

New senior management of the Marine Department

Ms Maisie Cheng Mei-size assumed the post of Director of Marine on September 15, succeeding Mr Michael Wong Wai-lun, who has assumed the post of Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands).

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Clement Cheung, said Ms Cheng is a seasoned Administrative Officer with rich experience in public administration as well as proven leadership and management skills. Mr Cheung has every confidence that Ms Cheng will serve the community with professionalism in her new capacity and will rise to the challenges ahead.

Mr Freely Cheng Kei assumed the post of Deputy Director of Marine (Special Duties) on September 29, succeeding Ms Shirley Lam Shuet-lai, who has assumed the post of Special Representative for Hong Kong Economic and Trade Affairs to the European Union. Mr Cheng heads the Task Force on Reform of the Department.

STH inspects cleanliness of harbor

The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, inspected the cleanliness of the harbour on September 30 and learnt about the cleaning measures at sea carried out by the Marine Department (MD) during the "Keep Clean 2015@Hong Kong: Our Home" Campaign

Accompanied by the Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng, Professor Cheung took a vessel to Tsuen Wan Bay from Central to inspect the cleanliness of the harbour and learn about the MD's work in cleaning up marine refuse at foreshore areas.

He said that, as a participating department of the "Keep Clean 2015@Hong Kong: Our Home" Campaign, the MD has enhanced cleaning in target areas with more accumulated marine refuse, and has deployed a foreshore cleaning team to strengthen clean-up measures at foreshore areas, in order to support existing cleaning work.

Currently, the MD's marine cleaning services contractor provides more than 70 vessels of various types to conduct daily scavenging services in Hong Kong waters. To maintain the cleanliness of Hong Kong waters, staff of the MD's Pollution Control Unit perform daily patrols in the waters of various districts every day to monitor the condition of the sea surface and the contractor's performance.

On August 11, officers of the MD distributed promotional leaflets at the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter to persons-in-charge and workers of fishing vessels to remind them to keep typhoon shelters clean during their activities. Foam plastic boxes for carrying their catches should be properly stored to prevent them from being carried into the sea by wind. Domestic refuse should be placed in plastic bags provided by the MD and then passed to the refuse collection vessels of the MD for handling.

When marine littering is found, the public should report the case by calling the 24-hour telephone hotline at 1823. Necessary information such as the name of the vessel and its license number, the littering time and venue, and the type of refuse and its quantity should be provided to facilitate necessary follow-up action.

HKSR passes 100 million gross tonnage mark

Ranked as the fourth largest ship register in the world, the Hong Kong Shipping Register (HKSR) passed the 100 million gross tonnage (GT) mark at the end of September with a total of 2,449 ships listed on the register.

A spokesperson for the Marine Department (MD) said on October 12 that the HKSR is committed to maintaining Hong Kong's high shipping standards. The HKSR conducts Pre-Registration Quality Control to ensure that ships at the time of joining the HKSR comply with all applicable safety and pollution prevention standards of the relevant international conventions. In addition, the HKSR also fully implements a Flag State Quality Control System to ensure ships on the register comply with international standards.

As a result of the quality control system, the Port State Control detention rate of Hong Kong-registered ships remains at a low level. Ships

registered in Hong Kong remain among the top performers in the white list issued by the Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of Port State Control, and are classified as low-risk ships in the Paris MoU. In addition, Hong Kong continues to hold the Qualship 21 status of the United States Coast Guard.

The spokesperson said that to ensure the high standards of Hong Kong-registered ships, the HKSR will continue to enhance its services and provide shipowners with technical support and advice. In addition, the MD will continue to improve its co-ordination with relevant Mainland authorities to provide better protection for Hong Kong-registered ships when they are in international waters and in foreign ports.

The HKSR was set up on December 3, 1990, with a GT of 6 million at the time.

Oilex and HNS Exercise test marine pollution responses

The Marine Department (MD) held two annual marine pollution response joint exercises, code-named Oilex 2015 and the Maritime Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Exercise 2015, simultaneously in the morning on October 16 at Junk Bay. The joint exercises were held to test local responses in the event of pollution caused by oil spillage and HNS in Hong Kong waters.

During the exercises, response groups contained and cleaned up a mock spill situation that would have posed threats to the local environment and facilities. In the scenario used, a tanker collided with a container vessel. The tanker was found to be leaking fuel oil and later anchored in Junk Bay, while five containers loaded with ammonium nitrate fell from the container vessel into the sea, subsequently drifting into Junk Bay, and leaked ammonium nitrate.

In the wake of the simulated oil spill, oil combat teams used floating barrier booms to encircle the tanker while salvage teams transferred the fuel oil and stopped up the leakage. Barrier booms were also set up near the tanker to prevent the spill from drifting. The exercise also demonstrated the

spraying of oil dispersant from pollution control vessels and a Government Flying Service (GFS) helicopter onto the sea, as well as the use of oil skimmers and other equipment.

Combating the simulated HNS spill, the response teams lifted the damaged containers out of the sea and sprayed seawater on the sea surface to expedite the dissolution and dilution of ammonium nitrate.

Under the Maritime Oil Spill Response Plan, the MD co-ordinated the oil spill exercise while other government departments, namely the Civil Aid Service, the GFS and the Hong Kong Police Force, also took part. Several oil companies and Hong Kong Response Limited also participated in the exercise.

The HNS spill response exercise was co-organised by the MD and the Environmental Protection Department with participation from the Fire Services Department, the Government Laboratory and the Hong Kong Police Force.

The exercises provided hands-on experience for relevant departments in adopting an emergency response strategy to prevent pollution according to the properties of the substances concerned.

Marine traffic control and safety measures for the National Day Fireworks Display

The Marine Department (MD) implemented marine traffic control and strengthened the inspection of spectator vessels for the National Day Fireworks Display held on October 1, to ensure that safety requirements are met.

On the event day, the MD established a closed area in the waters off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai, where barges for the fireworks display were anchored, and a restricted area in the Central Harbour. To ensure vessels disperse in an orderly manner, the Eastern and Western Cordon Lines of the restricted area were lifted in stages after the event.

To enhance marine safety, the MD officers strengthened inspections of spectator vessels, which included providing sufficient life-saving appliances on board, ensuring that children wear a lifejacket at all times and having coxswains keep a passenger and crew list on board.

The MD and the Police officers also strengthened inspections especially on speeding and overloading, and they maintained order at major landing facilities after the event to ensure the smooth and safe disembarkation of passengers.

Hong Kong and Macau hold meeting on maritime safety

The then-Director of Marine, Mr Michael Wong Wai-lun, led a delegation to Macao on July 23 for the meeting on maritime safety with the Director of Macao Marine and Water Bureau, Ms Wong Soi-man and her delegation, to further enhance communication and cooperation on maritime safety and the management of sea passenger transport between Hong Kong and Macao.

Regular meeting with China MSA

The regular meeting between the China Maritime Safety Administration (China MSA) and Hong Kong Marine Department (MD) was held in Yantai, Shandong from August 5 to 7. The then- Director of Marine, Mr Michael Wong Wai-lun, led a delegation to meet with the Director-general of the China MSA, Mr Chen Aiping and his delegation, to discuss issues of mutual interest, including comprehensive quality control of ships, control of vessel emissions, the vessel Traffic Separation Scheme routing system at Mirs Bay and release of the Pearl River Delta Electronic Navigational Charts.