

S for S reviews CSD passing-out parade

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) held a passing-out parade at the Staff Training Institute in Stanley today (December 17) to mark the graduation of 28 Officers and 114 Assistant Officers II. The Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, reviewed the parade.

Speaking at the parade, Mr Tang said the CSD, being an integral part of Hong Kong's criminal justice system, has all along committed itself to providing a secure custodial environment for persons in custody (PICs). In the past year or so, with the safeguards of the Hong Kong National Security Law, the improved electoral system and the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong", Hong Kong has got back on the right track of "one country, two systems", and the society has restored order from chaos in a short period of time, resolving problems at their roots. Correctional officers play a pivotal role in maintaining the stability of Hong Kong by remaining steadfast in duties, riding out challenges coming from within and outside prisons, and being on full alert to prevent anti-China forces from stirring up disorder in Hong Kong again.

He pointed out that since last year, a large number of people have been detained in correctional institutions due to riot-related offences, and the number of remands has reached a decade high. With forward-looking planning, the CSD has flexibly deployed resources in a timely manner in order to arrange for these PICs to be detained in different institutions, thereby enhancing the management effectiveness. Some of these PICs are radicals who are opposed to China and attempt to destabilise Hong Kong. They have established links with outside groups in an attempt to build up forces behind bars, disseminate fake news and sow the seeds of endangerment of national security. They have tried to establish privileges and recruit followers in prisons, with an aim to challenge the authority of the department. With the dedicated efforts of the professional and well-trained correctional officers in combating illicit activities without fear, the CSD has been successful in preventing the prisons from being turned into bases for subversion against China and Hong Kong.

Mr Tang commended the CSD for keeping its rehabilitation work abreast of the times by providing comprehensive rehabilitation programmes in a strategic manner, based on the principle of "Correction first and Rehabilitation follows". In view of a propensity for violence among young people as a result of the riots in recent years, the clinical psychologists of the department have designed a new counselling service, "Youth Lab", which aims to help young PICs adjust their mode of thinking and strengthen their law-abiding awareness. Meanwhile, the CSD and the Police work hand in hand for a new initiative called "Walk with YOUth Programme", under which volunteers from both departments organise a series of activities to help young PICs establish correct values. With regard to education, the CSD has introduced a programme, "Understanding History is the Beginning of Knowledge", to enhance young PICs' understanding of Chinese history in an interesting way, and to foster their sense of national identity. Moreover, the department has stepped up its

counselling efforts to strengthen PICs' ability to judge the truthfulness of online information and help them develop critical thinking.

Mr Tang said, on community education, the CSD has disseminated to young people the messages of "leading a law-abiding and drug-free life as well as supporting offender rehabilitation" through the adventure-based programme, "Mission in Prison", and the uniform group, "Rehabilitation Pioneer Leaders", under the Rehabilitation Pioneer Project. The CSD's policies on "Correction" and "Rehabilitation" complement well with each other and have shown encouraging results.

Mr Tang also pointed out that the CSD has already included the Constitution, the Basic Law, the Hong Kong National Security Law and national studies in the compulsory subjects of the recruit training programme, and refresher training programmes. The department has also invited the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the National Security Department of the Hong Kong Police to jointly hold talks for CSD staff members so as to deepen their understanding of the relevant laws.

He encouraged graduates to maintain the department's unswerving commitment over the last century and discharge duties with perseverance with a view to building an even better Hong Kong.

The 2021 Legislative Council General Election will be held this Sunday (December 19). Mr Tang appealed to the public again, particularly the disciplined services staff, to actively participate in the election by casting their votes to elect people who love the country and Hong Kong so as to continue the good governance for a harmonious, stable and prosperous Hong Kong.

One of the graduates today is Assistant Officer II, Mr Wat King-long. He is a long-distance runner who was awarded the Young Runner of the Year of the Hong Kong Trail Running Awards. He participated in a number of large-scale international long-distance running events in the past and won the second runner-up of his group in the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon this year. He hopes that he will encourage PICs, with his sheer perseverance as an athlete, to face difficulties in a positive manner.