

Police stringently follow up on illegal activities of damaging Police Headquarters

Police strongly condemn protestors for blocking Harcourt Road, Arsenal Street and Gloucester Road started at about 10.30pm yesterday (June 26) and further besieging and damaging the Police Headquarters (PHQ) in Wan Chai. Police will stringently follow up on these illegal activities.

The acts of the protestors seriously affected the work of Police, including the provision of emergency services to the public. The Report Room service in Wan Chai Police Station has been suspended since around 10.40pm yesterday. Eighteen calls of 999 hotline in Wan Chai Division could not be immediately handled. Extra resources were deployed to follow up. The incident also made staff members who were on night shift could not report duty.

While besieging PHQ, the protestors used mills barriers and sundries to block the entrance and exit gates, threw eggs at PHQ, drew graffiti on the outer walls, and destroyed the closed-circuit television on the outer wall of PHQ. They also targeted strong lights and laser beam at Police officers' eyes and maliciously obstructed officers from entering and leaving PHQ.

Police respect the public's freedom of expression, speech and assembly. However, the behaviour of the protestors obviously went beyond the legal boundary, which is not acceptable in our society. Police will deal with these illegal acts in a steadfast manner.

For the sake of public order and public safety, at about 3.30am, Police took actions to disperse protestors and to take down the obstacles in the vicinity of PHQ to resume traffic. Police's operations completed at around 6.45am this morning. During the operations, a man was arrested for assaulting police officer.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, June 27, 2019 is 104.8 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

UGC releases University Accountability Agreements

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The University Grants Committee (UGC) today (June 27) released the University Accountability Agreements (UAAs) for the 2019-22 triennium signed with the UGC-funded universities. The agreements were signed by the Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong; the Secretary-General of the UGC, Professor James Tang; and the Council Chairmen and Heads of the UGC-funded universities.

Mr Tong said, "Our universities play a critical role in the development of our society and the UGC has therefore always attached great importance to their robust governance. I am very pleased with the signing of the first UAA, which illustrates the concerted efforts of both the UGC and the UGC-funded universities to enhance accountability and transparency of the universities in their performance in the education of our youths and their drive to continuous improvement."

Pursuant to a key recommendation of the "Governance in UGC-funded Higher Education Institutions in Hong Kong" report (the Governance Report), the UAA was established after many rounds of consultations with universities over a three-year period since 2016. In addition to setting out the duties and responsibilities associated with public funding, the individual UAA contains performance indicators which include both sector-wide performance measures and institution-specific key performance indicators. They cover five key domains: (1) quality of the student experience of teaching and learning; (2) quality of research performance and of the research postgraduate experience; (3) knowledge transfer and wider engagement; (4) enhanced internationalisation; and (5) financial health and institutional sustainability. The performance indicators provide a useful tool for the UGC to assess the performance of universities against their individual goals under the principle of institutional autonomy.

Mr Tong stressed that the UGC-funded sector enjoys an excellent international reputation. Effective governance and public accountability of institutional activities would further assure public confidence and help ensure the sustainability of the UGC-funded sector.

Mr Tong added, "I would like to thank the universities, their councils and their management teams for their earnest support and valuable input to the UGC in establishing the UAA. The process of arriving at the agreed UAA was made much easier as a result of the ongoing and constructive dialogue between the universities and the UGC. I believe we have together made an important step in ensuring the continued success of our sector, which in turn contributes to the sustainable development of Hong Kong. Last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude to Sir Howard Newby, author of

the Governance Report, who also led the Task Force on Implementation of the Governance Report Recommendations in producing the UAA."

The UAA forms an integral part of the 2019-22 triennium funding planning process and the UGC will closely engage with the universities to reflect on the implementation of the UAA in light of future development and operational experience. As an enhanced governance framework, the UAA will be refined based on experience gained over time.

The individual UAAs have been uploaded to the website of the UGC (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/activity/university_acc_agree.html).

Update on cluster of respiratory infection cases in Castle Peak Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients presented with respiratory symptoms in a male forensic psychiatric ward, the spokesperson for Castle Peak Hospital gave the following update today (June 27):

Two more patients (aged 19 and 68) in the ward presented with respiratory symptoms. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients. The patients concerned are being treated under isolation with stable condition.

