

Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training submits review report to EDB (with photos)

The Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) submitted its review report to the Education Bureau (EDB) today (January 23).

In its review, the Task Force considered various aspects pertaining to enhancing the promotion of VPET in Hong Kong, including its promotion in secondary and higher education, the development of vocational progression pathways and publicity strategy. The Task Force also made reference to the practices in other economies and stakeholders' views collected through a two-month public consultation completed in July last year.

The Chairman of the Task Force, Dr Roy Chung, said, "Under the theme of 'VPET for the Future', the review report reaffirms VPET's integral role in Hong Kong's education system to equip students with work skills for the future. The Task Force considers that the Government should strengthen and deepen collaboration with industries to provide more diversified and quality VPET programmes for young people, with a view to facilitating the parallel development of the VPET and academic education pathways."

The Task Force has put forward 18 recommendations in its report, including stepping up promotion of VPET in secondary education through existing platforms (such as Applied Learning and the Business-School Partnership Programme), reiterating the value and positioning of VPET in higher education (including the proposed applied degree and Higher Diploma), developing flexible vocational progression pathways for in-service practitioners under the Qualifications Framework and strengthening the future promotion of VPET with an innovative and coordinated approach. A leaflet highlighting the Task Force's key recommendations and a full list of the recommendations are at Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

Having received the review report, the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Chairman, Dr Roy Chung, and all of the members of the Task Force for their hard work and contributions to the review. Since its establishment in April 2018, the Task Force has been dedicated to conducting a comprehensive review on the promotion of VPET in Hong Kong and offered their invaluable professional advice, while suitably making reference to practices outside Hong Kong and the views of major stakeholders.

"The Government has all along been committed to providing multiple and flexible education pathways for young people with different aspirations and

abilities through VPET. The recommendations of the Task Force help chart a clear way forward for the promotion of VPET as a preferred choice. The EDB will carefully study the report and actively follow up on its recommendations," said Mr Yeung.

The full review report can be viewed on the EDB's website (edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/other-edu-training/vocational-other-edu-program/promotion-vet.html).



[Appeal for blood donation as blood inventories drop to alarming level](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The blood inventories are now reaching a critically low level. The Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) appealed to the general public today (January 23) to donate blood immediately to replenish the blood supply as soon as possible.

Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season and there has been an increase in demand for blood transfusions since the commencement of the winter surge in public hospitals. The BTS sincerely urges people from all walks of life to join in before the Chinese New Year holidays. As a token of thanks, all those providing successful blood donations today and tomorrow (January 24) will receive a Red Packet Pouch Set. A CNY Goodies Bag will be given to every donor who gives blood during January 26 to 28 while stocks last.

Most BTS donor centres are open during the Chinese New Year holidays, except on January 25. For details, please visit www.ha.org.hk/rcbts, or check the mobile app "HK Blood" for more details.

Members of the public are urged to download "HK Blood" to locate the nearest donor centres across the city and make appointments for donation:
iOS: itunes.apple.com/hk/app/hk-blood/id1387423207?mt=8;
Android:
play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=hk.org.ha.btsmapps&rdid=hk.org.ha.btsmapps.

EPD and ECC continue to co-organise “Green LNY Fairs” to promote “Use Less, Waste Less” (with photos)

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, and the Chairman of the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC), Professor Joseph Sung, yesterday (January 22) visited the Green Lunar New Year (LNY) Fair at Fa Hui Park, Mong Kok. They called on stall operators and members of the public to support green initiatives by conserving resources and reducing waste during festive LNY celebrations.

The Fa Hui Park Green LNY Fair is jointly organised by the ECC, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the non-government organisation (NGO) Green Come True. An interactive education and promotional booth has been set up to promote green messages at the fair. Shopping bag sharing stands have also been set up at the fair for members of the public to pick up reusable shopping bags to reduce the use of disposable plastic bags. Green Ambassadors are deployed on-site to guide fair visitors and stall operators on how to practise proper waste separation and clean recycling. Reusable tableware lending services are also available at the fair to encourage members of the public to go plastic-and-disposable-free. A number of stall operators have already joined the "Green Stall Scheme" and have pledged to implement a series of green measures including waste reduction at source, recycling and resource sharing. The ECC, EPD and collaborating NGOs, green groups and tertiary institutions are also running similar environmental education and promotion activities at the remaining 14 LNY fairs across the territory.

