

SWD to invite applications for IT schemes for persons with disabilities

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) will invite applications from tomorrow (April 29) until June 2 from eligible individuals and organisations for the Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment (30th Round) and the Central Fund for Personal Computers (42nd Round).

The objectives of the Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment are to support non-governmental and non-profit-making organisations providing services or schooling for persons with visual impairment (PVI) to acquire advanced Chinese screen readers, Braille displays and accessories to facilitate PVI's surfing on the Internet, and to subsidise individual PVI in need to purchase these devices for the purpose of studying or employment and with genuine financial difficulty. Previous beneficiaries of the scheme may re-apply if there are proven genuine financial difficulties and needs for study or employment purposes.

The items supported under the scheme are advanced Chinese screen reader, Braille displays of 40 cells and accessories/portable devices.

Successful organisation applicants will be supported in full for purchasing a high-performance Chinese screen reader set (capped at \$9,800) and/or Braille displays (capped at \$36,000) and/or accessories (capped at \$66,300) on the reference list under the scheme. Successful individual applicants will be sponsored to purchase a high-performance Chinese screen reader set with an amount not more than \$9,800 and/or accessories/portable devices not more than \$49,600 in value and/or Braille display on the same reference list not more than \$32,400 in value.

Eligible organisations may lodge their applications by completing the designated forms. For individual applications, nomination from subvented non-governmental rehabilitation organisations, the student affairs offices of local tertiary institutions, principals of local secondary/primary schools, or the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department (LD) is required, and the application should be submitted through the nominating organisation in the designated form together with the quotations for the items concerned. Invitation letters have been sent to the relevant organisations to invite nominations.

As for the Central Fund for Personal Computers, the Fund aims to assist eligible persons with disabilities in acquiring the required computer facilities for self-employment or receiving supported employment services at home with guidance and follow-up services to be provided by the referral rehabilitation organisations or the Selective Placement Division of the LD. Applicants must:

(a) be users of rehabilitation services of and nominated by rehabilitation

service organisations or the Selective Placement Division of the LD;
(b) have difficulties in engaging in open employment;
(c) provide a viable business plan which has to use computer facilities;
(d) have financial difficulty in acquiring the required computer facilities;
(e) be capable of using a computer to carry out the business plan; and
(f) have the consent of the nominating organisations or the LD to provide guidance and follow-up services after applicants' acquisition of the computer facilities.

For enquiries, please contact the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of the SWD at 3586 3594, through email to eoimc@swd.gov.hk or by fax to 2834 7046.

Details of the above schemes are available on the SWD website (www.swd.gov.hk) and CyberAble.net (www.CyberAble.net). Information notes and application forms can be downloaded from the websites.

Tenants of EcoPark, country parks and Hong Kong Wetland Park receive rental concessions of over \$17 million

To help tenants cope with the economic impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the rental concessions of government premises from April to September this year will be increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent. A spokesman for the Environment Bureau (ENB) said today (April 28) that eligible tenants of the EcoPark under the Environmental Protection Department, country park refreshment kiosks and the Hong Kong Wetland Park under the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department will benefit from this measure. They will receive additional rental concessions of some \$3.6 million in total.

The spokesman said, "Together with the 50 per cent rental concessions provided by the Government from last October to March this year, eligible tenants of the EcoPark, country park refreshment kiosks and the Hong Kong Wetland Park will receive rental concessions totalling more than \$17 million within 12 months."

In the face of the current economic challenges, the ENB offered a 50 per cent rental concession from last October to this March to eligible tenants of the EcoPark, country park refreshment kiosks and the Hong Kong Wetland Park. The concession period has been subsequently extended for another six months to September this year. Under the new round of anti-epidemic measures, the rental concessions from April to September this year will be increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent. Meanwhile, tenants of the Hong Kong Wetland Park will receive a full rental waiver during the park closure period.

Twelve tenants of the EcoPark, operators of the eight country park refreshment kiosks, and cafeteria and souvenir shop operators in the Hong Kong Wetland Park, totalling more than 20 tenants, will benefit from the rental concession measures.

Red fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

The fire danger situation today (April 28) is red and fire risk is extreme. The countryside is extremely vulnerable to fire. If you are planning to spend the day in the countryside, please take pre-cooked food for a picnic and take all measures to prevent hill fires. The penalty for lighting fires illegally in the countryside is \$25,000 and a year's imprisonment.

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a work accident that happened at a construction site in Happy Valley this afternoon (April 27), in which a male worker was hit by a collapsed I-beam while operating an excavator. He was certified dead later in the hospital. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and expresses its deepest sympathies to the victim's family.

â€‹ The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced an immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending the use of excavators and other loadshifting machinery on the site. The contractors cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

Transcript of remarks by Secretary for Justice at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, at a media session after attending the Legislative Council Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services meeting today (April 27):

Reporter: Secretary, the only part of the Basic Law that is relevant to the Liaison Office (Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) is Article 22. When you say that the Liaison Office needs to obey the Basic Law and Hong Kong laws, what do you actually mean? It is not bound by Article 22? Second question, the Police yesterday said that as long as people gather for a common purpose in a public place, their distance apart does not really matter, and people will still be violating the gathering limit ban. Is that the correct understanding of the

gathering limit ban? Are authorities misusing this to crackdown on protests or people's freedoms?

Secretary for Justice: On your first question, I think you started off entirely on a misplaced ground, and therefore your question is misplaced. So let me correct that. You suggested that the only relevant provision is Article 22, and that is not correct because when one looks at Article 22 of the Basic Law, one looks at the ministries that are under the Central People's Government. The Central People's Government as defined in the Constitution Law is actually the State Council, and therefore when one looks at the whole thing about the Constitution Law, Article 5 of the Constitution Law states unequivocally that every body that is set up will have to comply with the relevant laws and the Constitution Law. In other words, the Liaison Office will have to obey and comply with the laws in Hong Kong. As to your second question?

Reporter: What laws in Hong Kong for example?

Secretary for Justice: The laws in Hong Kong, it is going to be very long, I do not want to keep you here. Everything in Hong Kong, I mean, you know what are the laws in Hong Kong. Not just the laws in Hong Kong, but also the Constitution Law as well.

Insofar as your second question is concerned, you were talking about the Cap. 599G regulation. Generally, insofar as the public gathering idea is concerned, it means that people gather together for a common purpose and whether that is met will depend on a number of circumstances of a particular case. For example, whether they were so organised; whether they were discussing and proceeding in an interactive and connected way; whether they were just there temporarily or momentarily. And all these are really depending on the facts of each case. So for example, again generally, if people are purely lining up for a bus, getting into an elevator for instance, that would not be something in contravention with the Cap. 599G regulation.

Your tag-on question also suggested that whether the enforcement is to clamp any freedoms in Hong Kong. I emphasise again, the Government respects and protects the freedom that are set out in our laws, Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance. However, these freedoms are not absolute. Insofar as they violate the laws, then of course appropriate actions will have to be taken. Cap. 599G is enforced under Cap. 599 as a matter of the public health emergency situation that is facing Hong Kong at the moment. It is promulgated to encourage social distancing. It is not with any other motive except for the safety and health of the people in Hong Kong. So I hope that you will all comply with it in spirit and in form, so that you will not gather and thereby extending Hong Kong's position in this public health emergency situation. That is the only way by which we can get back to normal life as soon as possible.

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