

Hong Kong Flower Show 2019 commercial stalls to be auctioned on December 5

Auctions of the Hong Kong Flower Show 2019 commercial stalls will be held on December 5 (Wednesday) at Lockhart Road Sports Centre on 11/F, Lockhart Road Municipal Services Building, 225 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai.

Bidders must be 18 years old or above and ordinarily resident in Hong Kong under section 2 of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115). Any company incorporated in Hong Kong can also take part in the auctions. Each bidder can bid for one or more stalls.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the 10-day flower show will be held from March 15 to 24, 2019, at Victoria Park.

There are 55 commercial stalls in the showground. This year, the stall types and the categories of commodities to be sold have been optimised. The stall types are as follows:

- (1) Fast food stall (5 metres x 10m): 6
- (2) Fast food stall – floral cafe (5m x 10m): 1
- (3) Beverage stall (5m x 5m): 2
- (4) Agricultural produce stall (5m x 5m): 2
- (5) Photographic equipment stall (5m x 5m): 2
- (6) Book stall (5m x 10m): 1
- (7) Flower and gardening stall (5m x 5m): 38
- (8) Handicraft stall (5m x 5m): 3

Details of the auctions are as follows:

Auction time: 10am to noon

Stall types and upset prices:

- (1) Fast food stall: \$30,310
- (2) Fast food stall – floral cafe: \$30,310
- (3) Beverage stall: \$30,310
- (4) Agricultural produce stall: \$22,740
- (5) Photographic equipment stall: \$22,740
- (6) Book stall: \$15,500

Auction time: 2.30pm to 5.30pm

Stall types and upset prices:

- (1) Flower and gardening stall: \$22,740
- (2) Handicraft stall: \$22,740

Location and layout plans showing the commercial stalls to be auctioned are on display at the following venues:

- (1) All District Leisure Services Offices of the LCSD;

- (2) The Lift Lobby at 11/F, Leisure and Cultural Services Headquarters, 1-3 Pai Tau Street, Sha Tin; and
- (3) All Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department.

For enquiries, please call 2601 8260 or visit www.hkflowershow.hk/en/hkfs/2019/commercial.html.

LCQ18: Impacts of microplastics on the ecosystem and human health

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (November 21):

Question:

It has been reported that the findings of a number of overseas studies have revealed that microplastics (i.e. plastic pellets or flakes of less than 5mm in diameter or length, including plastic fibres as minute as having a diameter or length of only 1µm) are widely found in bottled water, tap water, seawater, edible salt, marine life and human waste. Some researchers have pointed out that microplastics, given their very tiny size, may enter human vascular and lymphatic systems, thereby jeopardising human health. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has monitored on a regular basis the concentration of microplastics in the water bodies of the reservoirs and rivers of Hong Kong; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as the Government said in November last year that the Water Supplies Department had engaged consultants to conduct a review on the risks of plastic fibre materials on drinking water safety, of the progress of that review; whether it has evaluated the impacts of drinking water containing microplastics on human health; if so, of the details;

(3) whether it compiled statistics and conducted researches in the past three years on the concentration of microplastics in Hong Kong waters and marine life; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) of the microplastics removal capability of the sewage treatment processes in various sewage treatment works, as well as the relevant performance indicators; and

(5) as the authorities said in April this year that they had commissioned consultants to conduct a one-year study to examine the impacts of

microplastics on Hong Kong's environment, and to gain an understanding of the bans imposed by places outside Hong Kong on personal care and beauty products containing microplastics, so as to formulate regulatory proposals applicable to Hong Kong, whether the authorities will, before the study is completed, introduce measures to reduce microplastic materials entering the natural environment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Microplastic pollution and the associated potential environmental impacts are a new global issue in recent years. Microplastics found in the aquatic environment have different identities and origins. They include microbeads arising from industrial production (e.g. as additives in personal care and cosmetic products (PCCPs)) and fragments from degradation of plastic products and waste. The common concern about microplastics is that it may be mistakenly consumed by aquatic organisms as food and toxic substances may also be adhered to or accumulated on its surface, thereby causing potential impacts on the ecosystem and human health through food chain transfer. There are opinions that preventive measures should be taken as soon as possible to reduce the release of plastic materials to the marine environment. We have been keeping a close watch on the latest development on the subject and, apart from conducting a 1-year consultancy study for developing appropriate control strategies targeting microbead-containing PCCPs, have also been collecting and studying relevant scientific research findings and data from various sources.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Kenneth Lau is as follows:

(1) At present, there has not yet been a unified standard or protocol in the scientific community for environmental monitoring of microplastics. Sampling and analytical methods as well as the types of plastic polymers being studied vary among individual research projects. Authorities in the international arena, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, Codex Alimentarius Commission (under Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO)) and European Food Safety Authority, etc, have not yet promulgated any relevant guideline or standard on microplastics. Under these circumstances, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has not conducted any routine monitoring of microplastics in Hong Kong's rivers and streams. To our knowledge, there has not been any government organisation announcing the routine monitoring of microplastics or releasing such data.

At present, the EPD is keeping abreast of the international and local development in environmental monitoring methods for microplastics. We are also actively participating in discussions on the standardisation of microplastic monitoring methodologies at symposiums organised by international and regional organisations (e.g. the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) with a view to taking follow-up actions on the environmental monitoring of microplastics at a suitable juncture.

On the issue of microplastics in drinking water, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has engaged consultants to collect information and carry out a study. It similarly shows that there is currently no internationally standardised method for testing microplastics in water samples, and no drinking water standard on microplastics has been adopted by any overseas jurisdiction. Furthermore, the WHO has not yet included microplastics in its Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality as health-related parameters that need to be monitored. In these circumstances, the WSD has not conducted any routine monitoring of microplastics at local reservoirs or water gathering grounds. Nevertheless, the WSD will keep in view related international development. If researches do show that microplastics will pose a risk in drinking water safety, the WSD will work with experts in the field and consult relevant government departments on the inclusion of microplastics as one of the monitoring parameters and formulation of corresponding measures.

(2) According to the risk assessment conducted by the WSD's consultants, although international studies on microplastics in drinking water are still at an early stage, the current outcome reveals that microplastics (including microplastic fibres) are ubiquitous in the environment, and drinking water as a medium only accounts for a very small part of the total human intake, as compared to other exposure routes including food and consumable products (e.g. clothing, cosmetics and skin care products, toothpaste, shower gel, etc). Therefore, the consultants consider that even if microplastics are present in drinking water, it will not constitute a major health risk.

(3) In the absence of a standardised monitoring method and protocol as mentioned in (1), the Government has not conducted any statistical analysis or research study on the concentrations of microplastics in Hong Kong waters and marine organisms in the past three years. Nonetheless, we are aware of local academic research studies in recent years reporting that microplastics do exist in various locations in Hong Kong waters, in concentrations not higher than others places and presenting relatively low levels of potential environmental impact. Through various channels including the Environment and Conservation Fund, the EPD will subsidise and encourage local academic institutions to conduct relevant research projects with the aim of gradually building up the local scientific database on microplastics.

(4) The Drainage Services Department operates sewage treatment works to remove pollutants for meeting effluent quality standards as stipulated in Discharge Licences issued under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance. The current effluent quality standards do not cover microplastics. However, as over 90 per cent of sewage in Hong Kong is receiving chemically enhanced primary treatment (CEPT) or secondary treatment before being discharged, it is envisaged that a significant portion of the microplastics in raw sewage should have been removed along with other pollutants during the treatment process. Overseas open literature has demonstrated that microplastics removal rate in CEPT plants is about 70-80 per cent, and is even higher for secondary treatment works.

(5) Apart from the one-year consultancy study, the EPD has been implementing multi-pronged measures to reduce plastic waste generation at source and curb

their release to the sea with a view to alleviating its impacts on the marine ecosystems. For example, we held a "Plastic Free Beach, Tableware First" campaign at all public beaches this summer to encourage members of the public and eateries in the vicinity of the beaches to avoid the use and distribution of disposable plastic utensils. In the coming year, the Government will take the lead to implement green procurement policies including avoiding disposable plastic tableware of single use. Specific measures will include: prohibiting the provision of plastic straws and polystyrene food containers in premises serving government staff; requiring the restaurant operators at certain government premises to avoid the use of disposable tableware as far as practicable in new or renewed contracts; working together with the catering trade to encourage less use of disposable tableware for promoting waste reduction at source.