Other officers/members attending the event included Permanent Secretary for the Environment/Director of Environmental Protection, Ms Maisie Cheng, as well as members of the ECC and its Publicity Working Group. All made use of the reusable tableware lending services when buying food at the food stalls. They also appealed to the public to bring the "six green must-haves" (namely water bottles, food containers, reusable cutlery, reusable straws, handkerchiefs and reusable shopping bags) when visiting the LNY fairs as well as using them in their daily lives to support waste reduction at source.

On recycling, apart from the collection of waste paper, plastic and metal at all LNY fairs, the EPD, as it did last year, separately appointed contractors to collect and recycle items including yard waste, wooden pallets, polyfoam and food waste (as applicable). To enhance recycling of resources, the EPD has appointed an additional "Mobile Recycling Team" this year to assist in the collection, sorting and handling of various types of recyclables, as well as to provide a convenient door-to-door collection service for the stall operators.

At the end of the LNY fairs, a "Resources Sharing Corner" will be set up in all fair venues to collect unsold goods and leftover materials (such as canvas, marquees, tables and chairs, shelves and sandbags) from stall operators for on-site distribution or redistribution to others after the fair. The bamboo sticks from the scaffolding of fair stalls will also be collected by EPD contractors to be recycled into mulch for composting, planting and similar uses, or will be delivered to interested groups or farms for further use. The collected general food waste and coconut shells will be delivered separately to the Organic Resources Recovery Centre Phase 1 and the Animal Waste Composting Plant under the EPD for further treatment.

The ECC and EPD hope that the above measures can continue to reduce the amount of waste generated by the operation of LNY fairs and enhance the overall quality and quantity of recyclables through a multi-pronged approach.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, January 23, 2020 is 106 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Hong Kong Customs detects largest cannabis trafficking case at Hong Kong International Airport in past decade (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 70 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about \$12 million at Hong Kong International Airport on January 17. This is the largest cannabis trafficking case detected by Customs at Hong Kong International Airport in the past decade.

Customs officers inspected an air consignment, with several cartons of goods declared as loudspeakers, arriving in Hong Kong from Canada on that day. The batch of suspected cannabis buds was found concealed inside 32 speakers and wrapped with tinfoil and vacuum bags, in an attempt to evade law enforcement officers' detection.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers on the same day arrested a 50-year-old man suspected to be involved in the case.

Investigation is ongoing. The arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Hong Kong Customs strives to combat dangerous drugs trafficking and takes rigorous enforcement action in accordance with Hong Kong's laws. The recreational use of cannabis has been legalised in individual overseas jurisdictions where products containing cannabis or controlled cannabinoids (such as tetrahydro-cannabinol, or THC) in the form of food, drinks and topical products for applying to skin, hair or nails, as well as cannabis extracts, may be available for sale. Customs reminds the public that cannabis and THC are controlled dangerous drugs in Hong Kong. It is a criminal offence to bring such products into Hong Kong.

Cannabis and THC (a major cannabinoid present in cannabis plants) are dangerous drugs controlled under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134). Any products that contain cannabis or THC are also controlled under Cap. 134.

With the Lunar New Year holiday approaching, members of the public should pay attention to the packaging labels of the products concerned to check whether they contain cannabis while making purchases in foreign places during travel. The public should also be aware of the relevant domestic legislation in relation to cannabis, so as to avoid breaching the law inadvertently.

Under Cap. 134, trafficking in dangerous drugs, or illicitly importing to and exporting from Hong Kong, procuring, supplying, manufacturing or dealing in or with dangerous drugs, constitutes a criminal offence. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment and a fine of \$5 million. Illicitly possessing or smoking, inhaling, ingesting or injecting dangerous drugs is subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for seven years and a fine of \$1 million.

Customs has all along been closely monitoring the trends concerning dangerous drugs in other places and implements appropriate strategies. Stringent law enforcement is imposed on passenger and cargo clearance, including air postal packets and express cargo, to effectively combat drug trafficking activities and interdict the flow of dangerous drugs into Hong Kong.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit drug-related activities through Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

