

Two property owners fined over \$220,000 in total for persistently not complying with removal orders

Two property owners were convicted and each fined over \$110,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts last week for persistently failing to comply with removal orders issued under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123).

The two cases involved two unauthorised structures of about 640 and 500 square metres erected respectively on the roof of two premises of an industrial building at Sze Mei Street, San Po Kong. As the unauthorised building works (UBWs) were constructed without prior approval and consent from the Buildings Department (BD), removal orders were served on the owners under section 24(1) of the BO.

Failing to comply with the removal orders, the owners were prosecuted by the BD in 2015 and 2018 and were each fined over \$50,000 in 2015 and over \$90,000 in 2018 upon conviction by the court. As the owners persisted in not complying with the removal orders, the owners were prosecuted for the third time. The owners were convicted again and each fined \$112,050 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts on June 28.

A spokesman for the BD said today (July 6), "UBWs may lead to serious consequences. Owners must comply with removal orders without delay. The BD will continue to take enforcement action against owners who have failed to comply with removal orders, including instigation of prosecution, so as to ensure building safety."

Failure to comply with a removal order without reasonable excuse is a serious offence under the BO. The maximum penalty upon conviction is one year's imprisonment and a fine of \$200,000, and a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence continues.

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (July 4):

Reporter: The Police obtained the warrants for the eight people. What's the actual practical benefit for the very high profile announcement because you

can't capture them if they're not in Hong Kong? And what would it do to Hong Kong's image that you're trying to rebuild, given there are so many reactions from other governments already? And will...in contact or interacting with these people, face legal consequences, such as maybe sharing the posts or whatsoever? About the timing, is it related to the open letter issued by foreign organisations asking Washington to not let you attend the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit because they issued the letter on June 30 and it came out just days later? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Well, the Police's action to use all possible legal means to arrest the wanted persons, who are suspected to have committed serious offences that endanger national security, is the execution of the duties, of an important duty, that is imposed on them. They should do it because these are suspected criminals who have violated serious offences. They should do it because we cannot allow people to just go away without taking the responsibility to face justice, to face the law. The Police should do it because that is a strong message to everybody that any act that endangers national security will not be tolerated, and serious action will be taken against that. The Police should do it because that's the message not just to Hong Kong, but to those who try to endanger our national security. We want them to know that we will not sit and do nothing.

I am in support of the Police's action. It's not just that this is an important duty they should do. But it is to try to get as much assistance as possible from law-abiding citizens. A lot of them feel a strong responsibility to protect national security, and I think they will be very pleased to provide information to the Police. And that law-abidingness is important.

I also want to tell the criminals that, well, the only way to end their destiny of being an abscondee who will be pursued for life is to surrender.

I have strong faith in the Police's ability to do what they can to carry out their duties, and we'll be pursuing the abscondees' criminal responsibilities for life until they surrender themselves.

As regard the action, I think the Police should take action as they consider appropriate, particularly considering the whole operational requirements. Our action is to tell everybody that endangering national security is not something we will tolerate. We'll do whatever legally to pursue the responsible person. How overseas politicians or officials say will not, in any way, change our strong belief in the need to uphold our protection of national security. I know that they have been doing things for their own political reasons, for their own political gains.

The way we are handling national security cases is in conformity with the practices that will be taken for pursuing criminals that have absconded for their national security offences. Extraterritorial power exists in many countries' national security law. Hong Kong's National Security Law is one of the many such laws, as in other countries, that will have the same power of taking extraterritorial action against criminals who have contravened their

country's law in this regard.

I am not in any way troubled by any attempt to sabotage our action, because I have strong faith that Hong Kong Police will be able to do what they can. I'm not afraid of any political pressure that is put on us because we do what we believe is right. And safeguarding national security is the duty of the people of respective countries, particularly I, as the Chief Executive, have the constitutional duty to safeguard national security.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

“Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country” Government Schools Joint School Gala showcases fruitful achievements (with photos)

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (June 30) held the "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country" Celebration of 26th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Return to the Motherland cum Government Schools Joint School Activities Gala to showcase the fruitful achievements of the "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country" joint school national education activities in this school year.

The Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing, together with the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, officiated at the event. About 500 EDB representatives, government school principals and vice-principals, as well as representatives of secondary and primary school councils, school head associations, school sponsoring bodies and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation attended.

