

LCQ1: Utilisation of the Transport Information System

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Samson Tam and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (February 24):

Question:

Regarding the utilisation of the Road Traffic Information Service and the Public Transport Enquiry Service of the Transport Information System which was developed by the Transport Department (TD), will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether the authorities have compiled statistics on the average monthly utilisation rate of the aforesaid two services since their introduction; if they have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(b) whether the authorities have received complaints from members of the public about the aforesaid two services; if they have, of the number of complaints and the details of them; and

(c) given that it has been reported that TD is currently unable to provide real-time traffic information for the public and the trades concerned, whether the authorities will expeditiously provide such real-time information services, so as to improve and promote the development of an intelligent transport system in Hong Kong; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(a) & (b) The Transport Department (TD) is committed to promoting the development of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) as well as research and development of Transport Information System (TIS) to provide more transport and traffic information to the public via the Internet. The pilot versions of the Road Traffic Information Service (RTIS) and Public Transport Enquiry Service (PTES) were launched in February and April 2009 respectively.

The pilot version of RTIS provides on the Internet an integrated platform for the dissemination of real-time traffic information including special traffic news, traffic closed-circuit television (CCTV) images and traffic speed map to facilitate the choosing of optimum driving routes by motorists. During the pilot period, in every month, about 5,000 visitors and 6,000 hits were registered on average. The TD has not received any comments or complaints from users. In light of the experience during the pilot, the TD is now studying the possibility of introducing a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) version of the RTIS and upgrading the search function for roads on the traffic speed map in order to facilitate the obtaining of information via mobile devices and more convenient search of the traffic speeds of individual roads. The relevant services are expected to launch formally in the second half of 2010.

The pilot version of PTES provides a multi-modal public transport route point-to-point search service with map display and fare information for members of the public to enquire the optimum modes and routes of public transport. During the pilot period, in every month, about 45,000 visitors and 730,000 hits were registered on average. The TD has received 52 comments or complaints from users, covering mainly user interface, stop/station and map information, suggested routes and system capacity, etc. In light of these comments, the TD has enhanced the system

capacity, updated information on the routes and maps, and improved certain functions and computation programs of the system. It plans to formally launch the relevant enquiry service in the first half of 2010.

(c) Since the Government mapped out the blueprint for the development of ITS in Hong Kong in 2001, the TD has been maintaining contact with the transport industry, academia and related organisations to keep abreast of technological developments and market demand. The TD has also been proactively applying new technologies to enhance the dissemination of transport information. For example, it has been supplying real-time traffic information of CCTV images to mobile network operators since 2007, and it plans to launch the PDA version of the RTIS this year. The TD is also considering to provide more traffic information to value-added services providers in the private sector, such as telecommunication companies, fleets and freight operators, vehicle manufacturers, as well as logistics and IT organisations. The aim is to help them develop applications of the ITS, including car navigation, fleet management systems and personalised information services, so that better and quicker traffic information may be provided to benefit members of the public.

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