

CAD follows up on air traffic control incident

The Civil Aviation Department (CAD) is following up on an air traffic control (ATC) incident that occurred yesterday morning (February 27). At around 7am yesterday, an MNG Airlines' A330 cargo flight (flight number MNB380) from Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) to Turkmenistan and another Silk Road Western Airlines' B777 cargo flight (flight number AZG625) to Baku were granted clearance by ATC officers to depart from the Centre Runway (Runway 07C) and the South Runway (Runway 07R) of HKIA, respectively, following standard flight procedures. After taking off, both cargo flights were subsequently instructed by ATC officers to climb to 5 000 feet and 3 000 feet, respectively, to maintain vertical separation. However, as the climbing rates of the two cargo flights varied from what the ATC officers had anticipated, the desired vertical separation was not achieved. During this time, both cargo flights followed standard departure procedures and maintained visual contact with each other. When the aircraft were approximately 7 nautical miles northeast of HKIA, the traffic collision avoidance system of the Silk Road Western Airlines' B777 cargo flight issued an alert to its crew, and the aircraft then descended to 2 500 feet. After the incident, both aircraft continued to their destinations according to their flight plans.

The CAD is highly concerned about the incident and has immediately initiated an investigation and follow-up actions according to procedures. Preliminary information indicates that the incident may involve non-compliance by ATC personnel with established procedures for arranging aircraft for take-off. The relevant ATC personnel have been temporarily removed from frontline ATC duties.