

Marine Department launches Green Incentive Scheme to facilitate green transformation of Hong Kong-registered ships

The Marine Department (MD) announced today (June 28) that the Green Incentive Scheme is now open for applications from eligible Hong Kong-registered ships until December 31, 2026, to encourage the green transformation of the maritime industry.

The Government promulgated the Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy on December 20, 2023, outlining 10 strategies and 32 concrete action measures to support the sustainable development needs of the maritime and port industry in Hong Kong, with a view to enhancing the long-term competitiveness of the industry. One of the action measures is to provide green incentive to Hong Kong-registered ships that have attained high ratings under the international standards on decarbonisation formulated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Government has allocated \$65 million in the 2024-25 Budget to implement this initiative.

Under the Scheme, all Hong Kong-registered ships of 5 000 gross tonnage or above in possession of a valid "Statement of Compliance – Fuel Oil Consumption Reporting and Operational Carbon Intensity Rating" showing that the ship has attained rating A or B in the Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII) formulated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) are eligible for the green incentive. Each qualified Hong Kong-registered ship is eligible to receive \$20,000 per corresponding year from 2024 to 2026. If a ship attains rating A or B in the CII throughout three years from 2024 to 2026, it may receive a maximum incentive of \$60,000.

A spokesman for the MD said, "Hong Kong-registered ships are renowned for their high quality and safety. The port state control detention rate of Hong Kong-registered ships in 2023 was only 0.81 per cent, significantly lower than the global average of 3.39 per cent. The Hong Kong Shipping Registry (HKSR) is consistently included in the white list of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the Tokyo MoU, and recognised in the United States Coast Guard Qualship 21 programme."

"Hong Kong, China, as an associate member of the IMO, has been committed to supporting the organisation's decarbonisation initiatives. Although various green incentives have been introduced by other flag administrations, so far none of them has introduced a CII-related green incentive. Hong Kong will be the pioneer administration supporting the IMO's green shipping policy on the CII. The measure will help promote the image of the HKSR as a green fleet and reinforce its brand in the international maritime arena," the spokesman continued.

To promote the work of the HKSR and introduce the Green Incentive Scheme, the MD has uploaded a new promotional leaflet (www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/publications/pdf/materials/hksr.pdf). The application form of the Scheme has also been uploaded onto the MD's website (www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/hksr/gisform.pdf).

United Nations Sanctions (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-Iran) (Amendment) Regulation 2024 gazetted

The Government today (June 28) gazetted the United Nations Sanctions (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-Iran) (Amendment) Regulation 2024 (the Amendment Regulation), which came into operation today.

"The Amendment Regulation amends the United Nations Sanctions (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-Iran) Regulation to reflect the expiry of certain restrictive measures imposed against Iran under the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2231," a Government spokesman said.

The expired measures relate to the prohibition against:

- the supply, sale, transfer or carriage of certain items to Iran;
- the supply, sale, transfer or carriage of certain items from Iran;
- the provision of certain training, services or assistance related to conventional arms;
- the provision or transfer of certain technology, assistance, training, services or resources related to ballistic missiles;
- making available to, or for the benefit of, certain persons or entities any funds or other financial assets or economic resources (economic assets);
- dealing with economic assets belonging to, or owned or controlled by, certain persons or entities;
- the sale and acquisition of interest in certain commercial activities;

and

- entry into or transit through the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) by certain persons.

The HKSAR Government has all along been implementing fully the sanctions imposed by the UNSC. The Amendment Regulation aims to give effect to the instructions by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for fulfilling the international obligations of the People's Republic of China as a Member State of the United Nations.

Unconscious person in custody dies in hospital

A 47-year-old male person in custody who had been found unconscious in Shek Pik Prison died in a public hospital today (June 28).

The person in custody was sentenced to imprisonment for the offence of trafficking in a dangerous drug in March 2012. He was admitted to the institution hospital for medical treatment due to physical discomfort. At 1.23am today, he was found unconscious in his bed in a hospital cell by correctional officers. The officers immediately provided first-aid treatment to him and called for reinforcement. A helicopter was called to send him to a public hospital for further treatment. His condition deteriorated and he was certified dead at 2.53am.

The case has been reported to the Police. A death inquest will be held by the Coroner's Court.

HKSARG warmly welcomes increase of duty-free allowance for luggage articles for visitors who are Mainland residents

A Government spokesman said today (June 28) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) warmly welcomed and expressed

sincere gratitude for the Central Government's active response to the HKSARG's proposal, announcing that the duty-free allowance for luggage articles brought into the Mainland from Hong Kong by visitors who are Mainland residents will be increased from the current level of RMB5,000 to RMB12,000, while retaining the measure of allowing for additional duty-free goods at the value of RMB3,000 purchased at port entry duty-free stores, bringing the total amount of allowance to RMB15,000.

The new measure will be applicable to six land ports, including Lo Wu, Futian (Lok Ma Chau Spur Line), Shenzhen Bay, West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and more, starting from July 1, and then be implemented at all ports starting from August 1.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said, "I am very grateful for the care of the Central Government and the introduction of various measures to promote Hong Kong's economy. The current measure of increasing the duty-free allowance for luggage articles brought into the Mainland from Hong Kong by visitors who are Mainland residents, implemented under the framework of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, shows the Central Government's support for the HKSAR's economic development. The new measure will enhance the shopping experience for Mainland resident visitors in Hong Kong and allow them greater flexibility when shopping, which is beneficial for Hong Kong in attracting more visitors and boosting the development of diversified tourism. Additionally, the measure can help stimulate the retail atmosphere in Hong Kong and bring vibrancy to the local economy."

