

Labour Department to hold occupational health public talks

The Labour Department (LD) will hold a public talk entitled "Occupational Health of Office Workers Series (II) Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders for Office Workers" on March 21 (Friday) to raise office workers' awareness of musculoskeletal disorders of the back and upper limbs arising from prolonged repetitive movements or improper sitting postures. The talk will cover the causes of and preventive measures for musculoskeletal disorders among office workers.

The talk will be given by the LD's occupational hygienist and occupational health nurse at 3.30pm at the the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui.

The LD will hold another talk, entitled "First Aid in the Workplace", on March 28 (Friday). The talk will cover basic knowledge of first aid and explain how to assist and handle employees injured in workplace accidents through case illustrations.

The talk will be given by the occupational hygienist and occupational health nurse at 3.30pm at the Lecture Theatre of the Hong Kong Central Library, 66 Causeway Road, Causeway Bay.

Both talks will be given in Cantonese. Admission is free but pre-registration is required. Interested parties can register online (www.oshsreg.gov.hk/en). For enquiries, please call 2852 4040.

Tuen Mun Job Centre to merge with Yuen Long Job Centre

The Labour Department (LD) today (March 14) announced that to enhance the effectiveness of using public resources, the Tuen Mun Job Centre will merge with the Yuen Long Job Centre starting April 1. Upon merging, the job centre at G/F, Victory Building, 3 Tsing Min Path, Tuen Mun, New Territories, will be renamed as the New Territories West Job Centre to continue providing services to the public. For the addresses and service hours of the job centres, please visit the LD's Interactive Employment Service (iES) [website](#).

The LD provides diversified and free employment services for job seekers. Apart from services provided by job centres, the LD's iES [website](#) and the iES mobile application provide round-the-clock online employment

services and employment information to enable job seekers to search for job vacancies and submit job applications online. Job seekers and employers can also call the hotlines for job seekers (2969 0888) and employers (2503 3377) of the Telephone Employment Service Centre of the LD to access services.

The LD will continue to review its services in a timely manner, and adjust and enhance them in light of the service needs and market situation to enhance efficiency.

2025-26 Valuation List and Government Rent Roll open for inspection from March 17

The 2025-26 Valuation List and Government Rent Roll will be open for inspection from next Monday (March 17) to May 31.

Members of the public may view the Valuation List and Government Rent Roll on the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD)'s website (www.rvd.gov.hk) or its Property Information Online (PIO) website (www.rvdpi.gov.hk), or at the RVD on 15/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon, during office hours. Notices on the display of the Valuation List and Government Rent Roll were gazetted today (March 14).

Rateable values effective from April 1 this year are shown on the 2025-26 Valuation List and Government Rent Roll. All rateable values are assessed on the same basis by reference to rental values in the open market on the designated valuation reference date (October 1, 2024).

Proposals objecting to the new rateable values must be lodged from March 17 to May 31 by submitting an electronic form (Form e-R20A) using the [Electronic Submission of Forms](#) provided on the RVD's website, or a specified form ([Form R20A](#)). Form R20A is available on the RVD's website, or at the RVD's office or the Home Affairs Department's Home Affairs Enquiry Centres. Completed forms must be submitted to the RVD in person or by post.

"Proposals received after May 31 or submitted via other means will not be accepted," an RVD spokesman said.

Rates are charged at specified percentage(s) of the rateable value of a property. For 2025-26, the rates percentage charges are maintained at the current levels, which are:

- Non-domestic tenements: 5 per cent.
- Domestic tenements with a rateable value of \$550,000 or below: 5 per

cent.

- Domestic tenements with a rateable value over \$550,000: rates will be charged at 5 per cent of the rateable value for the first \$550,000, 8 per cent for the next \$250,000, and 12 per cent for the portion of rateable value exceeding \$800,000.

If payable, Government rent is charged at 3 per cent of the rateable value of a property.

The 2025-26 Budget proposes to provide rates concession for the first quarter of 2025-26, i.e. April to June 2025, subject to a ceiling of \$500 for each rateable tenement.

