

## Suspected MERS cases reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 7) reported two suspected cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The cases are detailed below:

Sex	Female	Female
Age	42	27
Affected areas involved	Israel and Jordan	Israel and Jordan
High-risk exposure	Nil	Nil
Hospital	Queen Mary Hospital	Queen Mary Hospital
Condition	Stable	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative	Negative

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

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# **“Gilded Glory: Chaozhou Woodcarving” exhibition to showcase customs and lifestyle of Chaoshan region**

The exhibition "Gilded Glory: Chaozhou Woodcarving" will open tomorrow (November 8) at the Hong Kong Museum of History. With around 120 exhibits, the exhibition will reveal the practical uses and artistic qualities of Chaozhou woodcarving, while also giving the audience a taste of the customs and humanistic spirit of Chaoshan region.

An opening ceremony was held today (November 7). Speaking at the ceremony, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Ms Michelle Li, said that the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed the Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Exchange and Co-operation Development Plan 2014-2018 in 2014 to strengthen co-operation among the three places. The Hong Kong Museum of History and Guangdong Museum also launched an exhibition exchange programme this year, demonstrating the close relationship between cultural institutes of Guangdong and Hong Kong.

Ms Li expressed her gratitude for the support of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Museum and the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community Organizations, and said she hopes to continue working with Mainland cultural institutes and community organisations to bring treasures of traditional Chinese art and culture to Hong Kong.

Highlight exhibits include a gilt wooden diamond-shaped food container featuring a pigmented lacquer painting of "Wine from Wang Maosheng"; a small gilt wooden shrine featuring a biwu dingshuai (awarding marshalship through a martial arts contest) motif; a gilt wooden divine sedan chair; painted queti brackets featuring "Tale of the lychee and mirror carved in relief"; a gilt wooden beam cushion featuring crab and plum blossoms in openwork; and a large gilt wooden lobster and crab cage in openwork provided by Mr Gu Liuxi, who inherited the national intangible cultural heritage of Chaozhou woodcarving.

Chaozhou woodcarving is known as "gilt wood", as lacquer and gold foil are often applied to give key parts or the entire work a magnificent gold finish. The ingenious openwork carving techniques, together with meaningful folk motifs and patterns, showcase the traditional lifestyle of the Chaoshan region. The exhibition will also illustrate customs and traditions of the Chaoshan community in Hong Kong through various woodcarving works, including the Yu Lan Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community, Chaozhou opera, Chaozhou music, dietary habits, customs and religious rituals.

Chaozhou woodcarving is a traditional Chinese folk handcraft with a long and distinguished history, and was popular across the Chaoshan region. Chaozhou woodcarving, along with Dongyang woodcarving, Huangyang woodcarving and Longyan woodcarving, are known as the "Four Greatest Schools of

Woodcarving in China". In 2006, Chaozhou woodcarving was inscribed onto the first national list of intangible cultural heritage.

Other officiating guests included the Director of the Guangdong Museum, Dr Wei Jun; the Executive Vice Chairman of the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community Organizations, Dr Ko Wing-man; and the Museum Director of the Hong Kong Museum of History, Ms Belinda Wong.

The exhibition, which will run until February 25 next year, is jointly presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, and jointly organised by the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Guangdong Museum.

The Hong Kong Museum of History is located at 100 Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui. For details of the exhibition, please visit [hk.history.museum/en\\_US/web/mh/exhibition/current.html](http://hk.history.museum/en_US/web/mh/exhibition/current.html), or call 2724 9042 for enquiries.

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## **Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions for Third Quarter 2018**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (November 7) the results of Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions for the third quarter of 2018.

Regarding SMEs' perception of banks' credit approval stance relative to 6 months ago, 77 per cent of respondents perceived similar or easier credit approval stance in the third quarter of 2018, compared with 72 per cent recorded in the previous quarter (Chart 1 in the Annex). 23 per cent of respondents perceived more difficult credit approval stance in the third quarter of 2018, as compared to 28 per cent in the previous quarter.

