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Preliminary Works Underway for Automatic Platform Gates Project On East Rail Line, Ma On Shan Line

There has been a flurry of activities at MTR Racecourse Station over the last two months but it has nothing to do with horses. While racing was on summer break, MTR Corporation took advantage of the time to strengthen the station's platforms to prepare them for the future installation of automatic platform gates (APGs) along with the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project. Similar platform modification works at other East Rail Line stations will start in November 2013.

"Retrofitting platform gates on an operating railway is always challenging. We have to do it without interrupting normal train service for our passengers, which means we can only work for a few hours overnight after train service has ended for the day. It's worth noting that MTR was the first railway in the world to do this and the methods it pioneered have given railways in other cities the confidence to attempt this type of door retrofitting work," said Mr Jay Walder, Chief Executive Officer of MTR Corporation.

As some East Rail Line stations are about 100 years old, the challenges become even more complex. The platform structure has to be strengthened to support the extra weight of the APGs, as well as the additional wind loads that the APGs must withstand. This requires the installation of steel bars and brackets at the platform. Moreover, the curvature at some existing platforms will be adjusted to narrow the gap between the train and the platform. Before any gates can be installed, a new signalling system and new trains with the same signalling system have to be commissioned to provide the stopping accuracy needed to align the train doors with the APGs for MTR to maintain a highly reliable train service.

As most of the East Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line stations are located above ground, extra care must be taken so as not to disturb nearby residents.

"The construction team has developed an innovative 'mobile sound insulation booth'," explained Mr T M Lee, General Manager – SCL Electrical & Mechanical of MTR Corporation. "The noisy part of works overnight will be conducted inside the 'mobile sound insulation booth' which reduces noise levels by around 20 decibels."

"Difficult as the works may be, we understand the public's desire to see APGs in stations earlier rather than later. That's why we have committed under our Listening • Responding programme to bring forward completion of APG installations in Ma On Shan Line stations by 2017, one year earlier than originally scheduled," added Mr Walder.

Under the programme, nearly 2,300 APGs will be retrofitted on 53 platforms at 21 stations.

Photo Caption:

1. Mr TM Lee, General Manager – Shatin to Central Link Electrical & Mechanical, explains the platform strengthening works being conducted at MTR Racecourse Station to pave way for APG installation further down the road.



2. EAL station platforms are being strengthened with the installation of steel bars and brackets (mockup work procedures).



3. Automatic platform gates will be retrofitted at the EAL stations. (Photomontage)

