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Pay tribute to seafarers on their day

The Director of Marine, Mr Francis Liu, expressed gratitude to the world's seafarers, who number approximately 1.5 million and who have been making invaluable contributions to international trade and the world economy, on the Day of Seafarer. The International Maritime Organization has established the Day of the Seafarer on June 25 in 2010, aiming to pay tribute to seafarers.

Mr Liu celebrated this meaningful day together with the maritime community and nautical studies students at a buffet dinner party held on June 25 at the Mariners' Club, Tsim Sha Tsui. He offered his sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Marine Department, the Hong Kong Seamen's Union and the Hong Kong Maritime Forum in jointly organising a series of activities in

Hong Kong, aiming to draw public attention to seafarers' contributions.

Activities include roadside exhibitions at the Causeway Bay pedestrian precinct on June 16 and at the Mong Kok pedestrian precinct on June 17. The exhibitions showcased photographs of seafarers' daily work and life aboard vessels, and a group of young local seafarers were present to

give more details to the public. It also depicted career paths of ship officers to attract youngsters to consider seeking a seafaring career, in sustaining the position of Hong Kong as an international maritime centre. Mr Liu noted that the heavy rain during the exhibitions did not quench the burning fire in the hearts of the young seafarers, but on the contrary had the effect of boosting their passion.

Moreover, a visit to Kwai Tsing Container Terminals was arranged on June 22 for nautical studies students to learn more about port operations. They also embarked on super container-ships to see for themselves work and life onboard. Mr Liu believed those involved in the trip would have broadened their horizon and gained a valuable experience. 🌀



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Fatal water sport accidents reduce significantly

The number of fatal water sport accidents fell significantly to three cases in 2011, which showed the Safety Afloat Campaign started in 2007 had achieved its desired effect and enhanced the safety awareness of the public, the Director of Marine, Mr Francis Liu, said on May 9.

Speaking at the 2012 Safety Afloat Educational Seminar, Mr Liu said that the drowning of a swimmer during a launch picnic in Nam Fung Wan, Sai Kung, in late April was the first fatal water sport accident recorded this year. Investigations into the water sport accidents revealed that most of them could have been avoided. Most of the fatalities and injuries were attributable to a lack of safety awareness when participating in water sport activities.

He further elaborated that inadequate preparation on the part of those who engaged in marine leisure activities was another cause of the accidents, including failure to take heed of weather conditions or warnings, the lack of adequate planning for voyages, insufficient consideration of whether the areas concerned were suitable for the structures of the boats to be used or the nature of the relevant activities, and not having enough experienced crews on board to provide guidance or ensure that safe practices were followed by passengers when taking part in water sport activities.

Swimmers should first undergo training and gain proficiency; realise their own abilities; refrain from swimming shortly after consumption of food, alcohol or drugs; supervise children properly; and avoid swimming alone or away from companions, Mr Liu added.

He reminded coxswains and boat operators to have adequate professional knowledge. Coxswains and boat operators should familiarise themselves with all the safety precautions and contingency measures that should be in place on board, so as to avoid being at a loss in emergencies; check the structures and conditions of vessels before setting sail; and properly maintain the batteries to lower the risk of fire hazards caused by short circuits and flash fires.

The seventh Safety Afloat Educational Seminar jointly organised by the Marine Department, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) was held to enhance the safety awareness of the public and allow boating enthusiasts to express their views on ways to ensure marine recreational safety as water sport activities are getting more popular today.

A new Announcement in the Public Interest on water sport safety was specially produced this year by the Marine Depart-

ment and the Hong Kong Police Force, and started broadcasting from May 9 evening via TV and radio to disseminate water sport safety messages to the general public, with an aim of achieving the goal of zero accidents in water sport activities.

On the front line, officers of the Marine Department and the Marine Police will continue to step up their patrol activities in speed restricted zones, the water areas in the vicinity of popular beaches and water sports sites, and will take action against any illegal or reckless boating activities. The lifeguards of the LCSD will also keep an eye out for boating activities at beaches and the adjacent water areas. They will alert officers of the Marine Department and the Marine Police to take law enforcement action against offenders when necessary.