Of those respondents with existing credit lines, 98 per cent reported that banks' stance on existing credit lines was easier or unchanged in the third quarter of 2018, up from 94 per cent recorded in the previous quarter (Chart 2 in the Annex). 2 per cent of respondents reported tightened banks' stance in the third quarter of 2018, down from 6 per cent in the previous quarter.

The Survey also gauged the results of new credit applications from SMEs. 3.1 per cent of respondents reported that they had applied for new bank

credit during the third quarter of 2018. For respondents who already know their application outcomes, 94 per cent reported fully or partially successful applications; the proportion of respondents that reported fully successful applications increased to 83 per cent from 67 per cent in the survey of the previous quarter (Chart 3 in the Annex). The proportion of respondents that reported unsuccessful application increased from 2 per cent to 6 per cent. It should be noted that owing to a small sample size (i.e. 3.1 per cent of surveyed SMEs), the results on new credit applications from SMEs could be prone to large fluctuations. Care should be taken when interpreting the survey results.

#### About Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions

In light of the importance of SMEs to the Hong Kong economy and concerns about potential funding difficulties facing SMEs over the past few years, the HKMA has appointed the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) to carry out this Survey, starting from the third quarter of 2016. This Survey is conducted on a quarterly basis, covering about 2 500 SMEs from different economic sectors each time. The results of this Survey can help monitor the development of SMEs' access to bank credit from a demand-side perspective.

The results of this Survey should be interpreted with caution. Similar to other opinion surveys, views collected in this Survey may be affected by changes in sentiment due to idiosyncratic events that occurred over the Survey period, which can make the results prone to fluctuations. Readers are advised to interpret the results together with other economic and financial information. In addition, views collected are limited to the expected direction of inter-quarter changes (e.g. "tighter", "similar" or "easier") without providing information about the magnitude of these changes.

Detailed tables and technical information of this Survey are published on the website of the HKPC ([smecc.hkpc.org](http://smecc.hkpc.org)).

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## **Persons in custody at Shek Pik Prison attain good examination results**

A total of 107 persons in custody in Shek Pik Prison (SPP) of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) were presented with certificates at a ceremony today (November 7) in recognition of their study efforts and academic achievements.

The 107 persons in custody awarded certificates today had passed 236 papers with 164 distinctions and credits and achieved a total of 845 university credit points. Among them, eight persons in custody were awarded Bachelor Degrees of Business Administration, a Bachelor Degree of Business

Administration in China Business and Bachelor Degrees of General Studies by the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK). Two persons in custody attained good academic results and were presented with scholarships by the OUHK.

In 2018, a total of 199 persons in custody at SPP passed 306 papers in various distance learning courses and public examinations organised by the OUHK, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, the British Council and the City and Guilds International Limited.

Examinations passed covered a variety of subjects including Chinese language, English language, mathematics, economics, business finance, business statistics, business administration, software applications, Putonghua, accounting and book-keeping.

Officiating at the ceremony, the Honorary President of the Prisoners' Friends' Association (PFA) and member of the Legislative Council, Mr Michael Tien, said that the CSD endeavours to conduct suitable rehabilitation programmes to help persons in custody turn over a new leaf as well as reintegrate into society. Over the years, the PFA has long been supporting the rehabilitation work of the CSD and co-operating in fostering offender rehabilitation. The PFA's volunteers help persons in custody to cope with imprisonment by providing regular visits and correspondence.

During the ceremony, persons in custody at SPP staged a dance performance, while a band formed by persons in custody also sang to convey gratitude to their family members and all those helping them in rehabilitation.

Also attending the ceremony were the Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Lam Kwok-leung; representatives of non-governmental and community organisations; community leaders; and family members of certificate recipients.

Situated on Lantau Island, SPP is a maximum security institution with a capacity of 426 penal places for male adult persons in custody.

