

Border bus shuttle call

NEW Territories taxi drivers and minibus operators yesterday urged the Government to hold talks with mainland authorities in order to grant permits to allow minibus shuttle services through the Lok Ma Chau border checkpoint.

Such a shuttle service, which would include taxis being allowed to take passengers into the checkpoint, would provide much-needed business for taxi drivers, they said.

The Transport Department has recently allowed taxis to bring passengers up to the Lok Ma Chau checkpoint but they are not permitted to enter it.

At present only vehicles with special permits, such as lorries or tourist coaches, are allowed to pass through the checkpoint.

Chairman of the New Territories Taxi Drivers' Union Choi Kwok-hung said they were waiting for the Transport Department to come up with a policy on such an arrange-

By BEVERLY CHAU

ment and to negotiate with mainland officials.

"We could bring passengers to the border and minibuses take passengers from there to Huang-gang," Mr Choi said.

Chairman of the Hong Kong, Kowloon and New Territories Public and Maxicab Light Bus Merchants United Association Leung Hung said minibus drivers should be granted cross-border permits.

"Our services are flexible. We can provide quick transport services to passengers going short distances," he said.

Mr Leung said minibuses would not create a traffic overload at Lok Ma Chau given the expressways at the border.

Mr Choi claimed transport officials on the Chinese side welcomed the idea but had to wait until the Hong Kong Government approached them for discussion.