

CE speaks on rail merger

Following is the transcript of remarks (English portion) by the Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, on the merger of the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Corporation and the Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation at a media session at the ground floor lobby, Main Wing, Central Government Offices, today (April 11):

Chief Executive: I am pleased to announce that the Executive Council has approved the structure and terms for the proposed merger of the two railways.

The proposed rail merger will bring tremendous benefits to the community. The travelling public will get immediate benefit from fare reduction on Day One of the rail merger. The integration of the two rail systems will also bring more convenience to passengers through better interchange arrangements.

With the fast expanding railway network on the Mainland, the rail merger is a timely move for Hong Kong which will enhance our ability and potential in connecting with a railway route on the Mainland. This in turn will generate economic benefits and opportunities for Hong Kong. The merger will create a world class Hong Kong railway company and consolidate Hong Kong's status as Asia's World City.

Overall, it is a fair and balanced package. I hope the general public, legislators, staff of the two railway corporations and minority shareholders of the MTR Corporation will give their support.

The Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury will convene a press briefing later today. They will give you the full details of the package proposal. Thank you very much.

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

Ends/Tuesday, April 11, 2006