

ICAC arrests 20 for alleged corruption over works contracts

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In response to press enquiries, the ICAC today (Friday) confirmed that it had arrested 20 persons, including five officers of the Highways Department (HyD), for alleged corruption over the tendering and administration of HyD works contracts.

The ICAC earlier received a corruption complaint against HyD staff. Following inquiries for months, an operation was mounted on March 20.

Arrested in the operation were a Chief Engineer, a Senior Engineer and three Inspectors of Works of HyD; nine subcontractors; five senior executives of three construction companies; and one other person.

ICAC investigations revealed that the arrested HyD staff had allegedly accepted advantages from a number of subcontractors and senior executives of construction companies mainly engaged in road maintenance works.

In return, these HyD staff had allegedly disclosed tendering information and confidential documents to the subcontractors and the construction companies; helped the latter secure works contracts of HyD and issued excessive works orders to these companies.

The Senior Engineer and one of the subcontractors were arrested following an alleged corrupt transaction. An envelope containing \$20,000 cash was recovered from the Senior Engineer.

Enquiries also revealed that one of the company executives arrested, who was formerly a senior directorate government officer, had allegedly attempted to exert undue influence on senior HyD officers to remove an HyD engineer from his post, so as to avoid proper supervision of the works undertaken by the company.

An ICAC spokesman said the Corruption Prevention Group of HyD, comprising senior directorate officers of HyD and ICAC representatives, meet regularly to explore areas for corruption prevention reviews, and map out staff integrity training plans.

In the coming months, the Corruption Prevention Department (CPD) will organise a series of integrity training seminars for HyD's professional engineers and technical staff as well as HyD's work consultants and contractors to further enhance their awareness of corruption prevention.

In recent years, CPD has examined HyD's practices and procedures in the outsourcing and administration of road maintenance and resurfacing works, and offered detailed corruption prevention advice on various areas, such as site supervision, testing of samples and contract administration