will cater for the arrangements of BCPs to enhance transportation services connecting various BCPs, including increasing the frequency of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) shuttle bus (Gold Bus), the Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang cross-boundary shuttle bus (Yellow Bus) and cross-boundary coach, and formulating a contingency plan by establishing a dedicated passage at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Port, Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port, and Shenzhen Bay Port when necessary, to ensure the smooth operation of public transport services.

Regarding local public transport services, the TD has approached various public transport operators proactively to enhance their capacity. The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) will cater for the arrangements of the BCP to extend services of the East Rail Line to and from the MTR Lo Wu Station correspondingly, and the majority of MTR railway lines will operate overnight on New Year's Eve. Furthermore, bus routes will be arranged between the MTR Sheung Shui Station and San Tin Yellow Bus Station to facilitate passengers using the East Rail Line to cross the boundary via the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port, which operates round-the-clock, after the end of services to the Lo Wu Control Point. Various public transport operators will reserve sufficient vehicles and manpower to meet the travel needs of visitors.

The Inter-departmental Joint Command Centre set up by the Hong Kong Police Force (Police), the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), and other relevant departments will be activated from December 21, 2024, to January 1, 2025, to monitor the real-time situation at various control points. The Joint Command Centre will maintain close liaison with the Mainland port authorities through the established port hotlines and real-time notification mechanism, and take timely contingency actions to flexibly deploy manpower at the BCPs to ensure smooth operation of the land control points. The Security Bureau will also activate the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre in a timely manner to closely monitor and coordinate the public order at various BCPs and facilitate inter-departmental follow-up actions where necessary to respond promptly to various kinds of emergencies.

The Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) of the TD will operate 24 hours a day, closely monitor the traffic conditions and public transport services in all districts, BCPs, and major stations across Hong Kong, take prompt measures to address service demands, and disseminate the latest traffic updates through various channels.

#### Crowd management and special traffic arrangements

The Police will arrange sufficient manpower to implement corresponding crowd management measures and special traffic arrangements as necessary to ensure that all celebrations will be conducted in a safe and orderly manner. Various district offices will closely monitor the flow of visitors in their respective areas, and report to relevant departments having regard to the actual circumstances in order to strengthen management arrangements of the

relevant spots. Major tourist attractions will also roll out crowd control arrangements. The Police will hold a press conference later this month to provide detailed information on crowd management and special traffic arrangements for the New Year's Eve countdown fireworks.

#### Management of tour groups and protection of visitors

For management of tour groups, the Travel Industry Authority (TIA) has reminded travel agents receiving Mainland inbound tour groups to stagger arrival times as far as possible, and will co-ordinate with various parties to adopt appropriate diversion measures in tourist attractions to enable proper management of the flow of visitors and tour buses, with a view to offering a pleasant travel experience to visitors. The TIA will also conduct inspections in districts where relatively more registered shops for inbound tour groups are located, and offer assistance to visitors and tourist guides to protect inbound tour group visitors' rights. Additionally, the Police will continue to step up enforcement actions against the illegal acts of taxi drivers including overcharging and refusing hire. The C&ED will also step up inspection of shops serving visitors so as to combat unfair trade practices.

#### Information dissemination

The HKTB will launch a dedicated webpage for New Year's Eve countdown to provide various useful information to facilitate residents and visitors to plan their itineraries more conveniently. The inter-departmental working group will also strengthen information dissemination to facilitate residents and visitors to plan their itineraries according to the latest situation.

