

Disbursement of subsidies to construction industry under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund in progress

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (May 18) that about \$1.2 billion in subsidies has been disbursed to about 160 000 construction workers under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF). Together with the subsidies dispensed under the first round of the AEF, more than \$1.7 billion in subsidies has been disbursed.

"Among some 210 000 workers who received the \$1,500 subsidy under the first round of the AEF, about 80 per cent of them have received the one-off \$7,500 subsidy automatically under the second round of the AEF. The remaining 20 per cent of workers shall also receive the subsidies within the coming days," a spokesman for the DEVB said.

"Under the second round of the AEF, besides registered construction workers under the Construction Workers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 583), workers registered with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Buildings Department, the Water Supplies Department and the Fire Services Department will also directly benefit from the one-off subsidy of \$7,500. Eligible workers can now submit applications via the Construction Industry Council's (CIC) mobile application," the spokesman said.

Moreover, the Government will align the amount of the one-off subsidies offered to construction-related enterprises under the second round of the AEF at the higher level of \$20,000 each, covering eligible contractors, specialist contractors, works contractors and suppliers, as well as eligible minor works contractors, registered contractors of electrical/gas/lift/escalator/fire service installation and suppliers of construction-related machineries and equipment rental. Relevant enterprises can submit applications through the CIC's online platform within May.

The DEVB is also processing the applications from consultant firms offering engineering/architectural and related professional services for training subsidy under the second round of the AEF. The disbursement of subsidies to the approved companies is in progress.

The deadline for application for the various subsidies is August 31. Eligible companies or workers who have not yet submitted their applications may visit the CIC's dedicated website for details (www.cic.hk/eng/main/anti_epidemic_fund_2nd/).

For more details, please call the CIC hotline at 3199 7377 or e-mail PPEFund@cic.hk.

Government welcomes election of LegCo House Committee Chairman

In response to media enquiries, a Government spokesman said today (May 18) that the Government welcomes the election of the Chairman of the House Committee of the Legislative Council (LegCo) today and hopes that LegCo will return to normal operation as soon as possible. The Government will continue to fully co-operate with LegCo in its scrutiny work in the remainder of the current term of LegCo.

Government announces mechanism for persons engaged in technological R&D co-operation-related activities in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan to apply for exemption from compulsory quarantine arrangement

The Government announced today (May 18) the mechanism for persons engaged in technological research and development (R&D) co-operation-related activities in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan to apply for exemption from the compulsory quarantine arrangement. The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) has started processing applications from today.

In accordance with section 4(1)(b) of the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Chief Secretary for Administration may designate any person or category of persons for exemption from the compulsory quarantine arrangement if he is satisfied that the person's or persons' travelling is necessary for purposes relating to manufacturing operations, business activities or the provision of professional services in the interest of Hong Kong's economic development.

In accordance with the above-mentioned provision, the Chief Secretary for Administration has exempted the following category of persons from the compulsory quarantine arrangement.

An eligible enterprise or institution must be:

(a) A public R&D institution in Hong Kong (i.e. the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute, the Automotive Platforms and Application Systems Research and Development Centre, the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel, the Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech Research and Development Centre, and the Nano and Advanced Materials Institute); or
(b) A tenant/incubatee/grantee/occupant of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) or Cyberport which conducts technological R&D work.

Each eligible enterprise or institution can have up to two personnel who are either the owner and/or full-time employee(s) to be exempted, and such persons have to travel to the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan for conducting one of the following R&D-related activities:

(a) on-the-ground R&D work requiring collaboration with an enterprise or institution in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan;
(b) sourcing of essential materials or equipment which are required to sustain the technological R&D work carried out in Hong Kong by the eligible enterprise or institution; or
(c) overseeing the operations of the eligible enterprise or institution's research facility(ies) in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan.