Furthermore, since the set-up of an inter-departmental working group for cleaning shorelines in 2012, additional resources amounting up to HK\$100 million per year have been allocated for strengthening the cleanup of marine refuse, patrol and enforcement against littering at sea, and also providing supportive facilities for preventing refuse from entering the sea. For examples, more waste recycling bins are provided at various coastal locations including piers, landing points, waterfront areas, etc; more than 190 water dispensers are set up at coastal areas including beaches, water sports centres, promenades and waterfront parks to encourage citizens to bring their own water bottles and avoid buying drinks in single-use plastic bottles. The Government has also been promoting clean shorelines and waste reduction at source through publicity and education activities, the Clean Shoreline Engagement Platform as well as the Environment and Conservation Fund.

[Appeal for information on missing woman in Sau Mau Ping \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (November 21) appealed to the public for information on a woman who went missing in Sau Mau Ping.

Lui Wai-lin, aged 41, went missing after she was last seen at Kwun Tong High Level Service Reservoir on Shun Lee Tsuen Road yesterday (November 20) afternoon. Her family made a report to Police on the same day.

She is about 1.65 metres tall, 50 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a pointed face with yellow complexion and short straight black hair. She was last seen wearing a yellow long-sleeved T-shirt, black trousers and pink plastic shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon East on

3661 0316 or 9886 0060 or email to rmpu-ke-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.

[Apply for travel documents early to avoid Christmas and New Year holiday rush](#)

Hong Kong residents intending to travel abroad during the Christmas and New Year holidays are reminded to apply early for travel documents.

An Immigration Department spokesperson said today (November 21) that the processing time for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport applications is normally 10 working days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and general holidays) after receipt of all necessary documents, the application fee and a photograph. Applications in respect of children under 11 years old not holding a Hong Kong permanent identity card normally take 14 working days. As regards applications submitted by post, via drop-in-box or online, processing might take two to three more working days. Applications for a replacement passport due to loss, damage or change of personal data should be made in person, and the processing time may be longer.

Eligible applicants aged 11 or over may submit HKSAR passport applications at the self-service kiosks at Immigration Headquarters and at all six Immigration branch offices during office hours.

The spokesperson emphasised that a request for urgent issue of an HKSAR passport will only be entertained in justifiable circumstances. Normally, no priority will be granted to pleasure trippers.

Applicants who wish to apply for or collect travel documents in person are encouraged to make prior appointments through the Internet (www.gov.hk/tdbooking) or the 24-hour hotline (2598 0888).

HKSAR passport application forms and information leaflets on application procedures and the requisite documents are available at Immigration Headquarters and Immigration branch offices. For details and application forms, please visit the website (www.gov.hk/passport). Further application details for an HKSAR passport are also available at the Easy Access of the Immigration Department YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/immdgovhkchannel). Enquiries can also be made by telephone (2824 6111), fax (2877 7711) or email (enquiry@immd.gov.hk).

At present, 163 countries and territories have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to HKSAR passport holders. Some places require visitors to have a passport with validity of at least six months.

Moreover, in order to allow greater travel convenience for HKSAR passport holders, the Immigration Department has co-operated with Korea, Singapore, Germany, Australia and Thailand, where eligible HKSAR passport holders may use the automated immigration clearance services. For detailed information, please visit (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/automated_clearance.html).

Before travelling abroad, Hong Kong residents can use the Registration of Outbound Travel Information (ROTI) service to register their contact details and itinerary. The information they provide allows the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department to contact and assist them in an emergency outside Hong Kong. For more information on ROTI, please visit (www.gov.hk/roti) or call (852) 183 5500. Residents who need assistance while outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour hotline of the AHU at (852) 1868.

Missing man in Sau Mau Ping located

A man who went missing in Sau Mau Ping was located.

Cheung Shun-king, aged 77, went missing after he left his residence in Upper Ngau Tau Kok Estate on November 18 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

The man was located on Ting On Street last night (November 20). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.