

Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after attending the Board meeting of the MTR Corporation Limited today (March 19):

Reporter: Can you tell us about the Government's response while we are waiting for the MTR to give us the details on what happened? What's the Government's response to what the MTR told you during the meeting? And also I want to ask about the disruption to our central business district because right now, the red line between Admiralty and Central is still not running, and it's going to take up to days before the public can use them again. So what's the Government's thought on when's the earliest for us? Is there any indication on when the public can use that line between those stops again? And also did you talk about the penalty for Thales, the contractor, as well as like the disruption, did you talk or discuss at the meeting as well?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: First and foremost, we really appreciate the public's tolerance about the disturbance in their daily travelling or commuting to work or to office. In fact, the Transport Department has been working very closely with the public transport sector to enhance the frequency of franchised buses and ferry services, with a view to easing the difficulties of fellow citizens in going to work or going to school. In the days to come, before the service is resumed, our Transport (Department) colleagues would continue to work with these public service operators to provide the same or enhanced services.

As to when the service will be resumed, we are given to understand that the MTR colleagues are working very hard, with a view to speeding up the recovery, and to resume the service as soon as possible. When there is a certainty as to when the service could be resumed, I am sure that the MTR colleagues would inform the public as soon as possible.

As regards the incident, I must say that the Government is deeply concerned about the serious incident that has only happened during the past 40 years of railway operation. We have asked the MTRCL to investigate with due diligence with a view to ironing out the exact details and the reasons of the incident. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department is also conducting an independent investigation into the design, the operation, the integration of the hardware and software, as well as any possible causes for this incident. I hope through this dedicated, comprehensive investigation and to make it known to the general public and the media, we are able to regain public confidence in our public railway safety.

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