Rates and Government rent demands (demands) will be issued in early April and show the rateable values for 2025-26, the Government rent payable and the net rates amount payable after deducting the rates concession. Leaflets explaining the general revaluation and the rates concession will accompany these demands. Enquiries can be made on the RVD's 24-hour hotline 2152 0111 (handled by 1823).

"The demands must be paid by the last day for payment shown on the demands, whether or not a proposal to object the new rateable value has been lodged. Any changes in rateable values resulting from the RVD's decisions made upon consideration of the proposals will date back to April 1 this year, and adjustments will be made in subsequent demands," the spokesman said.

To enhance valuation transparency, payers of rates and Government rent of private residential properties (excluding village houses) may obtain information on the saleable area and age of their properties free of charge through the PIO using the Assessment Number and the PIO Enquiry Code printed on the demands.

Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement between Hong Kong and Bahrain to enter into force on March 21

The Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) signed between Hong Kong and Bahrain in March last year will enter into force on March 21, following the completion of the two sides' respective internal procedures required.

Under the IPPA, the two governments undertake to provide investors of the other side with fair, equitable and non-discriminatory treatment of their

investments, compensation in the event of expropriation of investments, and the right to free transfers abroad of investments and returns. The IPPA also provides for settlement of investment disputes under internationally accepted rules, including arbitration.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, said, "By enabling investors of Hong Kong and Bahrain to enjoy corresponding protection of their investments in the host economies, the IPPA will enhance confidence of investors, expand investment flows and further strengthen the economic and trade ties between the two places.

"The Government has been actively seeking to expand Hong Kong's global economic and trade networks with a view to assisting enterprises and investors in opening up markets. We are exploring the signing of IPPAs with Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Egypt and Peru, as well as exploring IPPAs or free trade agreements with emerging markets including potential partners in the Middle East and other regions along the Belt and Road," he added.

The IPPA with Bahrain is the second of its kind signed by the current-term Government, following the IPPA signed with Türkiye. It is also the 24th investment agreement that Hong Kong has signed with a foreign economy.

The other foreign economies that have signed IPPAs with Hong Kong are the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Australia, Austria, the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

Registered minor works contractor fined and prohibited by disciplinary board from certifying or carrying out minor works for six months

The Registered Contractors' Disciplinary Board (the Board) has completed a disciplinary inquiry under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) and decided that a registered minor works contractor (RMWC) should be disciplined under sections 13(2)(b), 13(2)(i) and 13(2)(j) of the BO for having carried out and certified building works as if it were minor works carried out under the simplified requirements of the Minor Works Control System (MWCS), and having been negligent or misconducted itself in the building works.

The Board ordered the RMWC to be prohibited from certifying or carrying out any minor works under the simplified requirements of the MWCS for six months with effect from the date of the Gazette and be fined \$20,000. Also,

the RMWC was ordered to pay \$50,100 in total, being the costs of the Board and the Buildings Department (BD) for conducting the inquiry.

The Board's written decision and order issued on February 26 was published in the Gazette today (March 14). Details are available at the following link: www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20252911/egn202529111497.pdf.

The RMWC submitted a certificate to the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) under the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Housing in March 2022, notifying the commencement of minor works, i.e. alteration of external non-load bearing reinforced concrete walls, at a shopping centre at Tsui Lam Road, Tseung Kwan O. The RMWC subsequently submitted a completion certificate to the ICU certifying the completion of the alteration works. After an investigation by the ICU, it was revealed that the alteration works involved external walls, including external load bearing reinforced concrete walls, which were over 3.5 metres high, and do not comply with the Building (Minor Works) Regulation. Such works do not belong to any minor works items and should only be carried out after obtaining prior approval and consent from the ICU. All of the above showed that the RMWC had carried out and certified such works as if it were minor works commenced under the simplified requirements of the MWCS, and that the RMWC had been negligent or had misconducted itself in the building works.

A spokesperson for the BD reiterated that any registered contractor who contravenes the relevant provisions of the BO in carrying out building works will be subject to enforcement action including criminal prosecution and disciplinary action under the BO.