

### **Mighty "Athena" Begins First Tunnel Drive on Hong Kong Island for Shatin to Central Link**

"Athena", the first tunnel boring machine (TBM) for the Hong Kong Island Section of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) opened a new chapter for the project this month by embarking on her mission to carve three of the four SCL TBM railway tunnels on the island. The boring works of the remaining tunnel will then be taken up by her sister "Zhi-nu". A celebration to mark the commencement of Athena's journey in the presence of representatives of the local community was held on 29 March 2016.

From the launching shaft on the temporarily reclaimed land at the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter, the giant "Athena" with a diameter over seven metres will first burrow beneath the busy city to excavate an up-track tunnel of over 600 metres to connect with the future Exhibition Station on the foreshore of Wan Chai North, while installing a concrete tunnel lining as she progresses starting from this month. She will then bore both the up-and-down-track tunnels between Fenwick Pier Street and Admiralty Station. Tunnel boring works are expected to commence in the first half of 2017.

"It is an exciting moment to witness the giant 'Athena' primed for action to begin our first tunnelling drive on Hong Kong Island. TBMs are highly effective and efficient and by bringing tunnel construction works entirely underground, we can minimise impacts on the environment and neighbouring communities which is crucial in the built-up areas along the railway alignment on Hong Kong Island," said Mr TM Lee, General Manager - SCL and Head of E&M Construction of MTR Corporation.

"The launch of 'Athena' marks an important step forward in the construction of the SCL. SCL is a strategic railway project. On completion, it will greatly enhance connectivity of the entire railway network on Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories thus forming an integral part of Rail Gen 2.0, Hong Kong's new generation of rail travel," he added.

The 17-kilometre SCL is a territory-wide strategic railway project with 10 stations, of which six will be interchange stations, and will create new East West and North South corridors that will allow for the seamless interchange of passengers heading to and from every corner of Hong Kong.

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TBM "Athena" is named after the Greek goddess of strength and wisdom, thus symbolising the might and intelligence needed to overcome challenges that may arise in the course of her mission to excavate a trio of railway tunnels. The name was selected from more than 30,000 entries by 7,000 students in a naming competition in 2014.

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#### About MTR Corporation

MTR Corporation is regarded as one of the world's leading railway operators for safety, reliability, customer service and cost efficiency. In its home base of Hong Kong, the Corporation operates nine commuter railway lines, a Light Rail network and a high-speed Airport Express link on which more than 5.5 million passenger trips are made on a normal week day. Another 5 million passenger trips are made on the rail services it operates outside Hong Kong in the Mainland of China, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Australia. In addition, the Corporation is involved in a range of railway construction projects as well as railway consultancy and contracting services around the world. Leveraging on its railway expertise, the Corporation is involved in the development of transit-related residential and commercial property projects, property management, shopping malls leasing and management, advertising media and telecommunication services.

For more information about MTR Corporation, please visit [www.mtr.com.hk](http://www.mtr.com.hk).

Photo Captions:

1. Mr TM Lee, General Manager – SCL and Head of E&M Construction of MTR Corporation (middle) shares the joy of the launch of “Athena”, the first tunnel boring machine for the Hong Kong Island Section of the Shatin to Central Link, with (from left) Mr Neil Ng, Project Manager – SCL Civil (North South Line) of MTR Corporation; Mr Stephen Ng Kam-chun, BBS, MH, JP, Chairman of Wan Chai District Council; Mr Jonathan Leung Man-ho, Government Engineer of the Railway Development Office of the Highways Department; (from right) Mr Alain Hervio, Project Director of Dragages Hong Kong; Mr Rick Chan, JP, District Officer (Wan Chai) and Mr Nicolas Borit, Managing Director of Dragages Hong Kong.



2. TBM “Athena”, named after the Greek goddess of strength and wisdom, excavates the up-track tunnel from reclaimed land at the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter to the future Exhibition Station of the Shatin to Central Link.