The number of visitor arrivals has continued to increase in the first five months of this year. As of end-May, the total number of visitor arrivals reached 18 million, representing an increase of around 78 per cent compared to the same period last year. Of this, 13.8 million were Mainland visitors, an increase of around 74 per cent compared to the same period last year. The average length of stay for overnight Mainland visitors was 3.1 nights in the first quarter of this year, with an average per capita spending of HK\$5 400. The new measure will provide Mainland visitors with more shopping choices in Hong Kong to cater to their consumption needs, allow them to enjoy the pleasure of shopping and enrich their travel experience in Hong Kong.

Under the new arrangements, it is roughly estimated that this will bring an additional HK\$8.8 billion to HK\$17.6 billion in shopping expenditure to Hong Kong, generating value-added of about HK\$2.7 billion to HK\$5.4 billion to the Hong Kong economy.

The various measures introduced by the Central Government in support of Hong Kong, including adding 10 more Individual Visit Scheme cities, extending the period of stay for holders of an exit endorsement for business visit travelling to Hong Kong, and launching the Express Rail Link sleeper train between Hong Kong and Beijing/Shanghai, will further support Hong Kong's tourism and economic development and ensure the long-term prosperity and stability. Hong Kong's tourism and related industries are in the process of complementing the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" through

innovation and transformation, and developing more diversified tourism resources and vibrant travel itineraries in Hong Kong, with a view to adding vitality to the city's economy.

The HKSARG will carry out promotional efforts to inform Mainland visitors and related trades about the new policy arrangements. In addition, the Hong Kong Tourism Board will launch a new summer promotional event, Summer Chill Hong Kong, on July 11 to coincide with the peak season of visitor arrivals during the summer holidays. This will involve distributing 500 000 sets of offers worth more than HK\$100 million, covering sightseeing and transport, dining and consumption discounts. Full support will also be given to various large-scale consumption and promotion activities, including the second edition of the Hong Kong Shopping Festival organised by the Hong Kong Retail Management Association, to collaborate with the trade in attracting more overnight visitors to Hong Kong and encourage them to increase consumption.

All traffic lanes of Yiu Hing Road to fully reopen on June 30

The Highways Department (HyD) today (June 28) announced that the remaining temporarily closed traffic lane of a section of Yiu Hing Road near Yiu Tung Estate in Shau Kei Wan will be reopened at about 5.30am on June 30 (Sunday) to fully resume two-way traffic along the entire road, alongside the reopening of the northern footpath after rehabilitation and completion of a bus trial run.

During the torrential rain on September 8, 2023, a severe landslide occurred on a natural slope about 60 to 100 metres above Yiu Hing Road, resulting in the need for temporary full closure of the section of the carriageway fronting Yiu Ming House of Yiu Tung Estate. The HyD immediately collaborated with the Geotechnical Engineering Office to formulate a work plan for carrying out the emergency repair works, which are of high complexity and risk, for the natural slope in phases.

After the completion of the first phase of the slope repair works by the HyD, a traffic lane of the section of Yiu Hing Road was reopened for one-way westbound traffic on March 23, 2024. The HyD then continued to carry out the next phase of the slope repair works, including reinforcing the slope near the road surface with shotcrete, stabilising isolated boulders in the middle portion of the slope with the installation of rock dowels, and construction of concrete buttresses to stabilise the remnant tor at the crown of the slope.

The HyD has completed the above works and reinstated the road surface.

The remaining temporarily closed traffic lane of the section of Yiu Hing Road will be reopened to resume two-way traffic on June 30, while the northern footpath fronting Yiu Ming House of Yiu Tung Estate will be reopened at the same time. The seven franchised bus routes (i.e. Citybus Routes 77, 82S, 99, 720X, N8 and Cross Harbour Routes 110 and 606) and two green minibus (GMB) routes (GMB Routes 50 and 65) plying the road section will all resume their services using the original route. The original bus stops outside Yiu Hing House and Yiu Kwai House of Yiu Tung Estate and opposite to Shaukeiwan Plaza in the eastbound direction of Yiu Hing Road will be reopened, except for the original bus stop opposite to Yiu Ming House of Yiu Tung Estate in the westbound direction of Yiu Hing Road, which will continue to be suspended.

To further protect the safety of road users, the HyD will continue to carry out the remaining slope protection works, including the installation of metal protection nets on the shotcreted surface in the middle portion of the slope. In addition, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has completed the water pipe repair works along the northern footpath and will arrange for the phased removal of temporary pipes within Yiu Tung Estate. Meanwhile, the WSD and the Drainage Services Department will also seek to complete the repair works of all damaged underground public utilities as soon as possible. Upon completion of all related works processes, the HyD will carry out the remaining road reinstatement works with a view to fully reopening the southern footpath of Yiu Hing Road as soon as possible.

To protect the safety of road users during the slope protection works, the traffic lanes in both bounds and the footpath of the relevant section of Yiu Hing Road need to be temporarily closed to vehicular and pedestrian traffic when specified inclement weather warning signals (including a Localised Heavy Rain Advisory for the Eastern District, Hong Kong; Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signals; Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above; a Special Landslip Advisory for the Eastern District, Hong Kong, or a Landslip Warning) are in force. Appropriate traffic signs will be erected on-site to guide motorists and pedestrians. Franchised bus and GMB services plying both bounds of Yiu Hing Road will be temporarily diverted to route via Yiu Hing Road Bus Terminus to maintain services for the residents of Yiu Tung Estate. Members of the public are advised to pay attention to the latest information released by the Hong Kong Observatory as well as the latest traffic news distributed via radio, television and the "HKEMobility" mobile application.