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## **LCQ13: Lifeguards employed by Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

Following is a question by Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (November 7):

Question:

Regarding the training received and the duties carried out by the two types of lifeguards (i.e. civil service lifeguards and seasonal lifeguards) employed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of occasions last year on which duties involving skin-diving and scuba-diving were carried out by the two aforesaid types of lifeguards, and a breakdown of the details of such duties by (i) name of the public swimming pool complex (complex)/beach where they were on duty and District Council (DC) district to which the complex/beach belonged, and (ii) the diving depth involved;

(2) among the two types of lifeguards, of the respective numbers and percentages of those who currently possess related diving qualifications, with a breakdown of such numbers by (i) name of the complex/beach where they are on duty and (ii) DC district to which the complex/beach belongs;

(3) given that LCSD indicated in 2016 that it would study ways to ensure that all newly recruited lifeguards should complete the three-stage induction training programme (induction training) (including skin-diving rescue), of the progress of such work, and the current number of civil service lifeguards who have not yet completed such training and, among those lifeguards, the number of those who need to perform life-saving duties;

(4) whether LCSD has provided diving training (other than induction training) for in-service lifeguards; if so, of the number of relevant courses organised each month in the past three years, as well as the respective numbers of applicants, those admitted and those passing the relevant tests; whether the lifeguards are required to receive such training and complete the training by a certain deadline, as well as the consequences for their non-compliance;

(5) whether LCSD will (i) require newly recruited lifeguards to possess related diving qualifications upon appointment or within a specific period after appointment, and (ii) encourage in-service lifeguards to obtain the relevant qualifications; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) whether there were lifeguards who had not yet completed the induction training being promoted to senior lifeguards in the past three years; if so, of a breakdown of the number of such lifeguards by the type of training which they had not completed;

(7) whether LCSD has deployed lifeguards on duty at beaches who have not yet received relevant training to perform scuba-diving duties; if so, how LCSD ensures that such lifeguards know how to operate the diving equipment;

(8) whether, in respect of the diving duties to be performed by lifeguards, LCSD has (i) formulated standard workflows, safety codes and contingency procedures, (ii) kept relevant work records, and (iii) deployed manpower to manage and maintain the diving equipment;

(9) of the number of times for which oxygen tanks for scuba diving were refilled in the past three years, with a breakdown by (i) name of

complex/beach and (ii) DC district to which the complex/beach belonged;

(10) of the number of cases of lifeguards performing diving rescues in the past three years and, among such cases, (i) the respective numbers of those in which the victims were drowned and those in which the victims were rescued, as well as (ii) the number of those in which there was a delay in rescue due to the lifeguards not possessing diving skills;

(11) whether the duties of LCSD's lifeguards include cleaning up oil spill, rubbish, faeces, blood and vomit within the area of the complex/beach concerned; if so, (i) of the respective numbers of cases in which lifeguards performed such types of cleaning duties in the past three years, with a breakdown by name of the complex/beach and by DC district to which the complex/beach belonged, and (ii) whether LCSD has provided training, guidelines and equipment for lifeguards in respect of such duties, and formulated infection prevention measures; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(12) as some lifeguards have indicated that they do not have a clear understanding about their scope of duties, whether LCSD will consider setting out the duties of lifeguards in detail; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(13) given that the duties of lifeguards cover the areas of life-saving, first aid, crowd control, customer services, assisting in law enforcement, etc., but the entry requirement on academic qualification for lifeguards is mere completion of Primary Six, whether LCSD will consider raising the entry requirement on academic qualification for lifeguards; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) currently provides lifeguard services at 44 public swimming pools, 38 gazetted beaches and five water sports centres. As at August 1, 2018, there were 1 959 lifeguards comprising 174 senior lifeguards and 1 785 lifeguards in LCSD. Of those 1 785 lifeguards, 687 lifeguards were non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff employed on a seasonal basis to augment the lifeguard manpower during the swimming season. As regards the 13-part question on the responsibilities, qualifications and training, departmental guidelines and future development of the lifeguard grade, my reply is as follows:

(1), (7), (10), (11) and (12) The major responsibilities of civil service lifeguards include performing lifesaving and first aid duties, assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order and assisting in cleansing work. While the major responsibilities of full-time NCSC seasonal lifeguards include ensuring swimmers' safety, performing lifesaving duties, maintenance of order and assisting in cleansing work. Details of the major responsibilities of lifeguards are clearly spelt out in recruitment advertisements and annual staff report of lifeguards. Besides, when newly-

appointed lifeguards report for duty, they will be briefed on their duties and work by staff of the department.