Speaking at the Gala, Mr Cheuk said that strengthening national education on all fronts is a major initiative of the Government. The first-year "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country" activities have set a very good example. He thanked all principals and teachers of government schools for their effort and contribution to national education and was pleased with students' enthusiastic participation in the activities. He also encouraged students to continue learning within and beyond the classroom, and care and learn about the country and Hong Kong's developments and culture.

Addressing the event, Dr Choi said that the EDB has all along been adopting a multipronged and co-ordinated approach to promote national education and led 65 government schools to launch a series of joint school national education activities under the theme of "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country" in this school year. Over 12 000 teachers and students from

government and non-government schools participated in the activities with excellent achievements.

The "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country" joint school national education activities included exhibitions, fun days, competitions, performances and community exploration activities, with an aim of deepening students' understanding of Chinese culture, and national development and achievements, as well as cultivating in them a sense of nationhood, national identity and affection for the nation. To foster exchanges in the school sector, some of the activities were open for participation by students and teachers from non-government schools.

The Gala today was the grand finale of the "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country" series. Hundreds of students from government schools participated in the performance, including the Flag Raising Ceremony and Chinese-style foot drill by joint school flag-guards, as well as folk music, dance and martial arts performance, to showcase their learning achievements. The event also included student sharing sessions and showed a video of highlights of the joint school activities in this school year.

The EDB will continue to promote the "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country" joint school national education activities in the 2023/24 school year and organise more diversified learning activities to promote national education to nurture young people into quality citizens with a sense of social responsibility and national identity, as well as an affection for Hong Kong.





Government welcomes passage of Road Tunnels (Government) (Amendment) Bill 2023

The Government welcomed the passage of the Road Tunnels (Government) (Amendment) Bill 2023 by the Legislative Council today (June 28), which enables a major step forward in rationalising cross-harbour traffic.

The Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, said, "The Government's proposed toll plans for the three road-harbour crossings (RHCs) are scientifically based, well deliberated and balanced, and have positively responded to the views of Members of the Legislative Council, the transport trades and the public, after numerous rounds of studies and discussions. The toll plans will help alleviate cross-harbour traffic congestion, and bring benefits to private car motorists, the public transport trades, the commercial vehicle trades, cross-harbour bus passengers and the community as a whole."

The Bill provides for matters relating to the Government's takeover arrangements of the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) on August 2 this year; and the all-day fixed toll plan for private cars at the three RHCs in the first phase, i.e. the toll for private cars using the WHC will be reduced by 20 per cent to \$60, while the toll for private cars using the Cross-Harbour Tunnel and the Eastern Harbour Crossing will be adjusted to \$30. Taxi toll for the three tunnels will be charged at a flat rate of \$25 all day. The relevant provisions will come into force on August 2 this year.

The Bill also provides for a time-varying toll plan. The Government plans to implement time-varying toll at the three RHCs later this year, i.e. the toll for private cars is between \$20 and \$60; toll for motorcycles (including motor tricycles) is between \$8 and \$24; cross-harbour taxi toll remains an all-day fixed toll of \$25; other commercial vehicles including goods vehicles and buses are charged an all-day fixed toll of \$50. The

relevant provisions will come into force on a day to be separately appointed by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics.

Government appoints HKEX Risk Management Committee members

The Financial Secretary has reappointed Ms Miranda Kwok Pui-fong and Mr Sun Yu as members of the Risk Management Committee (RMC) of the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX).

The reappointments, made under section 65 of the Securities and Futures Ordinance, will take effect from July 1, 2023, for a term of two years.

"Ms Kwok and Mr Sun are experienced professionals in the financial services sector. We believe that they will continue to provide invaluable advice to the RMC and contribute to formulating appropriate risk management policies for the HKEX," a Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau spokesman said today (June 23).

The RMC was established in March 2000 with the role of formulating policies on risk management matters relating to the activities of the HKEX and its subsidiaries for submission to the Board of the HKEX for consideration.

The RMC is chaired by the Chairman of the HKEX, Mrs Laura Cha May-lung. Other serving members are Mrs Susan Chow Woo Mo-fong, Mr Hugo Leung Pak-hon, the Executive Director (Supervision of Markets) of the Securities and Futures Commission, the Executive Director (Monetary Management) of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and the Chairman of the Hong Kong Interbank Clearing Limited.