

Public market stalls on Hong Kong Island and in Islands District for rent at upset prices from October 7 to 9

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (October 2) that 70 market stalls in 13 public markets on Hong Kong Island and in the Islands District which were not taken at open auctions held earlier would be available to the public for renting at their upset prices from October 7 to 9, on trial a first-come, first-served basis.

The rent of the 70 stalls will be set at the upset price of the most recent open auction. In open auctions, the upset prices for the stalls will be initially fixed at 80 per cent of the open market rent (OMR) if the stalls have been vacant for over six months, and at 60 per cent of the OMR if the vacancy has been over eight months.

The retail commodities allowed for sale in these stalls cover cooked food, frozen meat, fresh meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, ready-to-eat food, food-related dry goods and wet goods, non-food related dry goods and wet goods, etc. The tenancy agreement is a three-year fixed term starting from November 1, with no right of renewal upon expiry. The monthly rent of the stalls varies depending on their sizes, locations, vacancy periods and the reduced upset prices from the last open auction of the individual stalls. Relevant information is available on the FEHD website.

Members of the public who are interested in renting a market stall should approach the Hawkers and Markets Section (Hong Kong and Islands) Office of the FEHD, 8/F, Lockhart Road Municipal Services Building, 225 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai (Tel: 2879 5706) to apply in person from 9.30am to 12.30pm or 2.30pm to 4.30pm during the abovementioned renting period.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "Applicants for the market stalls must be at least 18 years old and ordinarily reside in Hong Kong. To allow more people to select the stalls and increase customer choices by enhancing the diversity in terms of the variety of stalls, there will be a restriction on the number of stalls that can be rented in the same market by a single tenant. Any person who is currently a stall tenant is allowed to select one stall in the same market. The existing tenants under the new three-year fixed term tenancy scheme (i.e. those persons who became stall tenants through the market open auctions after August 2022) are allowed to select a stall in the same market, but must vacate and return the current stall to the FEHD before the effective date of commencement of the new tenancy agreement. The terms and conditions of renting market stalls on a first-come, first-served basis have been uploaded to the FEHD website, detailing qualifications of the applicants listed."

Details of renting public market stalls on Hong Kong Island and in Islands District on a first-come, first-served basis have been uploaded to the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pleasant_environment/tidy_market/FCFS/index.html). Interested applicants may visit the department website or contact the respective District Environmental Hygiene Office.

Cluster of Candida auris cases in North Lantau Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

â€‹The spokesperson for North Lantau Hospital (NLTH) made the following announcement today (October 2):

An 90-year-old male patient in an emergency medicine ward of NLTH was found to be carrying *Candida auris* after screening on September 23 without signs of infection. He is in critical condition due to underlying diseases and is being treated in isolation. In accordance with the prevailing guideline, NLTH conducted contact tracing and found one more patient, a 71-year-old male, carrying *Candida auris* without signs of infection. The patient was discharged earlier.

The ward concerned has adopted the following enhanced infection control measures:

1. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures;
2. Applied stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients; and
3. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned.

The hospital will continue the enhanced infection control measures and closely monitor the situation of the ward. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Government launches Signature

Performing Arts Programme Scheme

The Government announced today (October 2) the launch of the Signature Performing Arts Programme Scheme for selecting performing arts productions with potential and nurturing them to become representative and large-scale local performing arts productions for long-running performances.

Each selected programme under the Scheme will receive a maximum direct subsidy of \$10 million to support expenses in areas such as creative concepts, stage productions, venue rentals, and marketing and promotion of the programme. To bring in resources from the community to jointly advance the development of local performing arts and to encourage the selected programmes to seek wider audience support, the Scheme will also provide a matching subsidy of up to \$5 million to each selected programme to match the private sponsorship raised and box income received.

A selected programme must stage at least 15 stage performances in Hong Kong and attract a total of at least 10 000 paid audience members. In addition, in accordance with the objective of nurturing large-scale and representative local performing arts productions for long-running performances, if a selected programme is able to make a profit in its first round of performances and stage a second round of performances of a similar scale in Hong Kong within the following 18 months, an additional subsidy equivalent to 20 per cent of the total funding support for the first round of the programme will be provided, with a view to encouraging successful programmes to be staged in Hong Kong on a long-running basis.

