

Preparation for National Day Holidays

To facilitate passenger flow at the control points for the coming National Day Holidays, the Tourism Commission hosted a joint briefing to announce a number of measures today (September 20).

The briefing was jointly organised by the Immigration Department, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC), the Federation of Hong Kong Hotels Owners (FHKHO) and the Hong Kong Hotels Association (HKHA).

Speaking at the briefing, the Acting Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Duncan Pescod explained that, in anticipation of a large number of Mainland visitor arrivals during the coming National Day Holidays, the Tourism Commission had recently convened a meeting with the Security Bureau, the Immigration Department, the HKTB and the tourism trade to discuss measures to ensure the efficient and effective processing of all visitors on arrival at the boundary control points. He announced a number of measures which have been agreed, including –

- increasing the number of immigration counters at Lok Ma Chau from 26 to 33;
- requesting the travel agents to apply in advance for time slots for immigration clearance at Lok Ma Chau;
- introducing an electronic system for travel agents to submit details of tour groups;
- reminding the travel agents to send tour guides to receive all tour groups in a timely manner;
- organising briefing and familiarisation programme for tour guides on clearance procedures and the control points;
- requesting travel agents not to put tour groups on "yellow buses";
- requiring travel agents to confirm hotel booking before accepting the tours; and
- requesting coach operators not to put tour groups and transit visitors on the same coach.

Cooperation has been sought from the travel agents and coach operators on the above measures. In addition, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has been in touch with the Mainland authorities to inform them of the arrangements made by Hong Kong and request their assistance to remind the Mainland travel agents to comply with the requirements. The HKTB has also sent relevant information to the various provincial tourism authorities and travel agents in the Mainland. They will deploy staff at Lo Wu and China Ferry Terminal to greet incoming visitors and distribute shopping and tourism-related information.

Mr Pescod said, "Hong Kong, as Asia's World City and most preferred city destination, has to ensure a warm and open welcome for all visitors. This must include efficient processing of the entry and exit of our visitors at all times. We are working to improve the experience offered to visitors coming to Hong Kong. With active support from the Immigration Department, the HKTB, the travel trade and the hotel sector, we are working to enhance passengers' experience at the control points to give them a favourable first impression of Hong Kong."

Also attending the briefing were Mr Tong Law, Commander, Border Division of the Immigration Department; Ms Bonnie Ngan, General Manager, Corporate Communications & Public Relations of the HKTB; Mr Joseph Tung, Executive Director of the TIC; Mr Michael Li, Executive Director of the FHKHO and Mr James Lu, Executive Director of the HKHA.

End/Friday, September 20, 2002

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