

Experience warmth from social enterprises at HKBPE

Christmas is around the corner and it is time to share the joy with family and friends. Members of the public can purchase heartwarming holiday gifts as well as experience the warmth brought by social enterprises (SEs) and support them by patronising SE booths at the 54th Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo (HKBPE).

The HKBPE will be held at Victoria Park from December 10 to 31. Members of the public are welcome to visit the SE booths at Booths No. 3C01 to 3C04. Fifteen SEs will take turns to showcase their products, including handicrafts and health and organic products. Please refer to the Annex for details. People purchasing products at the SE booths will receive a fine souvenir for free while stocks last upon reaching the spending requirements.

The HKBPE will be open from 11am to 8pm, and will close at 6pm on the last day of the exposition. The admission fee is \$8, and entry is free for children below 1 metre in height, senior citizens aged 65 or above and persons with disabilities.

A spokesman for the Home Affairs Department said, "The HKBPE provides a good opportunity for SEs to showcase their quality products and services and reach a wider audience. Social enterprises have to achieve their social missions while sustaining their business. Public support is crucial to their success."

Social enterprises now provide a great variety of products and services. The Social Enterprise Directory (www.socialenterprise.org.hk/en/sedb) published by the Social Enterprise Business Centre has an online search engine and a mobile application providing detailed information on over 600 social enterprises in Hong Kong.

For those who are interested in the around 80 social enterprise restaurants in Hong Kong, please search for "social enterprise restaurants" on the online platform or the mobile application of OpenRice.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, December 6, 2019 is 106.2 (down 0.3 against yesterday's index).

Auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on December 21 and 22

The Transport Department today (December 6) announced that two auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on December 21 and 22 (Saturday and Sunday) in Meeting Room S221, L2 Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai respectively.

"A total of 340 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public sale at each auction. The lists of marks have been uploaded to the department's website, www.td.gov.hk," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of \$1,000). Otherwise, the mark may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

- (a) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:
- (i) the identity document of the successful bidder;
 - (ii) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;
 - (iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and
 - (iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)
- Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.
- (b) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.
- (c) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark

purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(d) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.

(e) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk.

Government announces appointments to Travel Industry Authority

The Government announced today (December 6) that the Chief Executive has appointed Mr Ma Ho-fai as the Chairperson of the Travel Industry Authority (TIA) and 28 persons as ordinary members of the TIA for a period of two years with effect from January 1, 2020. The appointments were made in accordance with section 1 in Schedule 9 to the Travel Industry Ordinance (TIO) (Chapter 634).

The TIA is a new statutory regulatory body of the travel industry established under the TIO. It is primarily responsible for the licensing and regulation of travel agents, tourist guides and tour escorts.

On the appointments, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said, "The TIA will take up a range of challenging tasks in establishing itself as a new regulator of the travel industry in Hong Kong. Mr Ma has rich experience in public service. We are confident that under his leadership, the TIA will work closely with different stakeholders in setting up a new robust regulatory regime for the travel industry.

"Apart from the Chairperson and the Vice-chairperson (the Commissioner for Tourism), there are 28 ordinary members, namely 13 trade members and 15 non-trade members, in the TIA. The trade members comprise individuals who are engaged in inbound and outbound travel agent business, tourist guides and tour escorts, and members of the Board of Directors of the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC), enabling the TIA to have representation from a broad spectrum of the trade.

"For the non-trade members, they come from various fields and can provide valuable advice to the TIA with their expertise and experience in the respective areas, including law, accountancy, finance, education, consumer affairs and general administration, thereby contributing to the setting up of a comprehensive and effective regulatory regime for the travel industry."

The following is the membership list of the TIA:

Chairperson: Mr Ma Ho-fai

Vice-chairperson: Commissioner for Tourism

Ordinary members: Trade members

Ms Lanny Leung Kong-lan
Mr Paul Leung Yiu-lam
Mr Martin Ma Yuk-man
Dr Priscilla Poon Chau-min
Mr Jason Shum Jiu-sang
Ms Catherine So Ka-woon
Mrs Ann Tang Yu Li-hua
Mr Tse Yun-sang
Mr Jason Wong Chun-tat
Mr Wong Ka-ngai
Ms Gianna Wong Mei-kiu
Mr Michael Wu Siu-ieng
Mr Yiu Pak-leung

Non-trade members

Ms Dilys Chau Suet-fung
Ms Kerry Ching Kim-wai
Mr Alex Fan Hoi-kit
Professor Cathy Hsu Hui-chun
Mr Chris Ip Ngo-tung
Mr Victor Lam Hoi-cheung
Mr Kevin Lam Sze-cay
Mr Johnny Leung Ka-kui
Mr Fred Li Wah-ming
Ms Elaine Liu Yuk-ling
Dr Barry Mak Lui-ming
Mr James Tong Wai-pong
Mr Wilfred Wong Kam-pui
Mr Adrian Wong Koon-man
Mr Charles Yang Chuen-liang

The Government expects that it will take about two years for the TIA, upon establishment, to complete all necessary preparation before taking over the licensing and trade regulatory functions from the Travel Agents Registry and the TIC respectively for the full implementation of the new regulatory regime.

Seventeen persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operations

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations codenamed "Twilight" and "Contribute" on December 4 and yesterday (December 5). A total of 11 suspected illegal workers and six suspected employers were arrested.

During the operations, ImmD Task Force officers raided 14 target locations including a hotel, an industrial building, a shopping plaza, restaurants, a vegetable stall, a commercial building under renovation and residential flats under renovation. The suspected illegal workers comprised seven men and four women, aged 28 to 53. Among them, a man was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment. In addition, two men and two women were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards or Hong Kong identity cards related to another person. Meanwhile, three men and three women, aged 29 to 55, were suspected of employing the suspected illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective

employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screenings of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.