

## Joint operation to remove dangerous scaffolding erected in rear lanes at Ma Tau Wai Road completed

The Buildings Department (BD) in collaboration with the Lands Department (LandsD) and other relevant government departments, including the Home Affairs Department, the Highways Department, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Police, mounted a joint operation yesterday (August 18) to remove the scaffolding erected in the private rear lanes between 182-220 Ma Tau Wai Road and 1-9 Shek Tong Street and 484-510 Chatham Road North, and on the government land facing Shek Tong Street and the pavement of Ma Tau Wai Road. The operation was completed today (August 19).

The BD earlier received public reports about the erection of large scaffolding at the rear lanes at the above-mentioned area. An on-site inspection by the BD found that the scaffolding was partly erected in the private rear lanes and partly on government land. The LandsD was then notified for follow-up in parallel.

The BD's investigations revealed that the scaffolding in the rear lanes and on the government land was erected by the same person. As the person failed to give a reasonable explanation for the use of the scaffolding, the BD had urged the person to remove the scaffolding as soon as possible.

A recent inspection by the BD revealed that the scaffolding had continued to expand, causing serious obstruction to the emergency exits of nearby buildings, and was structurally unsafe. For the sake of public safety, the BD and the LandsD mounted the joint operation yesterday, pursuant to section 26(4) of the Buildings Ordinance (BO) and section 6(1) of the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, and arranged for a government contractor to carry out emergency works to remove the scaffolding in both the private rear lanes and on government land. After the operation, the BD will recover the cost of works and the supervision charge from the person who erected the scaffolding.

The BD is also conducting an investigation and collecting evidence on suspected contravention of the BO for consideration of suitable follow-up action.

Regarding the unauthorised building works (UBWs) and the projecting signboards at the side of 182-186 Ma Tau Wai Road, the BD has earlier issued removal orders to the persons concerned under the BO, requiring them to remove the UBWs and the signboards. As the persons concerned have lodged appeals in respect of the removal orders, according to the provisions of the BO, the BD will proceed with further action after the appeal proceedings have been completed.

Moreover, regarding the unauthorised stone house at the rear lane on the

ground floor of 9 Shek Tong Street, the BD has earlier issued a removal order to the owner concerned, requiring him to remove the UBWs. The owner advised that demolition works will be carried out. To ensure the demolition works can be carried out smoothly, the BD applied to the court for a closure order today and was granted an order to close the unauthorised stone house. If the owner fails to commence demolition works within a short period of time, the BD will arrange for a government contractor to carry out the demolition works and recover the cost of works, the supervision charge and the surcharge from the owner.

As for the UBWs at the external wall and the flat roof at 2/F, 182-186 Ma Tau Wai Road, the owner was earlier prosecuted by the BD under the BO and was convicted and fined about \$40,000 in total by the court last year. As the owner persisted in not complying with the removal orders, the BD is instigating another prosecution against the owner under the BO.

A spokesman for the BD reiterated, "We handle cases of contravention of the BO in a serious manner. The Department will take enforcement actions under the BO if irregularities are found again at the above-mentioned locations."