

GFS and HKO introduce operation Tropical Cyclone Reconnaissance

â€‹The Government Flying Service (GFS) and the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) today (November 24) held a joint press conference on previous Tropical Cyclone Reconnaissance missions with the dropsonde system.

The GFS, during typhoons Saola and Koinu, dispatched a Challenger 605 fixed-wing aircraft to deploy sondes at the designated co-ordinates and altitudes provided by the HKO to collect tropical cyclone meteorological data to enhance the monitoring of typhoons and preparedness.

The Senior Scientific Officer (Aviation Meteorological Data Analytics) of the HKO, Mr Cheung Ping, said, "The use of the dropsonde system enables first-hand meteorological data to be collected at various altitudes of the atmosphere, complementing the lack of conventional weather observations over the ocean, and facilitating the HKO in the analysis of the intensity and three-dimensional structure of tropical cyclones. The use of collected data in numerical weather prediction models could help improve the capability in predicting tropical cyclones."

Pilot I (Aeroplane) of the GFS, Captain Elaine Chan, said that the dropsonde system provides a safer and more effective way to collect meteorological data than sending an aircraft into a tropical cyclone. However, the mission still involves certain risks.

"Despite the fact that the crew is entering a tropical cyclone at a high altitude, they may still encounter conditions such as severe turbulence, hail and icing during the mission. Therefore, the crew needs to constantly review weather and aircraft conditions, to ensure that the mission is carried out safely. In the event of cabin depressurisation or other emergencies, the crew must respond immediately or even abort the mission," Captain Chan said.

The GSF and the HKO officially introduced the dropsonde system in 2016 to enhance the collection of meteorological data, with the first mission completed in September 2016. The GFS Challenger 605 has since conducted 57 dropsonde missions to collect meteorological data for 38 tropical cyclones, including typhoons Mangkhut and Hato in 2017 and typhoons Saola and Koinu in recent months.

The dropsonde system deploys an aircraft to release the dropsonde unit from a high altitude. The dropsonde unit, which contains meteorological sensors and a global positioning system, records wind direction, wind speed, temperature, air pressure and humidity at different locations during descent. The data is transmitted back to the aircraft through radio transmission, then to the HKO in real time via the satellite system for analysis.

Appointments to Social Welfare Advisory Committee

The Government announced today (November 24) the reappointment of seven incumbent members, as well as the appointment of two new members, namely Ms Anthea Lee Shuk-wai and Mr Francis Ngai Wah-sing, to the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC). Their appointments will take effect on December 1 for a term of two years.

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The SWAC advises the Government on social welfare policy and from time to time assists the Government in reviewing relevant services. The reappointed and newly appointed members come from a diverse background. I look forward to their valuable advice on the work of the SWAC."

The membership list of the SWAC with effect from December 1, 2023, is as follows:

Chairman

Mr Lester Garson Huang

Non-official members

Professor Bai Xue
Miss Cheung Sze-wing
Mr Andy Ho Wing-cheong
Mr Frederick Lai Wing-hoi
Dr Lam James Joseph
Ms Alice Lau Oi-sze
Ms Anthea Lee Shuk-wai
Dr Wingco Lo Kam-wing
Professor Petrus Ng Yat-nam
Mr Francis Ngai Wah-sing
Dr Pan Pey-chyou
Dr Ricky Szeto Wing-fu
Ms Rebecca Tsai Ching-yu
Dr Rizwan Ullah
Ms Eva Wong Ching-hung
Mr John Wong Chung
Professor Frances Wong Kam-yuet
Mr Barry Wong Man-sing
Ms Wendy Yuen Miu-ling

[Hong Kong Customs and Marine Police detect cigarette smuggling case in joint operation \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs and the Marine Police conducted a joint operation yesterday (November 23) in the waters near Lantau Island and seized about 2.9 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$10.73 million and a duty potential of about \$7.25 million.

During the joint anti-smuggling operation conducted near Lantau Island early in the morning yesterday, Customs officers and Police officers spotted a suspicious speedboat with three suspicious men and boxes of goods loaded on board heading from the east of Cheung Chau to Lantau Island. Enforcement officers immediately took action. During the chase, officers found that some of the boxes were thrown into the sea by the men. The speedboat finally ran aground at a seashore at Tai Long Wan of Lantau Island. The three suspicious men abandoned the speedboat and fled. A total of 290 boxes of goods wrapped in plastic bags which contained about 2.9 million suspected illicit cigarettes were found on the speedboat and the waters nearby. The speedboat was also detained for further investigation.

An investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Customs reminds members of the public that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).



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Adjustment in ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations in December 2023

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (November 24) announced an adjustment to the auto-LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations from December 1 to December 31, 2023, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contracts of the dedicated LPG filling stations.

A department spokesman said that the adjustment on December 1, 2023, would reflect the movement of the LPG international price in November 2023. The adjusted auto-LPG ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations would range from \$3.67 to \$4.54 per litre, amounting to an increase of \$0.02 to \$0.03 per litre.

The spokesman said that the auto-LPG ceiling prices were adjusted according to a pricing formula specified in the contracts. The formula comprises two elements – the LPG international price and the LPG operating price. The LPG international price refers to the LPG international price of the preceding month. The LPG operating price is adjusted on February 1 and June 1 annually according to the average movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index and the Nominal Wage Index.

The auto-LPG ceiling prices for respective dedicated LPG filling stations in December 2023 are as follows:

Location of Dedicated LPG Filling Station	Auto-LPG Ceiling Price in December 2023 (HK\$/litre)	Auto-LPG Ceiling Price in November 2023 (HK\$/litre)
Kwai On Road, Kwai Chung	3.67	3.64
Sham Mong Road, Mei Foo	3.73	3.71
Wai Lok Street, Kwun Tong	3.78	3.76
Cheung Yip Street, Kowloon Bay	3.83	3.80
Ngo Cheung Road, West Kowloon	3.84	3.81
Yuen Chau Tsai, Tai Po	3.89	3.86
Tak Yip Street, Yuen Long	3.99	3.96
Hang Yiu Street, Ma On Shan	4.01	3.98
Marsh Road, Wan Chai	4.02	4.00
Fung Mat Road, Sheung Wan	4.04	4.02

Yip Wong Road, Tuen Mun	4.14	4.11
Fung Yip Street, Chai Wan	4.54	4.51

The spokesman said that the details of the LPG international price and the auto-LPG ceiling price for each dedicated LPG filling station had been uploaded to the EMSD website (www.emsd.gov.hk) and posted at dedicated LPG filling stations to enable the trades to monitor the price adjustment.

Details of the pricing adjustment mechanism for dedicated LPG filling stations can also be viewed under the "What's New" section of the department website at www.emsd.gov.hk/en/what_s_new/current/index.html.

The dedicated LPG filling stations at Tak Yip Street in Yuen Long and Hang Yiu Street in Ma On Shan are closed for renovation. For details, please refer to the announcement on the EMSD website.