

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (October 2):

Reporter: The MTR Chairman Frederick Ma said that he expected there will be about 60 000 people using the Express Rail Link on the first day of the Golden Week, but this figure still falls short of the 80 000 target set by the Government. Are you worried that in the future, the Government may have to pay for the extra cost for failing to hit the passenger target? And also secondly, the NPC delegate Tam Yiu-chung says political groups should avoid using words such as "self-determination" because it may imply ideas of independence. What's your take on this issue and will the Government ban political groups using the term for their political platform?

Chief Executive: As far as comments made by other people, I don't want to comment on their comments. So you have to ask Mr Tam exactly what he meant.

As far as the high-speed train, let me first make it clear that the 80 000 passengers per day is not a target. It's a best estimate at the time based on various factors, like the train frequency, the assessment of people's travelling arrangements and so on. If you ask me, I would like this high-speed train to be able to serve more than 80 000 passenger trips every day.

The second point I want to make is, it is a new piece of cross-boundary infrastructure and people have to get used to the convenience of this new piece of cross-boundary infrastructure. Having said that, I think yesterday, according to our Immigration Department's figures, they have recorded a total of 78 000 passenger trips through this new cross-boundary point.

The third point is when we talk about patronage of any facility, the important thing is to look at the prospects. I feel this high-speed train, this West Kowloon terminus, has huge prospects to attract more people to use it because we have yet to open this wonderful cultural facility called the West Kowloon Cultural District. With its various museums and cultural venues, it is bound to be more attractive in the future. So, let's look forward to a more attractive and more appealing high-speed train that will attract more passengers. I am not worried about the financial situation because in the arrangement that we have signed with the MTR Corporation— not "we" as the Government but the KCR, the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation, has signed with the MTR Corporation, we have put in pretty conservative estimates about the passenger trips, so it is unlikely that we will need to subsidise the operation of this high-speed train. But of course, it is for the operator,

that is the MTR Corporation, to do all the necessary promotions to increase the patronage on the high-speed train.

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