

## SCED visits cruise liner and data centre

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The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, today (March 13) visited a cruise liner on its maiden visit to Hong Kong and a data centre in Tsuen Wan that has been converted from 33-year-old, 12-storey industrial building.

Seabourn Quest arrived at Hong Kong Ocean Terminal this morning from Shanghai. Mr So took the opportunity of the cruise liner's one-night stay in Hong Kong to go aboard for a brief visit.

Mr So listened to the introduction by representatives of the cruise company on Seabourn Quest's maiden world voyage, which began this January. He also learned about the ship's berthing requirements, itinerary planning and guest programmes.

Measuring 198m long and 25.6m wide with a gross tonnage of 32,000 tons, Seabourn Quest is one of the world's newest cruise liners.

Last Thursday (March 8), the Government announced the award of the tenancy for operating and managing the new cruise terminal at Kai Tak to Worldwide Cruise Terminals Consortium. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will step up promotion of cruise tourism to pave the way for the commissioning of the new cruise terminal in mid-2013.

"Hong Kong enjoys a superb geographical location with a natural deep water port and no air draft limitation. Coupled with world-class infrastructure and tourism facilities, Hong Kong possesses the excellent conditions to be the cruise hub in the region and attract more cruise vessels to homeport here.

"We will continue to work closely with the HKTB to further enhance Hong Kong's appeal to cruise companies, and to stimulate market demand for cruise tourism," Mr So said.

After visiting Seabourn Quest, Mr So went to see for himself a successful example of conversion from an industrial building to a high-tier data centre.

Last month, the Financial Secretary announced in the 2012-13 Budget two time-limited measures to encourage optimisation of existing industrial buildings or industrial lots for data centre development.

The management of Fujitsu Hong Kong Limited and Grand Ming Holdings Limited briefed Mr So on the operation of its data centre, which occupies a total gross floor area of more than 18,000 square metres. Commissioned in early 2008, it provides a full range of data centre services, including hosting, collocation, telecommunication, and managed operation and application services.

Mr So was told that in some parts of the building, three floors had been rebuilt into two floors to achieve the required headroom for data centre development.

Mr So also exchanged views with company representatives on government initiatives to develop Hong Kong as a regional data centre hub and the special requirements of data centre operators.

"The Government is fully aware of the need for land by data centres. While we will continue to explore more land for data centre use, industrial buildings constitute an important source of space and land for such purposes," Mr So said.

He added that since 2001, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation had granted about 18 hectares of land in Tai Po and Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estates for development of high-tier data centres.

"The two time-limited measures in the new budget will help spur more timely development of data centres in industrial buildings to meet the high demand for suitable data centre sites," Mr So noted.

The first measure is to exempt the waiver fee for changing parts of industrial buildings aged 15 years or above into data centre use. The exemption will be applicable to data centres of all tiers.

The second measure is that the Government will assess the premium for lease modification of industrial lots for development of high-tier data centres on the basis of actual development intensity and high-tier data centre use instead of optimal use.

The two measures will be introduced in 2012-13 for application until March 31, 2016.

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