

STH leads delegation to Greece

The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, led a delegation of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board to visit Greece in early June to promote Hong Kong's maritime services.

The delegation attended a business luncheon seminar in Athens on June 6, and Professor Cheung delivered a keynote speech there. They also attended the opening ceremony of Posidonia 2016, a large-scale international shipping exhibition, where Professor Cheung officiated at the opening of the Hong Kong Pavilion.

Outstanding shipping companies and seafarers honoured

The Marine Department and the Hong Kong Shipowners Association (HKSOA) jointly hosted a luncheon cum award presentation ceremony on June 17. Ship management companies, masters and crew were awarded for their support of the Hong Kong Shipping Register (HKSR), outstanding performance with Hong Kong ships and bravery on the high seas.

The Guest of Honour, Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, presented awards to China Shipping Group (Hong Kong) which has the highest gross tonnage (GT) on the HKSR in 2015; and to China Merchants Group (HK) Ltd., which placed the most GT on the HKSR in 2015.

The Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng, presented awards to the Anglo-Eastern Ship Management Ltd., Seaspan Ship Management Ltd., COSCO (H.K.) Shipping Co. Ltd., Pacific Basin Shipping (HK) Ltd. and Fleet Management Limited, which had outstanding performance in Port State Control inspections.

The Deputy Chairman of the HKSOA, Mr J.B. Rae-Smith presented awards to the representatives of three Hong Kong-registered vessels for the masters and crews' exemplary actions of bravery to save lives on the high seas. They were m.t. Fu Ning Wan, m.t. Brightoil Lucky, and m.t. Ya Long Wan.

Marine Department upgrades Vessel Traffic Services system

The Marine Department (MD) held a press briefing on July 21 to introduce the newly upgraded third generation Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) system and the reform work of the department.

The newly upgraded third generation VTS system is built for the practical situation of Hong Kong as a busy port. It meets the evolving international operational standards and reinforces Hong Kong's position as a world-class shipping hub port and an international maritime centre.

Located at the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) of the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal, the VTS system of the MD operates round the clock throughout the year. The VTS system has been established in accordance with international requirements. It distributes navigational information and advice to vessels through the very high frequency radio network to facilitate safe arrivals and departures.

The third generation VTS system complies with the requirements and operational standards of the International Maritime Organization and the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities. It has gradually come into operation since March this year. Thirteen radars are employed in the system to provide radar surveillance coverage of the Hong Kong navigable waters. Compared to the previous generation which could automatically track up to 5 000 marine targets, the new generation VTS system can automatically track up to 10 000 marine targets at any one time and is expected to meet the operational needs up to 2030. The system's ability to detect vessels under inclement weather is also enhanced. These enhancements allow the MD to monitor and regulate marine traffic more effectively. The system also provides vessel information to port users, government organisations and the general public.

The Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng, said at the press briefing that, under the supervision of the Steering Committee on Systemic Reform of the Marine Department chaired by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, the MD has been undertaking reforms since 2013. The MD has implemented a series of improvement measures to enhance marine safety. These include enhancing survey of local vessels, enhancing look-out duties by crew on vessels and strengthening the training and examination of coxswains. The MD's internal governance and work culture are also improving.

Looking ahead, the MD will continue to implement various improvement measures to enhance marine safety and introduce more fundamental reform to the regulatory regime of local vessels. These include reviewing the regulatory regime of local pleasure vessels, introducing legislation to control boating while under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and reviewing the coxswain licensing system. On internal governance, the MD will conduct a grade structure review for its two major professional grades, i.e. Marine Officers and Surveyors of Ships, to offer long-term solutions to its manpower and succession problems.

Concern on occupational safety and health in the maritime industry

The Harbour Transportation Workers General Union, the Small Craft Workers Union, the Occupational Safety and Health Council, the Labour Department and the industry organised the 2016 Work Safety Launching Ceremony on “Prevent Heat Stroke when Working Outdoor under Very Hot Weather” on May 20. The event served to remind practitioners of the sea transport and logistics industry of the risks when working outdoors during very hot weather; attendees also discussed how to take precautionary measures to avoid accidents.

