

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (January 16):

Reporter: A few questions. Just to follow up on the multi-entry permit scheme. You said you hope to have some sort of arrangements as soon as possible. Is there something we can look forward to before the Lunar New Year? I mean, does Hong Kong have the capacity to do this in terms of transportation and accommodation? Will this lead to parallel trading problems again? Second question is about the solid waste charging scheme. It's coming into effect from April. What steps are the Government taking to ensure that all walks of life in Hong Kong will be able to adapt to this? Are we on track to put this in place in April? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Hong Kong, after it has resumed normal travel with different parts of the world, is of a big interest, I think, to everybody (to come and visit). Particularly when we talk about our economic growth, tourism is always a big proportion of economic growth. In fact, the figures have indicated that they are showing very positive growth. But of course, there is a capacity constraint, as you have described, and we are, I think, effectively, and progressing well, in regaining that capacity. I think that happens to different cities as well. We are doing better in some areas, but we need to work harder in some other areas. In order to attract more tourists or visitors from the Mainland, there are various measures that we are considering, but all these measures need negotiation and discussion with the relevant departments on the Mainland. Of course, we want all these things to be decided as soon as possible, but equally, we will have to, in some way, take into consideration the views and the ideas of the relevant departments on the Mainland. But that is, I think, a positive common area that we have both shared in trying to have some decisions made as early as possible, because we think that people-to-people exchange works best for both sides. We will definitely work hard. At the same time, I am receiving positive feedback from the departments we have been talking with. Of course, some details need to be ironed out. I hope to be able to get some decisions made as soon as possible so that we can tell everybody.

In the course of doing so, we have to ensure that things happen in an orderly manner, and things will be under control. We used to have a problem of parallel trading, but things have also changed. We will look at all potential threats and risks in any new measures we take, we have to bear in mind to see how we will mitigate and control them. But I think the right attitude to take is not to be averse to all these challenges. We have to find ways to address and control them. The spending habits and the market situation have also changed very much over the years – online shopping, availability of a lot of products on the Mainland, and how Hong Kong

positions itself as a shopping paradise. All these need to be examined so that we will plan our policies, strategies and subsequent actions in accordance with the new environment and the new normals. All these will need to be worked out. The Government will do its best to think of the best way to deal with it, but equally important is that all players in the market, whether they are in the tourism industry, retail business, catering or service industries, need to work hard to think of new ways, to not just ensure that we attract a lot of people to come to Hong Kong, but ensure that they have good experiences – how services, our attractions and our way of ensuring that people do come to your shops to spend, and how to ensure that their experiences are good, so that they will go back and tell people around them that Hong Kong is the place to come. All these, the Government will work hard and, at the same time, I hope players in the market and in all these industries will also be as innovative as they always have been to ensure that we will be able to handle all these new normals well.

In regard to solid waste charging, I have heard a lot about questions that have been raised in the industries and by members of the public. I have asked the Secretary for Environment and Ecology to ensure that the action plan has its details worked out and clearly explained to all relevant parties, whether they are in the estate management sector, the catering sector, the housing sector, and all members of the public who need to buy all these charging bags. All these are information that needs to be clearly explained, spelled out, and easily available to everybody. They will work harder on holding seminars, doing press conferences, explaining whenever they can with different stakeholders, and also work out good Q&As, so that people can easily understand what their roles will be, what the legal responsibilities are, and how things will work out, when all these things are rolled out.

This charging policy is an important policy to change human behaviour. We know it is full of challenges and uncertainties when all these new behaviours need to be, in some way, carried out by everybody in the whole of Hong Kong. It is a cultural change as well, so all these things will be for everybody to take note of. I trust that everybody wants to have a better and greener environment to live in, and this charging policy has been implemented in a lot of cities around the world, particularly advanced cities. For example, in a lot of countries around us, solid waste has been reduced significantly as a result of this charging policy. I think it is for everybody to pay attention to. Of course, the Government needs to explain very clearly and repetitively all the things that people of Hong Kong and people in different industries need to know about. I think a big campaign has to be launched by the Environment and Ecology Bureau. The Government as a whole will be taking part in the whole launching of this campaign. We will be hearing different views and suggestions, a lot of which actually arise because they may not have really understood very clearly the whole game plan. So yes, the Secretary for Environment and Ecology will be doing a lot of work in this area. We will also be talking to different sectors, including District Councils, Care Teams, and people in different districts, because we want people in all 18 districts to be able to know their roles, their legal duties, and how they work out together to ensure that we eventually will have

this new charging policy carried out smoothly.