A Government spokesman said, "The Scheme will only select the best programmes among the applications for support, as its name suggests. The Scheme will play a pivotal role in showcasing Hong Kong's performing arts capability and further consolidate our role as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange." The Scheme will be implemented in two rounds, with two quotas under each round. Application details for the first round will be announced in November this year, and the Scheme will be open for application before the end of this year.

The Scheme was announced in the 2023 Policy Address. It aims to support representative and large-scale local performing arts productions to be staged as long-running performances, nurture world-class performing arts productions and international cultural brands that represent Hong Kong, and attract people from other places to Hong Kong, setting a stage facing the world.

Giant panda naming and painting competitions launched

â€‹The two giant pandas gifted by the Central Government to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region arrived smoothly in Hong Kong on September 26. To welcome these two giant pandas to the Hong Kong family, the Giant Panda Naming Competition and Giant Panda Painting Competition, organised by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) and co-organised by the Ocean Park Corporation (Ocean Park), were launched today (October 2).

The current names of the two giant pandas are An An (male giant panda) and Ke Ke (female giant panda). All Hong Kong residents are welcome to exercise their creativity and suggest meaningful new names for the giant pandas that highlight their characteristics. Participants are required to suggest a Chinese name for each of the two giant pandas and explain the meaning of the proposed names in no more than 100 words in Chinese. Participants are also welcome to propose keeping the current names of the two giant pandas with an explanation of the meaning of the names. The best entries selected will become the names of the two giant pandas. The Giant Panda Naming Competition is open for entries from today to October 27.

The Giant Panda Painting Competition will be run in three groups, namely the Open Group (for Hong Kong residents), the Secondary Student Group (for Secondary One to Secondary Six students) and the Primary Student Group (for Primary One to Primary Six students) respectively. All participants are welcome to depict the adorable nature of the two giant pandas with reference to their photographs and videos. Participants are required to submit their hand-drawn paintings between October 21 and November 8, and explain the message behind their paintings in no more than 100 words in Chinese.

For details of the two competitions, including terms and conditions, means for submission of entries, judging criteria and prizes, please visit Ocean Park's dedicated website at www.oceanpark.com.hk/en/park-experience/giant-panda-campaign-2024. Results will be announced by the end of this year and winners will be notified individually by correspondence.

The two giant pandas are now undergoing a one-month quarantine period in Ocean Park, after which they will need approximately one month to adapt to their new environment. The CSTB will maintain close communication with experts from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Ocean Park, and, subject to the health and adaptation conditions of the giant pandas, arrange for them to meet the public as early as possible.

Three men jailed for conspiracy to obtain airline services by deception

A 35-year-old Mainland male resident, a 48-year-old Taiwan male resident and a 60-year-old Canadian male were jailed for conspiracy to obtain airline services by deception. They were sentenced to 22, 32 and 34 months' imprisonment respectively at the District Court today (October 2).

The Anti-illegal Migration Agency (AIM) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) received intelligence in November 2023 that a Canadian male was suspected to be involved in illegal migration activities as a courier. Investigators successfully identified the courier, and the Mainland resident who intended to migrate illegally overseas, in the restricted area of Hong Kong International Airport after he disembarked from a flight from Bangkok and tracked him. It was discovered that the courier entered the same toilet cubicle with the Taiwan resident arriving in Hong Kong from Kaohsiung, and later with the Mainland resident to transfer a boarding pass. Later, the courier and the Mainland male resident proceeded to the transfer area to handle transfer procedures separately, while the Taiwan resident proceeded alone to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point.

Investigators intercepted the courier and the Mainland resident near the boarding gate of a Melbourne-bound flight. After examination, it was found that the Mainland resident was in possession of a boarding pass for the Melbourne flight and a forged travel document supposedly issued by Taiwan authorities, which bore his photo but had the name of that Taiwan resident. Investigators also unearthed from the personal belongings of the Mainland resident a People's Republic of China (PRC) passport, a PRC identity card and an Exit-Entry Permit for travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao, confirming his true identity as a Mainland resident. The Taiwan resident was intercepted by investigators when he attempted to depart Hong Kong at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point. The three arrested persons were charged at the District Court today with conspiracy to obtain airline services by deception. They pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to 22, 32 and 34 months' imprisonment respectively.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, under the laws of Hong Kong, people who, by any deception, dishonestly obtain services from another shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable, upon conviction, to imprisonment for 10 years.