Then Deputy Director of Marine, Mr HM Tung, said in his speech that practitioners of the sea transport and logistics industry, as well as those working at sea, engage in long periods of continuous manual work during high temperatures, which may easily invoke health problems such as dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and heat cramps. Employers should provide a good working environment and equipment to relieve the heat; they should also make appropriate work arrangements to reduce the hazards and risks of working during very hot weather.

Mr Tung emphasised the Marine Department’s concern about marine industrial safety and the occupational health conditions of practitioners. He called for the industry to continue to enhance occupational safety and health.

Third party risks insurance of local vessels increased

The Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Amount of Insurance Cover) (Amendment) Notice 2016 which increases the minimum amount of liability cover for

the compulsory third party risks insurance of local vessels will come into operation on September 1.

Except for any laid-up vessel with a written permission or non-mechanically propelled vessels with length overall not exceeding 4 metres, a certificated local vessel is required to be insured against third party risks in respect of deaths or personal injuries up to a specified minimum amount of liability cover.

The minimum liability cover for different types of vessels is to be increased as follows:

- * From \$5 million to \$10 million for local vessels permitted to carry more than 12 passengers, except Class I primitive vessels and Class IV vessels not let for hire or reward; and
- * From \$1 million to \$5 million for local vessels permitted to carry 12 or less than 12 passengers, Class I primitive vessels and Class IV vessels not let for hire or reward.

For local vessels with their policies of insurance made and in force immediately before September 1, 2016, the current statutory minimum amount of liability cover will continue to be applicable until (a) the date of expiry of the policy; (b) the expiry of one year beginning on September 1, 2016; or (c) the terms or conditions of the policy are altered in any way that would cause the policy to cease to be in compliance with the current statutory requirements, whichever is the earliest.

Marine Department Notice No. 71 of 2016 on the new statutory minimum amount of liability amount has been issued and it has been uploaded to the department's website (www.mardep.gov.hk). The MD also organised introduction seminars briefing sessions in July to explain the new requirements to the industry.

MD publishes "Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination Guidebook"

The Marine Department (MD) published "Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination Guidebook", which introduces the criteria for the Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination, the examination format and the syllabus, and provides sample questions for reference on June 8. The guidebook facilitates public understanding on the examination requirements and the navigational knowledge required for the professional qualification for maritime-related jobs, thereby promoting industry development.

The contents of the guidebook include knowledge on local waters, pilotage skills, the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, the use of radar, navigational skills and engineering. The contents are presented with illustrations and photos, as well as questions and answers, so as to give the public an easier means to understand the required navigational knowledge.

To participate in the Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination, an applicant must:

- * be at least 18 years old;
- * be able to prove to have:
 - (i) a minimum of nine months of service in any deck or engineering capacity in any mechanised vessel (other than pleasure vessels); or
 - (ii) 18 months of service on non-mechanised cargo vessels; or
 - (iii) 18 months of service on board a pleasure vessel while holding any type of pleasure vessel certificate of competency;
- * reach the eyesight standard prescribed by the MD; and
- * prove to have completed the in-service training and maritime course recognised by the MD.

After passing the examination, a holder of the Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate may act as the coxswain of a local Class I, II or III vessel that is not more than 15 metres in length and not more than 16.5m in length overall. Pleasure vessels are not included.

"Coxswain Grade 3 Certificate Examination Guidebook" (in Chinese only) is uploaded to the MD's website (www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/exam.html).

New regulation on verification of gross mass of a container carrying cargo comes into force

The Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Carriage of Cargoes) Regulation (Cap. 369AV) (Revision 2016) came into force on July 1. The regulation incorporated the latest requirements of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea to require shippers to verify and declare the verified gross mass of packed containers to carriers before loading them on vessels.