Mr Liu said he was confident that with these measures, together with the full co-operation and support of the industry and the general public, we would be able to fully enjoy the pleasure of marine leisure activities in this summer season and the years to come.

Apart from the Marine Department, representatives from the Marine Police, the LCSD and the Hong Kong Observatory, and the industry also joined the discussions.



HK keeps Qualship 21 status


The quality of Hong Kong-registered ships has been further confirmed as the maritime administration this year keeps the status in the Qualship 21 programme.

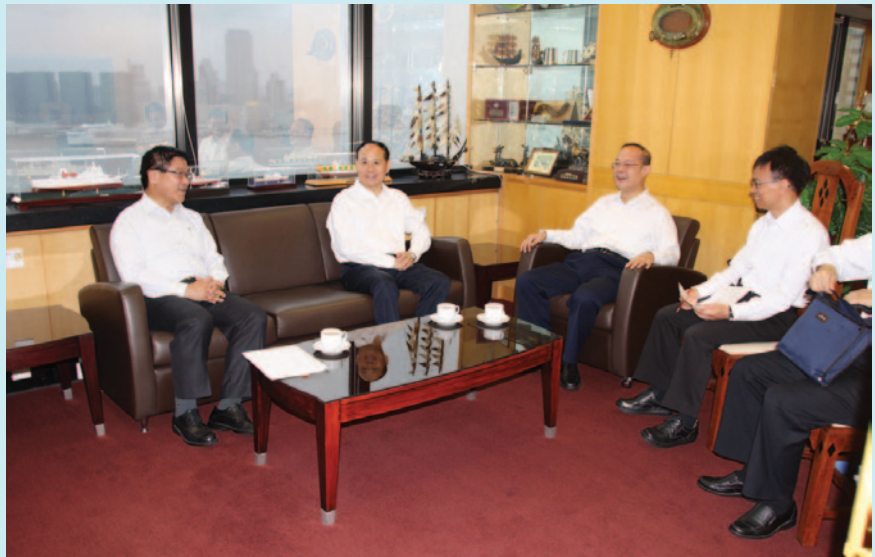
Qualship 21, which stands for "Quality Shipping for the 21st Century", is an initiative implemented by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) since 2001. The programme aims to encourage high-quality ships by providing incentives to quality operations.

Ships included in the Qualship 21 programme are subject to fewer port State control (PSC) inspections by the USCG whilst in the US waters.

A flag State is qualified for the Qualship 21 status when its ships have attained a USCG PSC three years' rolling average detention ratio of less than or equal to 1.0%, with at least 10 distinct arrivals in each of the past three years. In addition, a flag State must submit the executive summary to the USCG after having satisfactorily completed the International Maritime Organization's Voluntary Member State Audit Scheme.

Hong Kong re-acquired the Qualship 21 status in 2011.

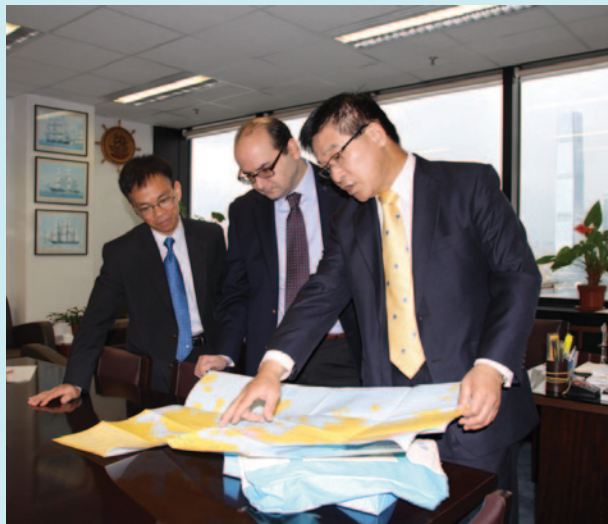
This year, the total number of qualified flag States has increased to 23. 



