

Delegation of power in issuing exemptions to Hong Kong registered ships

The Government proposes to amend the Schedule to the Specification of Public Offices Notice (Cap. 1C) to delegate the power currently vested with the Director of Marine (DM) in issuing exemptions to Hong Kong registered ships to other officers of the Marine Department (MD).

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said today (January 17), "Under the proposal, relevant legislative provisions in the merchant shipping statutes will be added to the Schedule to enable the DM to delegate his or her power to approve exemptions in person to other MD officers with the necessary expertise and qualifications. The proposal will enhance the efficiency and timeline in handling exemption applications from ship owners and operators, thus minimising delays in ship schedules and/or port state control detention of Hong Kong registered ships."

The Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development and the Hong Kong Fleet Operation Advisory Committee have been consulted and they supported the legislative proposal.

The legislative proposal was gazetted today and will be tabled at the Legislative Council on February 12 for negative vetting.

Opening arrangements for two heritage centres during Lunar New Year holidays

The Antiquities and Monuments Office today (January 17) announced the opening arrangements for the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre (HKHDC) and the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre during the Lunar New Year holidays. Details are as follows:

January 24 (Lunar New Year's Eve)

The two heritage centres will open from 10am to 5pm.

January 25 and 26 (the first two days of the Lunar New Year)

The two heritage centres will be closed.

January 27 and 28 (the third and fourth day of the Lunar New Year)

The two heritage centres will open at the following hours:

HKHDC: 10am to 7pm

The Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre: 10am to 5pm

The two heritage centres will open as usual from the fifth day of the Lunar New Year (January 29).

Appointments to Construction Industry Council announced

The Government today (January 17) announced the re-appointment of the incumbent chairperson and 11 incumbent non-official members, as well as the appointment of three new non-official members, to the Construction Industry Council (CIC) for a two-year term from February 1, 2020, to January 31, 2022. The appointments were made by the Secretary for Development.

The re-appointed chairperson is Mr Chan Ka-kui. The 11 re-appointed non-official members are Mr Chan Chi-chiu, Mr Chan Kim-kwong, Mr Chan Pat-kan, Professor Chung Kwok-fai, Mr Ivan Fu Chin-shing, Mr Kenneth Mo Kon-fei, Mr Pan Shujie, Mr Rocky Poon Lock-kee, Mr Simon Wong Hin-wing, Ms Eliza Wong Yeuk-lan and Mr Yu Sai-yen. The three new non-official members are Mr Thomas Ho Kwok-kwan, Mr Ricky Leung Wing-kee and Mr Li Tat-wai.

"We welcome the new members and look forward to working closely with all members for the healthy and continuous development of the construction industry. We would also like to express our gratitude to the three outgoing members, Mr Chow Luen-kiu, Mr Alex Kwan King-fai and Mr Stephen Lai Yuk-fai, for their contributions to the CIC in the past years," a spokesman for the Development Bureau said.

The CIC was established in February 2007 as a statutory body with the mission to forge consensus on long-term strategic issues concerning the construction industry, convey the needs and aspirations of the industry to the Government, and provide a channel for the Government to solicit advice on all construction-related matters. Since its establishment, the CIC has embarked on a range of initiatives to elevate the quality of construction and to uphold the professionalism of the construction industry in Hong Kong.

The appointments were published in the Government Gazette today.

Membership of the CIC as from February 1, 2020, will be as follows:

Chairperson

Mr Chan Ka-kui

Members

Mr Chan Chi-chiu

Mr Chan Kim-kwong

Mr Chan Pat-kan

Professor Chung Kwok-fai

Mr Ivan Fu Chin-shing

Ms Ada Fung Yin-suen

Mr Thomas Ho Kwok-kwan

Mr Eddie Lam Kin-wing

Ms Amy Lee Sau-king

Mr Ricky Leung Wing-kee

Mr Li Tat-wai

Professor Lo Hong-kam

Mr Kenneth Mo Kon-fei

Mr Pan Shujie

Dr Derrick Pang Yat-bond

Mr Rocky Poon Lock-kee

Mr Simon Wong Hin-wing

Mr Ken Wong Kin-wai

Ms Eliza Wong Yeuk-lan

Mr Yu Sai-yen

Mr Ringo Yu Shek-man

Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Buildings

Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Ship Leasing Tax Concessions) Bill 2020 **gazetted**

The Government published the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Ship Leasing Tax Concessions) Bill 2020 in the Gazette today (January 17).

The Bill seeks to amend the Inland Revenue Ordinance (IRO) (Cap. 112) to give profits tax concessions to qualifying ship lessors (at a 0 per cent profits tax rate) and qualifying ship leasing managers (generally at an 8.25 per cent profits tax rate). Anti-abuse provisions are included in the Bill to safeguard the integrity of the tax system and comply with international tax

rules.

"Ship leasing is a high value-added maritime service with strong growth potential. Ship finance contributed more than half of the value added of the maritime services sector in Hong Kong. The legislative amendments would provide tax incentives for qualifying ship lessors and ship leasing managers to operate in Hong Kong. It would not only help enhance Hong Kong's position as a ship leasing centre in the Asia-Pacific region, but is also conducive to the growth of our shipping core and maritime cluster since ship leasing facilitates ship ownership and operation," a spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said.

Recognising the business opportunities arising from the growth of ship leasing, the competitive landscape for maritime business in the region and Hong Kong's strong fundamentals as an international financial centre, the Government announced in the 2018 Policy Address its plan to introduce tax concessions for ship leasing business. The Bill will introduce tax measures to strengthen Hong Kong's competitiveness in attracting ship leasing activities which will also help attract the setting up of related maritime business establishments in Hong Kong, thereby consolidating the city's position as an international maritime and financial centre.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council for first and second readings on February 12.

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 17) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.