When verifying the mass of packed containers, shippers may opt to weigh each

packed container by using the approved weighing equipment, or weigh all packages and cargo items, including pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding the tare mass of the container to the sum of the single mass using a certified method approved by the Marine Department (MD).

The MD has issued the “Guidelines on the Verification of Gross Mass of a Container with Cargo Packed in Hong Kong”, Marine Department Notices No. 43, 87 and 90 on the new requirements and they are available at the MD’s website. The MD also organised introduction seminars to explain the new requirements and measures to the industry.

Regular meeting with Guangdong MSA

The regular meeting between the Hong Kong Marine Department (MD) and Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration (GDMSA) was held in Hong Kong on June 16. The Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng, led MD officers to meet with the Director of the GDMSA, Mr Liang Jianwei and his delegation, to discuss issues including the control of vessel emissions and verification of gross mass of containers.

Marine Department holds seminar to promote water sport safety

The Marine Department (MD), the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) held the 2016 Safety Afloat Educational Seminar at the Hong Kong Space Museum on May 12 to enhance the public's knowledge on water sport safety.

The Assistant Director of Marine (Port Control), Mr Lai Chi-tung, spoke at the seminar and reminded the public to be well prepared before participating in water sport activities to ensure safety. The MD reminded ship masters and boat operators to make appropriate preparations before setting sail for water sport activities. They should plan the voyages and consider whether the vessel's structure is suitable for the water area and the activity to be conducted. There should be enough experienced crew members on board to guide passengers to follow safety instructions when engaging in water sport activities. Ship masters or boat operators should also familiarise themselves with all the safety precautions and contingency measures, check the vessel's structure and its safety equipment on board before setting sail, and know the

location of the equipment and how to use it. They should also collect sufficient weather forecast information for the whole voyage and take heed of weather conditions or warnings.

Ship masters operating pleasure vessels should not enter shallow or dangerous waters, and should navigate slowly in speed-restricted zones or waters with others taking part in water sport activities. Boat operators should take appropriate safety measures to avoid any possible risk if they see other water sport activities nearby.

In recent years, there has been a trend for the water sport season to begin earlier. Some pleasure boats would operate at high speed near popular areas for water sport activities, which affects the safety of other users in the sea. The MD said the current legislation on speed-restricted zones has been in place for many years and the department is now conducting a review on the relevant legislation. This includes studies to adjust the number of speed-restricted zones and extend the duration of the restriction, and a review on the penalty for violations. The MD will consult the industry and the local community on the proposed amendments at an appropriate time. In addition, swimmers should swim at beaches with lifeguards on duty, stay inside the beach area and avoid swimming near anchored vessels. They should understand their physical abilities, take care of their children and avoid swimming alone or away from companions. They should also refrain from swimming right after consumption of food, alcohol or drugs.

The MD will continue its promotional and educational work to enhance the safety awareness of the public. Furthermore, officers of the Marine Police and the MD will step up their patrol activities in speed-restricted zones, waters in the vicinity of popular beaches and water sport sites, and will take action against any illegal or reckless boating activities. The LCSD lifeguards will also keep an eye out for boating activities at beaches and the adjacent waters. They will alert officers of the MD and the Marine Police to take law enforcement action against offenders when necessary.

The MD hopes that the industry and the public will co-operate in promoting water sport safety, so that everyone can enjoy pleasant leisure activities.

Hong Kong and Macau hold meeting on maritime safety

The Hong Kong Marine Department (MD) and Macao Marine and Water Bureau

held a meeting on maritime safety in Hong Kong on July 12. The Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng and MD officers met 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.

Celebrating the Day of the Seafarer

To celebrate the Day of the Seafarer, June 25, established by the International Maritime Organization, the Marine Department and the Hong Kong Seamen's Union jointly organised a series of activities; including visits to a container ship and a container terminal and a photo exhibition. The event aims to pay tribute to seafarers and to draw public attention to contributions they make.