The Director of Marine, Mr Francis Liu (first left) exchanging views with the Director of Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration, Mr Liang Jian-wei (second left), on co-operation of search and rescue between Hong Kong and Guangdong.



The Director of Macao Maritime Administration leads a delegation to the Marine Department for a regular conference on Hong Kong – Macao maritime safety with the officials of the Marine Department.



The Director of Marine, Mr Francis Liu (right), explaining Hong Kong's harbour facilities and layout to the visiting Turkish Consul General, Mr Haldun Tekneci (centre). Looking on is the Deputy Director of Marine, Mr Ivan Tung.

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Marine accident investigations forum aims to enhance safety

Discussions by world maritime administrations and organisations on probes into marine accidents definitely improved the quality of investigations and may lead to the development of new standards and practices in enhancing maritime safety and preventing pollution, the Director of Marine, Mr Francis Liu, said on June 11.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Marine Accident Investigators' International Forum hosted by the Marine Department, Mr Liu noted that the event provided a platform for marine accident investigators from all over the world to exchange views, experi-

ences and lessons learnt, aiming at reducing accidents and enhancing co-operation in investigations.

Mr Liu pointed out that it was a fact of life that no matter what we did, accidents were still bound to happen. Besides making every effort and doing our utmost to prevent these occurrences, what we could do was to consolidate the lessons learnt from the accidents and, by sharing them, provided food for thought for initiatives to minimise the recurrences of similar accidents.

"Even though we cannot entirely prevent accidents from happening, we can reduce casualties and damages to the minimum," he said.

"So communications among maritime administrations and organisations are important."

During the five-day forum, five important topics discussed were the use of voyage data recorder information, human factors, fishing vessel safety, training of investigators and fires aboard roll-on/roll-off ferries.

A total of 48 delegates from 26 maritime administrations and organisations participated in the forum held at the Hong Kong Inter-Continental Grand Stanford Hotel. Delegates from Indonesia and the Macao Special Administrative Region joined as observers.



A group photo of the Marine Accident Investigators at the opening ceremony of the MAIIF 21 in Hong Kong.



The Director of Marine, Mr Francis Liu (centre), delivering a speech at the opening of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Marine Accident Investigators' International Forum (MAIIF 21). On his left is the Chairman of the MAIIF 21, Mr Martti Helkila; his right the Deputy Chairman, Mr Joerg Kaufmann.

Warm welcome to Chinese naval escort taskforce

After completing the mission in March this year, missile destroyer Haikou and missile frigate Yuncheng of the Chinese Navy's naval escort taskforce 171 on their way home called at the port of Hong Kong and berthed at the naval base on Stonecutters Island.

In celebration of the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China had given approval for the naval escort taskforce 171 to visit Hong Kong from April 30 to May 4.

