

Inter-departmental counter-terrorism exercise successfully concluded

The first inter-departmental counter-terrorism exercise organised by the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU) set up by the Security Bureau was held today (March 25) at Lei Yue Mun Park. The exercise, codenamed "Powersky", simulated an operation against a terrorist cell which was plotting an attack in Hong Kong using homemade explosives.

The primary objectives of the exercise were to enhance the co-ordination amongst various departments on counter-terrorism intelligence and response, and to heighten counter-terrorism awareness of the public.

Speaking to the media before the exercise started, the Under Secretary for Security, Mr Sonny Au, said that the ICTU was set up in April last year, with members from six disciplined services, namely the Hong Kong Police Force, the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department, the Correctional Services Department, the Fire Services Department and the Government Flying Service.

He said that the ICTU is dedicated to monitoring the global terrorism situation trends and counter-terrorism measures, enhancing co-ordination and analysis of counter-terrorism intelligence, reviewing and improving counter-terrorism strategies in Hong Kong, developing specialised counter-terrorism training and improving various emergency response plans, and providing advice related to counter-terrorism to the Secretary for Security. The ICTU provides an inter-departmental counter-terrorism platform on top of the existing counter-terrorism framework to enhance Hong Kong's overall counter-terrorism deployment through enhancing the co-ordination among departments, and achieving synergy in various aspects such as counter-terrorism intelligence, emergency response and training.

The "Powersky" exercise was an intelligence-led operation exercise, involving about 270 officers from the six member departments. The exercise had three phases. The first two phases, focusing on intelligence development of the case, had just completed. The intelligence developed by the ICTU led to the third phase, which was a field exercise. Upon collating and analysing the intelligence, the ICTU confirmed the terrorist cell's intention to plot a bomb attack and located the hideout of the terrorists. The ICTU co-ordinated various operational units to mount an operation to smash the terrorist plot against Hong Kong.

The scenarios of the exercise included officers of the Customs and Excise Department conducting an examination on a freight vehicle with a mobile X-ray vehicle scanning system and an explosive detector dog to detect precursor chemicals for making explosives; the Special Duties Unit raiding a terrorist cell with the aerial support of the Government Flying Service; the Counter Terrorism Response Unit neutralising terrorists; the Explosive

Ordnance Disposal Bureau diffusing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear leakage; the Organised Crime and Triad Bureau and the Immigration Department's Counter Terrorism Operations Section conducting scene investigation; and the Hazmat Team of the Fire Services Department carrying out decontamination procedures for infected persons.

A spokesman for the Security Bureau said, "The 'Powersky' exercise concluded successfully. The Government will assess the outcome of the exercise with a view to enhancing law enforcement officers' counter-terrorism preparedness and responsiveness in handling counter-terrorism intelligence and incidents."

[SHA visits Kwun Tong District](#)

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, visited Kwun Tong District today (March 25) to visit a co-working space and Tsui Ping River Garden, and meet with Kwun Tong District Council (KTDC) members.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the KTDC, Dr Bunny Chan, and the District Officer (Kwun Tong), Mr Steve Tse, Mr Lau first visited INDEX. INDEX is a project under the Space Sharing Scheme for Youth which aims at supporting youth start-ups. Young users are able to enjoy hardware facilities of the shared space at concessionary rental and other entrepreneurial support, such as seminars and thematic conferences.

Mr Lau then proceeded to Tsui Ping River Garden. Accompanied by the Head of the Energizing Kowloon East Office, Ms Brenda Au, he toured the facilities and was also briefed by Drainage Services Department representatives on the Revitalisation of Tsui Ping River project. The construction of Tsui Ping River Garden involved the reprovisioning of the adjacent Shing Yip Street Rest Garden. Occupying an area of about 5 800 square metres, the Garden is equipped with various facilities including a covered multi-purpose area, an elderly fitness corner, a featured lawn area, a viewing deck, rain shelters, a small water feature and landscaped areas, which provide quality public open space for public enjoyment.

Mr Lau rounded off the visit by meeting with KTDC members to exchange views on district issues.

Latest test results of opening-up investigation in second stage of holistic assessment strategy for Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project

The latest test results of the opening-up investigation in the second stage of the holistic assessment strategy for the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project (as at March 25) are now available at the Highways Department's website for the SCL project (www.hyd.gov.hk/en/road_and_railway/railway_projects/scl/index.html) for reference by the public.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 25) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From March 17 to 23, three community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A male patient, aged 46 with good past health, who lives in Chui Shue House, Lei Muk Shue (1) Estate, Sheung Kwai Chung;
2. A male patient, aged 47 with good past health, who lives in Block A, New Kwai Fong Gardens, Kwai Chung; and
3. A male patient, aged 65 with good past health, who lives in Sheung Sam House, Lung Hang Estate, Tai Wai.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of March 23, 14 LD cases had been reported in 2019. In 2018 and 2017, there were 105 and 72 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's

instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 µm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:

1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Speech by Acting CE at Green Finance Certification Scheme Presentation Ceremony cum Forum 2019 (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) 30th Anniversary Presents: Green Finance Certification Scheme Presentation Ceremony cum Forum 2019 today (March 25):

Dr W K Lo (Chairman of the HKQAA, Dr Lo Wai-kwok), distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to join you all today at the Green Finance Certification Scheme Presentation Ceremony cum Forum 2019. This event is also one of the programme events of the 30th anniversary of the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency for taking the lead to launch the Green Finance Certification Scheme in January last year to provide third-party conformity assessment for issuers on their green debt instruments, with a view to helping our financial sector explore new commercial and business opportunities in the green finance market, promoting a common understanding

of green finance and fostering environmentally friendly investments in Hong Kong, the Mainland and worldwide. This echoes well with the policy objective of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in developing Hong Kong into a premier financing platform for international and Mainland green enterprises and projects.

