

Transcript of remarks by STH on commissioning of East Rail Line cross-harbour extension (with photo)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, on the commissioning of the East Rail Line cross-harbour extension at a media session today (May 3):

Reporter: A few questions. First, how much of a surge in passengers is the MTR expecting after the extension is opened given that the train will now be operating with nine carriages instead of 12? Will it overburden the East Rail Line? The second is why is the (MTR) Corporation confident that the harbour-crossing extension can open earlier than the target date that was set in June or July this year? Should people be worried about possible glitches in the route given what we've seen previously in the construction projects? And lastly, how will authorities address the pricing differences as mentioned just now? Thank you.

Secretary for Transport and Housing: Thank you. First and foremost, we have to realise that for any train, new or old, should they be put into operation, they must be sound and safe. By sound and safe, we mean that all the systems involved in the operation, including the signaling system, the operating system, all electrical and mechanical service systems, the permanent way and everything of it would be safe and sound. Safe in the sense of the approval, investigation and supervision by the authorities, by the Fire Services Department, the Environmental Protection Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and also the Highways Department. They are under very close scrutiny and examination before they were allowed to start operation. I am sure that Hong Kong's railway is one of the best across the globe. There's no doubt that we have confidence that the new cross-harbour extension will operate very smoothly in due course.

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