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

[FEHD raids unlicensed cold store in North District \(with photo\)](#)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), in the small hours of today (January 16), raided an unlicensed cold store in Ping Che, North District.

During the operation, the FEHD arrested one person and initiated procedures on prosecution for the suspected operation of an unlicensed cold store, and found about 24 700 kilograms of chilled poultry and game with official health certificates on the premises. In addition, about 80kg of chilled cut poultry without official health certificates were seized for disposal.

Under the Food Business Regulation, the maximum penalty for operating an unlicensed cold store is a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

"We will continue our stringent enforcement action against unlicensed food business to safeguard food safety and public health," an FEHD spokesman said.

Members of the public can report any suspected illegal food business activities by calling the FEHD hotline 2868 0000.



Housing Bureau and HKCRC sign MOU on innovative construction technologies

The Housing Bureau (HB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Hong Kong Center for Construction Robotics (HKCRC) today (January 16) for the establishment of a strategic partnership, with a view to jointly foster the upgrading and transformation of the construction industry, and provide solutions to address challenges including large-scale housing production, the shortage of the construction labour force, continuous enhancement of site safety, etc. Taking advantage of the vast supply, standardised design and highly repetitive nature of public housing by the Housing Department (HD) (the executive arm of the Hong Kong Housing Authority), it can provide a sufficient testing ground for trials of new technologies to facilitate testing and improvement of research outcomes before making them available in the market.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, said that she felt honoured to work with the HKCRC led by Professor Li Zexiang of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering. With the HKCRC's rich experience in research and development as well as application, the HB expects that by utilising public housing sites as a testing ground, the collaboration can inject more innovation and technology impetus into Hong Kong's construction industry and turn the immense market demand and challenges faced by the industry into development opportunities for construction technologies.

Witnessed by Ms Ho; the Acting Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Ms Lillian Cheong; and the Chairman of the Board of the HKCRC, Dr Kim Shin-cheul, the Permanent Secretary for Housing/Director of Housing, Miss Rosanna Law, signed the MOU with the Associate Director of the HKCRC, Dr Liang Haobo. The three main directions of this collaboration are:

- Smart Tower Cranes – The HD and the HKCRC will jointly develop a smart tower crane system to first enable workers to remotely control the tower crane at ground level or indoors, thus providing a more comfortable and safer working environment for tower crane operators. An auxiliary control system with artificial intelligence (AI) functions including automatic lifting route planning and obstacle avoidance will be developed in the next stage to realise "unmanned" cranes in the long run and make crane operations simpler and more efficient.
- Smart Construction Sites – The HKCRC has developed different types of construction robots, such as rebar tying robots and floor grinding robots, to enhance on-site efficiency and safety at construction sites. Various high-performance digital equipment such as mobile scanners, intelligent Internet of Things (IoT)-based digital inclinometers and precast component scanners, which are already in the practical application stage, help to enhance project quality and efficiency of

inspection works. Through collaborating with the HD, such research can be put for on-site testing and improvement by utilising the vast supply, standardised design and highly repetitive nature of public housing. The mature products can then be showcased and promoted to the industry, thus fostering the upgrading and transformation of the construction industry.

- Smart Estates – The adoption of different smart equipment and innovative technologies, such as cleaning robots and transportation robots, and the utilisation of the IoT, AI and mobile devices, will facilitate daily estate management, enhance work efficiency of frontline staff, and optimise property management.

The HD has been committed to promoting the digitalisation of public housing development. Apart from embracing innovative construction technologies, including the wider adoption of Modular Integrated Construction methods and various construction robots to continuously enhance the safety, efficiency, productivity and sustainability of public housing construction, the HD also actively promotes smart estate management to enhance management efficiency and service quality of nearly 200 public housing estates.

LandsD to close four map sales outlets

The Lands Department (LandsD) announced today (January 16) that four map sales outlets, located at the Harbour Building in Central, the West Kowloon Government Offices, the Sai Kung Government Offices and the Tai Po Government Offices, will be closed from February 1.

Members of the public can order map products and cadastral survey records via the Hong Kong Map Service 2.0 (www.hkmapservice.gov.hk) or at the LandsD's other four map sales outlets. For the addresses and opening hours of the outlets, please visit the LandsD website (www.landsd.gov.hk/en/about-us/sales-outlets.html) or call 2231 3187 for enquiries.

Red flags hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 16) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.