The HKSAR Government is determined to develop Hong Kong into a leading hub for green finance in the region, with focus on Mainland China and economies along the Belt and Road economic corridors. By leveraging our strengths and advantages as an international financial centre, we seek to create value through sophisticated professional services and our unparalleled expertise and reputation in the provision of financial services. Indeed, Hong Kong's sound legal and regulatory system, a deep and liquid capital market, robust financial infrastructure and a wealth of financial intermediaries and talent help maximise Hong Kong's potential in developing into a regional green finance hub.

While recognising the importance of market forces in shaping and determining the demand and supply for green bonds and other green financial products, the HKSAR Government will facilitate and provide necessary infrastructure and catalysts for jump-starting market developments. We will at the same time build up our international profile on green finance with increased international visibility and proactive promotion targeting audiences overseas.

We launched in June 2018 the Green Bond Grant Scheme to subsidise eligible green bond issuers in obtaining certification under the Green Finance Certification Scheme and attract more corporate green bond issuance in Hong Kong. From a broader perspective, the enhanced transparency and accreditation standard of green financial products will help strengthen market confidence in green finance.

As announced in the Chief Executive's inaugural Policy Address in 2017, the current-term HKSAR Government would take the lead in arranging the issuance of a green bond to demonstrate the Government's support for sustainable development and determination to combat climate change, and to promote the development of green finance. The Financial Secretary further announced in the 2018-19 Budget the launch of the Green Bond Programme with a borrowing ceiling of HK\$100 billion to encourage more issuers to arrange financing for their green projects through our capital markets and help grow the local green investor base. We are actively preparing for issuing the inaugural government green bond under the Programme targeting global green investors as soon as practical.

In addition, the three-year Pilot Bond Grant Scheme was also launched to attract local, Mainland and overseas enterprises to issue bonds, including green bonds, in Hong Kong. We have also introduced the Enhanced Qualifying Debt Instrument Scheme to provide tax concession for bond investment in Hong Kong with the aim of promoting our bond market development including green bond.

The priority that we accord to green finance is in consonance with our country's National 13th Five-Year Plan to construct a green financial system, develop green loans and green bonds and establish green development funds. Green finance is also a theme championed by G20 at the Hangzhou Summit in September 2016 where the importance of green finance was mentioned for the first time in its Leaders' Communique, recognising the need to "scale up green finance" in order to support environmentally friendly and sustainable growth globally.

Indeed, G20's call for scaling up green finance is underpinned by a growing market appetite for green bonds as evidenced by the increasing diversification of issuers and investors in the global green market. According to the Climate Bonds Initiative, global green bond issuance for 2018 reached US\$167.3 billion, up by 3 per cent over the preceding year.

In parallel, the Mainland's financial institutions are actively promoting relevant financing products such as green bonds to raise capital for environmental projects with a long payback period, such as renewable energy technology, waste treatment and sewage treatment. Last year alone, their green bond issuance that aligned with international green bond definitions reached US\$30.9 billion, representing about 18 per cent of the global market, second to the United States.

Locally, a two-fold increase to about US\$11 billion worth of green bonds were arranged and issued in Hong Kong last year by notable issuers from private sectors of Hong Kong, Mainland China and abroad, as well as multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Investment Bank. This testifies to the strengths of our financial platform in supporting further development of Hong Kong as a major green finance hub in the region. According to the Climate Bonds Initiative's green bond trading venue league table, the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited was ranked fifth globally and first in Asia last year.

We envisage that certification bodies that are well conversant with a spectrum of international, regional and local standards and guidelines will play a more significant role in the green finance development internationally, in view of the underlying trend of international harmonisation for a broader investor base. To this end, the HKSAR Government will continue to support the Green Finance Certification Scheme and encourage local, Mainland and overseas enterprises to make use of the Scheme and our capital markets for financing their green projects. In fact, the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency developed the Green Finance Certification Scheme with reference to a number of international and national standards on green finance. The Scheme also upholds its independence by refraining from rendering advisory or consultancy service in tandem to avoid potential conflict of interest.

Ladies and gentlemen, to facilitate cross-border investment in green bonds, we also make use of every opportunity to promote our competitive capital markets and green finance platform at regional and international forums, including the Asian Financial Forum held in Hong Kong in January this

year under the theme of "Creating a Sustainable and Inclusive Future". Relevant authorities such as Hong Kong Monetary Authority, HKEX and Securities and Futures Commission are also working in tandem with the Government's effort to develop Hong Kong as a leading centre for green finance and connect green finance flows with the Mainland and the rest of the world.

Hong Kong is an internationally renowned financial centre and global RMB business hub. We are well equipped to become a leading regional hub for green finance through issuing bonds, initial public offerings and other channels such as fund distribution in Hong Kong. However, we need the support and active participation of relevant sectors to achieve this ambitious goal. I would like to thank the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency once again for joining hands with the HKSAR Government in promoting green finance in Hong Kong, the region and beyond.

On this encouraging note, I wish the Green Finance Certification Scheme every success in the years ahead. I would also like to applaud the certified organisations on their accomplishment and determination in financing for a green cause. And, of course, I also wish you all a very successful, stimulating and fruitful Forum today. Thank you.