As regards rescue operations, lifeguards normally deploy skills taught and assessed in the training associated with the lifeguard qualifications (including underwater search by skin diving, etc.) in drowning incidents. Upon receiving a report of missing swimmer in beach water, lifeguards will carry out rescue operation and call the Police for assistance in the light of the circumstances. In addition to skin diving used in underwater search operations, trained and qualified lifeguards may carry out emergency underwater search for drowning victim(s) using scuba diving equipment under the supervision and instruction of senior lifeguards and assist in the rescue operation upon arrival of the diving personnel of the Fire Services Department where necessary. Lifeguards on duty at beaches without relevant training will not be deployed to carry out scuba diving in rescue and search operations. As skin diving forms one of the basic skills and responsibilities of lifeguards' daily lifesaving work, LCSD does not maintain relevant statistics. Details on the scuba diving work undertaken by lifeguards in 2017 are at Annex I. In the three cases of missing swimmers in the past three years, in addition to the use of skin diving, scuba diving was also carried out in the search operations. Despite having made all-out efforts in these rescues, the goal of saving the victims did not achieve. LCSD has no record of delayed rescue pertaining to the lack of diving knowledge/skills on the part of lifeguards.

Contractors are normally hired by LCSD for other tasks requiring diving for prolonged periods, e.g. underwater inspection or maintenance of facilities, etc. For instance, two professional contractors have been hired for inspection and maintenance of shark prevention nets respectively. The inspection contractor will deploy professional divers to conduct inspections to ensure proper maintenance of the shark prevention nets by the maintenance contractor. LCSD staff at the beaches may, as and when necessary, require the contractors concerned to conduct comprehensive inspection or carry out comprehensive maintenance of the shark prevention nets above and under water in accordance with the contract requirements. The diving tasks required for the inspection of the seabed conditions and the clearance work in the aftermath of the passage of Typhoon Mangkhut are undertaken by the outsourced contractors.

One of the major responsibilities of lifeguards is to assist in cleansing work. To keep pool water clean, officers-in-charge of swimming pools will deploy lifeguards to carry out cleansing work once refuse, faeces or vomitus is found. When LCSD is notified by the Marine Department of any oil spill incident near beach area or when venue staff find signs of oil contamination of beaches, officers-in-charge of beaches will lead and direct lifeguards and venue staff to assist in handling the incident, including monitoring whether beaches will be contaminated with oil spills, assisting and advising swimmers to go back to the shore, preventing dispersion of oil to beaches and assisting to clean up the contaminated sand, etc., in accordance with LCSD's emergency response plan for handling oil pollution. LCSD provides appropriate personal protective equipment for



lifeguards to carry out these tasks. Besides, guidelines have also been drawn up for the tasks concerned (including preventive measures against infectious diseases) with relevant training provided for lifeguards.

Statistics relating to the number of cases involving handling of oil spills, waste, faeces and vomitus in the past three years broken down by public swimming complexes/beaches and the District Council district of the swimming complexes/beaches are at Annex II.

(2) to (6) It is LCSD's requirement that all serving lifeguards and lifeguards to be recruited shall possess the Pool Lifeguard Award and Beach Lifeguard Award issued by the Hong Kong Life Saving Society (HKLSS). The Pool Lifeguard Award and Beach Lifeguard Award issued by HKLSS are internationally recognised lifesaving qualifications by the International Life Saving Federation (ILSF). As underwater rescue by skin diving is already an item to be assessed for the relevant Lifeguard Awards, all lifeguards have already possessed the skin diving skills for underwater rescue operation. On the other hand, scuba diving is not required to be assessed for the relevant Lifeguard Awards, and LCSD does not require lifeguards to possess any qualification on scuba diving.