Admission to the ward has been suspended and restricted visiting has been imposed. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Pearl River

Delta Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network results for 2018 released

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Pearl River Delta Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network released today (June 27) a report on its 2018 monitoring results, which showed the continual improvement of air quality in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) last year. Compared with 2017, the average annual concentration levels of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), respirable suspended particulates (RSP) and fine suspended particulates (FSP) in the PRD in 2018 decreased by 18 per cent, 3 per cent, 6 per cent, 4 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

The emission reduction measures implemented by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in recent years have contributed to the improvement of the overall air quality in the PRD. The monitoring network was launched in November 2005. Compared with 2006, the average annual concentration levels of SO₂ and RSP in 2018 had decreased by 81 per cent and 36 per cent respectively, while the annual concentration level of NO₂ decreased by 28 per cent within the same period. Although the other two parameters (i.e. CO and FSP) have only been covered by the monitoring network since September 2014, both their average annual concentration levels had decreased by 13 per cent in 2018 compared with 2015. However, the 2018 average annual concentration level of ozone (O₃) had increased by 21 per cent compared with 2006, indicating that further alleviation of regional photochemical pollution is required. The pollution trends of the six air pollutants since 2006 are shown in the Annex.

To continually improve regional air quality and photochemical pollution, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Guangdong Provincial Government have long been committed to reducing emissions of key sources of air pollutants. The two governments have launched a study on post-2020 emission reduction targets and concentration levels of regional air pollutants with a view to formulating emission reduction targets after 2020. Meanwhile, the Macao Special Administrative Region Government has also rolled out and implemented various emission reduction initiatives.

Hong Kong has implemented various control measures on marine and land transport, power plants and non-road mobile machinery in order to improve air quality on a sustainable basis. On the vehicular emissions front, Hong Kong has tightened the emission standards for newly registered vehicles to Euro VI and will continue to phase out Euro III and pre-Euro III diesel commercial vehicles; it has also conducted a trial scheme for electric buses; retrofitted franchised buses with selective catalytic reduction devices; stepped up emission control on petrol and liquefied petroleum gas vehicles by using roadside remote sensing equipment; and encouraged the use of electric vehicles through tax incentives. As regards marine emissions, Hong Kong and the Guangdong Provincial Government have jointly implemented control measures to mandate vessels to use low-sulphur fuel. Hong Kong will also increase the use of natural gas in power generation, promote wider use of renewable energy and continue to tighten the emission caps for power plants progressively. In

addition, the emission standards for non-road vehicles have been tightened to Euro VI, on a par with road vehicles.

In 2018, Guangdong Province promulgated the Regulations of Guangdong Province on Prevention and Control of Atmospheric Pollution; published and implemented a three-year action plan on pollution control and safeguarding blue sky respectively; introduced targets for improving air quality in 2020; and implemented various other air pollution control measures to upgrade industry structure, enhance energy supply structure, adjust transportation structure, deepen industries control at source, enhance control of mobile and area sources, tackle polluting weather effectively and enhance its ability to make decisions based on scientific considerations. Newly received environmental impact assessment projects (including those for the steel, petrochemical and cement industries) must comply with the specific emission standards for air pollutants. All motor vehicle petrol and diesel on sale in Guangdong must meet National VI standards. Full promotion has also been given to the electrification of public transport, implementation of control measures on polluting industries and premises, introduction of joint inspections on volatile organic compounds, and the provision of guidance to key enterprises in different places to initiate "One Enterprise One Strategy" integrated control measures.

Macao has rolled out a series of emission reduction measures to focus on reducing pollution from mobile and stationary sources in accordance with the air pollution control and management initiatives laid down in the Five-Year Development Plan of the Macao Special Administrative Region (2016-2020) and the Environmental Protection Planning of Macao (2010-2020). Such measures include promulgating the use of natural gas and the construction of relevant facilities; upgrading emission standards for newly imported vehicles to Euro VI; formulating emission standards for in-use vehicles; phasing out polluting motorcycles with two-stroke engines; promoting new energy vehicles; raising the standards of vehicle fuels to Euro V; and implementing emission standards for stationary sources such as sewage plants and the chemical and pharmaceutical industries.

The monitoring network, comprising 23 air monitoring stations located in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, monitors six major air pollutants (i.e. SO₂, NO₂, O₃, RSP, FSP and CO). The Guangdong Environmental Monitoring Centre, the Environmental Protection Department of Hong Kong (HKEPD), the Macao Environmental Protection Bureau and the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau are responsible for the co-ordination, management and operation of the monitoring stations of the three sides, and will continue to release annual reports on the monitoring results and pollution trends of PRD as well as quarterly statistical monitoring results. Members of the public can visit the website of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Regional Air Quality Monitoring Information System (<http://113.108.142.147:20047>) direct, or the websites of the Department of Ecology and Environment of Guangdong Province (gdee.gd.gov.cn), the HKEPD (www.epd.gov.hk), the Macao Environmental Protection Bureau (www.dsqa.gov.mo) or the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (www.smg.gov.mo) to obtain the relevant annual reports and quarterly monitoring statistics.