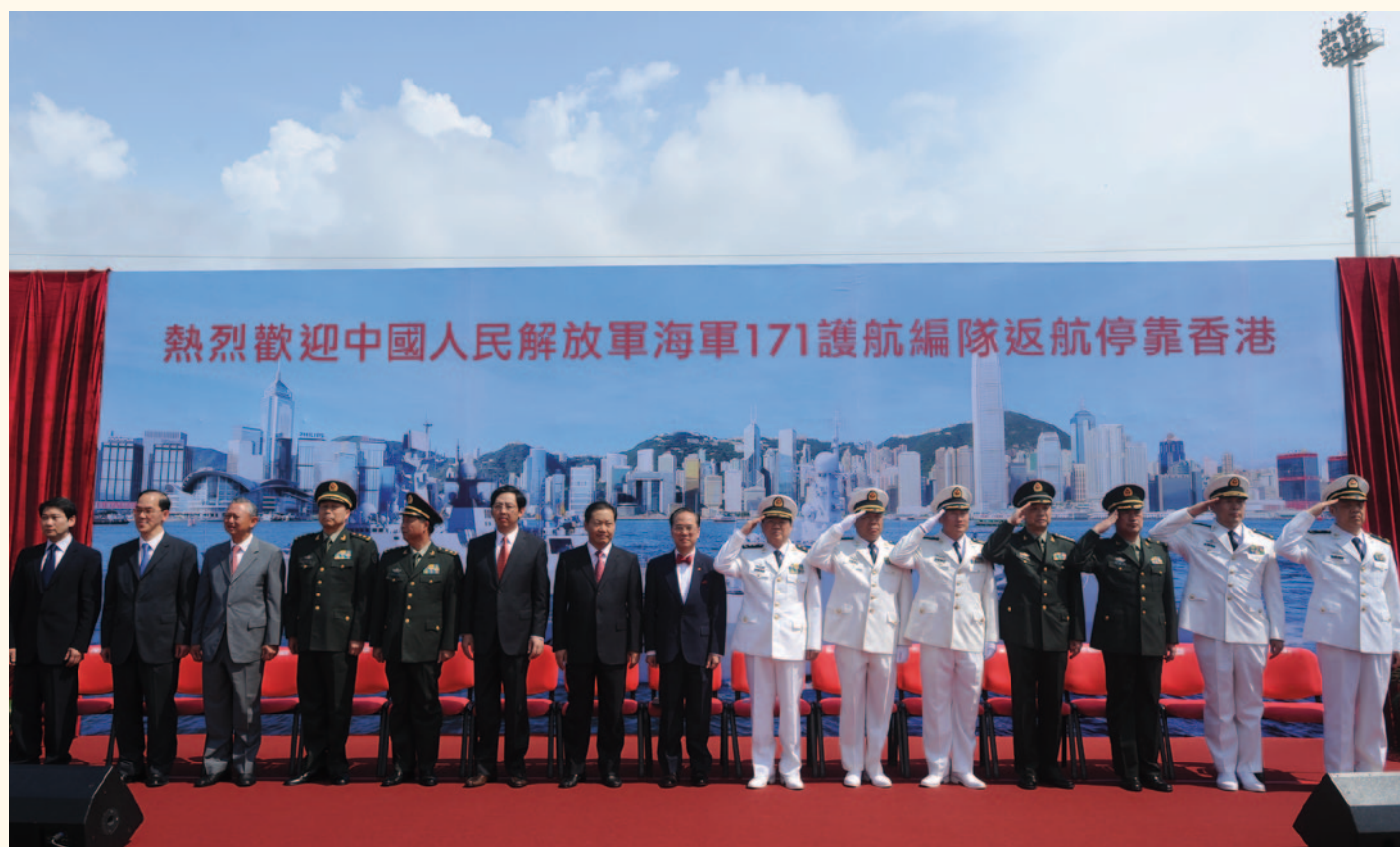
In the meantime, members of the public could tour the two warships, seeing for themselves the state-of-art accoutrements and knowing how



the crew had executed the escort mission.

Over the past four months, the taskforce successfully completed 40

times of the escort mission for a total of 240 Chinese and foreign ships, including 34 from Hong Kong.



Unite for championships at boat races

A total of 42 teams representing government departments, maritime-related associations and companies demonstrated their physical fitness and team spirit at the annual Dragon and Colour Boat Races hosted by the Marine Department (MD) at the Government Dockyard, Stonecutters Island on June 9.

The government departments which joined the competitions to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival were the MD, Fire Services Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Government Flying Service, Immigration Department, Civil Aid Service, Customs and Excise Department, Drainage Services Department and Electrical and Mechanical Services Department.

The associations and companies participating in paddling included the Bearable Sports Association; HK & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats

Association; HK Pilots Association; Nautical Institute (HK Branch); Polytechnic marine alumni association; Hong Kong St John Ambulance; Che Kung Colour Boat Association; Trial & Maintenance Unit; HK Institution of Engineers (Mechanical, Marine, Naval Architecture & Chemical); the

Institution of Mechanical Engineers (HK Branch); and a joint team formed by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (HK Section), HK Joint Branch of RINA and IMarEST, and HK Institute of Marine Technology.



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