An exempted person must undertake to fulfill the following requirements:

(a) he/she must only travel for the purpose of conducting the technological R&D activities as approved;
(b) he/she must only travel to and stay in the city in which the relevant facility(ies), enterprise(s) or institution(s) with the approved technological R&D activities is/are located;
(c) he/she must take every precautionary measure to ensure personal hygiene and avoid unnecessary social contact whilst in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan; and
(d) after returning to Hong Kong, he/she will be subject to medical surveillance arranged by the Department of Health (DH) for a period of 14 days. He/she will be required to wear masks and check body temperature daily, as well as to report to the DH on any discomfort.

Details of the exemption arrangement and the application form are available on the ITC website (www.itc.gov.hk). Tenants/incubatees/grantees/occupants of the HKSTPC or Cyberport should submit the completed application form with all required supporting documents to the ITC through the HKSTPC (ECQ@hkstp.org) or Cyberport (ECQ@cyberport.hk) as appropriate. Public R&D institutions should submit the completed application form with all required supporting documents directly to the ITC by email (ECQ@itc.gov.hk).

For enquiries, please contact the ITC (Tel: 2594 5602/2594 5932; email: ECQ@itc.gov.hk).

Currently, travellers to the Mainland and Macao would still be subject to the 14-day compulsory quarantine requirement imposed by the Mainland and Macao authorities. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative

Region is discussing with authorities in the Mainland and Macao on mutual recognition of COVID-19 testing results conducted by recognised medical laboratories, with a view to exempting the quarantine requirement for Hong Kong travellers to these places. Details of the arrangement will be announced when available.

SFH attends 73rd World Health Assembly via video conferencing (with photo)

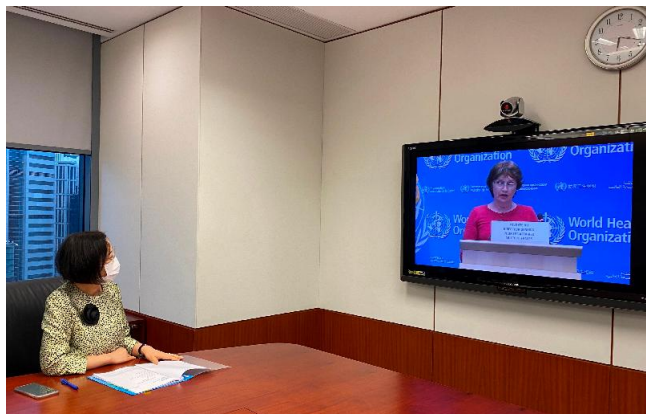
The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, attended the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) of the World Health Organization (WHO) via video conferencing today (May 18) as a member of the Chinese delegation.

Due to the pandemic situation of COVID-19, the WHA this year is being held through video conferencing on May 18 and 19. The assembly focuses on the anti-epidemic work by member states of the WHO and international co-operation. During the assembly, member states will deliver statements focused largely on the COVID-19 pandemic, report their progress in fighting the disease, share knowledge on the evolving situation, and consider a draft resolution on COVID-19.

"In fighting against COVID-19, I believe that exchanging unique perspectives and hearing from leading experts in various fields are crucial to navigating the anti-pandemic strategies in the future, not just as individual countries but as a global community," Professor Chan said.

"The Government has maintained close co-operation with the WHO and health authorities of its member states to fight the pandemic together, with a view to protecting the health of Hong Kong people and maintaining a robust healthcare system in Hong Kong," Professor Chan added.

The Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), Ms Elizabeth Tse, and the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, are also members of the Chinese delegation.



Appeal for information on missing man in Kwai Chung (with photo)

Police today (May 18) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Kwai Chung.

Tang Siu-chung, aged 78, went missing after he left his residence on Ta Chuen Ping Street on May 15 morning. His family made a report to Police on May 16.

He is about 1.68 metres tall, 60 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a round face with yellow complexion and short greyish-white hair. He was last seen wearing a white T-shirt, grey trousers, grey sports shoes and carrying a blue recycle bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1176 or 6099 3830 or email to rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.

