

The fifth term government assumed office

The fifth-term Chief Executive, Principal Officials and members of the Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region assumed office on July 1. Mr Frank Chan Fan was appointed as the Secretary for Transport and Housing.

CS visits Marine Department

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, visited the Marine Department (MD) on June 12 to learn more about the work of MD and meet with the staff.

Mr Cheung started his visit by meeting with the Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng, and senior officers of the department at the MD headquarters at Harbour Building in Central. He was briefed on the work of various divisions and the challenges they were facing.

Accompanied by Ms Cheng, Mr Cheung then toured the Central Marine Office to better understand its daily work, including processing licence applications and renewals for local vessels, and handling reports on departures and arrivals of river trade vessels and ocean-going vessels.

Mr Cheung then went to the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal (MFT) in Sheung Wan to learn about the operation of MFT and cross-boundary ferry services between Hong Kong and Macau as well as other ports in the Mainland. Mr Cheung also visited the Vessel Traffic Centre located at the MFT. He received a briefing on the Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) system. The VTS system was built to meet the practical needs of Hong Kong's heavy port traffic. It distributes navigational information and advice to vessels through a very high frequency radio network to facilitate their safe arrival and departure. On the day of the visit, the tropical storm Merbok was approaching Hong Kong. Mr Cheung was briefed by staff of the department on the contingency measures taken before the Hong Kong Observatory issued the No. 8 Gale or Storm Signal to ensure marine safety and marine traffic order in adverse weather. Mr Cheung thanked the staff of the MD for their dedication to provide services to the public.

During the visit, Mr Cheung chatted with staff of the department and commended them for their commitment in applying professional knowledge and technical expertise to ensure smooth port operation and safety in Hong Kong waters. He encouraged them to continue making joint efforts to provide safe and quality maritime services for the industry and the public.

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 15. 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, then- Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, presented awards to China COSCO Shipping Corporation Limited which has the highest gross tonnage (GT) on the HKSR in 2016; to China Merchants Energy Shipping Co., Ltd. which placed the most GT on the HKSR in 2016. Professor Cheung also awarded Sovereign Venture Limited for its ship crossing the 105 million GT mark on the HKSR and Osaka Bay Limited for its ship crossing the 110 million GT mark on the HKSR.

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

The Chairman of the HKSOA, Ms Sabrina Chao 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.v. Grand Century, m.v. OOCL Utah and m.v. Pacific Spirit.

MD officers introduce daily work

A series of interviews with staff of the Marine Department (MD) initiated by the

Facebook page of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB), “Any Walker”, concluded in late May. Representatives of various grades, including the Shipping Safety Officer, Ship Inspector, Mechanical Inspector, Senior Shipping Assistant Master, Assistant Marine Controller and Marine Inspector, were featured in the interviews to introduce their daily work and share their feelings about the career.

Videos of all interviews are uploaded to the MD’s thematic webpages on “Maritime Industry” at www.mardep.gov.hk/theme/maritime_industry/. The Facebook page of the THB, “Any Walker”, can be accessed at www.facebook.com/anywalker.hk.

Marine traffic control and safety measures for the fireworks display to celebrate 20th anniversary of establishment of HKSAR

The Marine Department (MD) implemented marine traffic control and strengthened the inspection of spectator vessels during the fireworks display to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region held on July 1 to ensure that the safety requirements are met.

On the event day, the MD established a closed area in the waters 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 law enforcement, 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.

MD holds seminar to promote water sport safety

The Marine Department (MD), the Hong Kong Police Force and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) held the 2017 Safety Afloat Educational

Seminar at the Hong Kong Space Museum on May 22. The Deputy Director of Marine, Mr Wong Sai-fat, spoke at the seminar and reminded the public to be well prepared before participating in water sport activities to ensure safety.

The MD reminded coxswains and vessel 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. Coxswains and vessel 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.

Coxswains 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. Vessel operators should take appropriate safety measures to avoid any possible risk if they see other water sport activities nearby.

In addition, the MD plans to step up regulation on small open cruisers, i.e. open cruisers with an overall length of not more than 3 metres and fitted with an engine with total propulsion power of not more than 3 kilowatts, by introducing conditions in the Operating Licences of these vessels to impose restrictions on their operating area and circumstances. The MD will consult the industry on the proposed amendments at an appropriate time.

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. To further enhance public awareness in the use of local vessels during water sport activities, the MD is going to produce promotional leaflets to provide safety advice concerning various water sport activities.

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 cooperate in promoting water sport safety, so that everyone can enjoy pleasant leisure activities.

Conference to promote international ship safety

The Third Joint Ministerial Conference of the Paris and Tokyo Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on Port State Control was held in Vancouver, Canada on May 3 and 4. The Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng, attended the conference on behalf of the then-Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, and met with more than 45 ministers or representatives from the MOU member States to discuss initiatives on the promotion of a wider safety and security culture in the entire maritime industry, protection of the global marine environment and safeguarding seafarers with respect to their living and working conditions aboard ships. A new Ministerial Declaration was signed to show member States' commitment to protect the oceans by eliminating substandard shipping practices and advancing international ship safety.

Representatives of the Port of Stockton visit HK

Representatives of the Port of Stockton in California, the United States, visited the Marine Department on May 5. The Deputy Director of Marine, Mr Wong Sai-fat, led MD officers to meet with the delegation led by the Chairperson of the Stockton Port Commission, Ms Elizabeth Blanchard, and introduced the port operations and port facilities in Hong Kong.

Representatives of the USCG visit HK

Representatives of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) visited Hong Kong

from May 23 to 25 to share experience on the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. The Director of Marine, Ms Maisie Cheng, led MD officers to meet with the delegation led by Rear Admiral Vincent Atkins, the USCG's 14th District Commander. The delegation also met with representatives of the port facility operators and relevant law enforcement officers in Hong Kong.

Representatives from Gyeonggi, Korea visit HK

Representatives of the Gyeonggi Provincial Government and Gyeonggi Pyeongtaek Port Corporation visited Hong Kong from June 26 to 27. Senior Marine Officer, Mr Wong Siu-fai met with the delegation and introduced the port facilities in Hong Kong on June 27.