To enhance the knowledge and skills of lifeguards, LCSD provides induction course on advanced skills on skin diving rescue to newly recruited civil service lifeguards every year. Besides, the department also provides skills enhancement programmes to serving lifeguards, including courses on advanced skills on skin diving rescue and scuba diving rescue. Civil service lifeguards posted to beaches and water sports centres have priority in joining scuba diving rescue courses. As at August 1, 2018, 942 and 392 civil service lifeguards of LCSD have received advanced training in skin diving rescue and training in scuba diving respectively.

Diving trainings provided for civil service lifeguards of LCSD in the past three years is in Table 1.

LCSD has been providing adequate training places for courses on scuba diving rescue for civil service lifeguards. The actual number of training places depends on the number of applicants for the courses. At present, applications from lifeguards to enrol in training courses due to operational needs are all accepted. LCSD will continue providing sufficient training places to meet its actual operational needs.

The requirement for serving lifeguards to take a mandatory training course (that is the integrated refresher course on Lifeguard Award) has been strictly implemented by LCSD. Moreover, the department will continue to provide sufficient training places to enable newly recruited lifeguards to complete the induction training programme as soon as possible so that they may practise their job skills and refresh their lifesaving knowledge and skills. At present, 119 civil service lifeguards in LCSD are yet to complete the induction training programme within three years after appointment. LCSD has arranged for all of them to complete the training programme this winter and issued letters to urge them to make best use of the training opportunities provided by the department to complete the programme. LCSD will

actively monitor the situation and arrange for newly appointed lifeguards to complete the induction training programme as soon as possible.

According to the records of LCSD, there has been no successful application from lifeguards who have not completed the required induction training programme (Note 1) for the post of senior lifeguards for the past three years.

(8) and (9) LCSD has departmental guidelines on beach management, which require officers-in-charge of beaches to brief newly posted lifeguards on their duties in detail to ensure that all lifeguards are familiar with the use of lifesaving facilities and equipment of the beach and that they know well the safety rules for swimmers as well as the accident-prone areas. Senior lifeguards are required to give instructions on the use of lifesaving equipment. Besides, the guidelines also require all lifeguards to participate in regular rescue drills (including diving training) and drills for rescue plans at their workplace to ensure that they are familiar with the corresponding rescue operation under different circumstances.

Currently, officers-in-charge of swimming pools and beaches maintain and arrange for maintenance of diving equipment and gears at their venues. The courses on scuba diving provided by the department have already covered areas on the relevant safety rules, points to note, maintenance and repair requirements for equipment concerned, etc. Information on the frequency of refilling of diving cylinders at swimming pools, beaches and water sports centres of LCSD in the past three years are at Annex III.

(13) The major responsibility of civil service lifeguards (including Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) and Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre)) is to provide lifesaving and related services. Hence, it is LCSD's requirement that applicants for the post shall possess a valid Beach Lifeguard Award and/or Pool Lifeguard Award issued by the Hong Kong Life Saving Society (HKLSS) (the internationally recognised lifesaving qualifications) to prove that they possess internationally recognised competence to perform lifesaving and lifeguard duties. Besides, LCSD also provides induction training to newly appointed lifeguards and opportunities for serving lifeguards to refresh and enhance skills through various trainings arranged every winter. LCSD will review the entry requirements for Artisan (Beach/ Swimming Pool) and Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) from time to time to meet the actual operational needs.

Note 1: The induction training programme was implemented since 2009. Lifeguards appointed before 2009 were not required to undergo the induction training. According to the records, 10 lifeguards appointed before the launch of the induction training programme were successful in their application for the post of senior lifeguards.