

HK SciFest 2021 fosters popular science culture through online and offline programmes

The integrated science programme, HK SciFest 2021, will be launched from tomorrow (March 26) until April 11. The festival is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and organised by the Hong Kong Science Museum (ScM) in collaboration with about 90 partners and units. Over 100 delightful science experience activities are offered online and offline for the public to enjoy the fun of science in many ways.

During the festival, the ScM will stage five new exhibitions featuring the world of flowers, stories behind the encounters between amateur naturalists and nature, the application of science and technology in agriculture, the future of seed technology, as well as global climate change. The exhibitions are enhanced with multimedia for visitors to explore various dimensions of science from a new perspective.

This year, some highlighted events including "Fun Science Carnival" and "Croucher Science Week", which will take place online for the first time, enabling rich exposures to different science streams through online broadcasts and productions under the guidance of scientific teams worldwide. In addition, a series of "STEM x SCM" online activities are designed to elevate public interest in and understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Other interesting activities include visits and guided tours, science lectures and workshops, which will provide diverse science experiences for people of all ages.

The closing event, the "Technologies of Gyroscope and Robotics" science demonstration, will be broadcast live on the ScM's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/hkscm) and YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/hksciencemuseum) at 6pm, April 11 (Sunday). Robots will perform Tai Chi and tightrope walking to demonstrate how they maintain balance using gyroscopic technology.

With "Technology For Our Future" as the theme this year, the HK SciFest aims to encourage the public to learn more about the latest achievements in science and technology as well as the development trends of the future in a light-hearted way, and to take advantage of technology wisely for dealing with future changes and challenges.

In view of the latest situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival's programmes may be adjusted or cancelled. Participants will be informed of the latest arrangements prior to the programme. For programme details and enrolment methods, please visit the website of HK SciFest 2021 at hk.science.museum/scifest2021.

The ScM will implement special opening hours from 10am to 5pm daily (except on regular closing days). The Museum will also apply admission by sessions and quotas to limit visitor flows. Visitors to Museum facilities will need to use hand sanitiser and will be subject to temperature checks before admission. They also need to wear their own masks. Children aged under 12 will only be allowed to enter the venue when accompanied by an adult. Enhanced measures, including cleaning and disinfection between sessions, will be conducted. For details please visit the Museum's website (hk.science.museum).

Appeals are made to members of the public to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app and scan the QR code with the app before entering the LCSD venues. For visitors who opt for registering personal information for entering, the venue staff may immediately call the contact number provided by the visitor to verify the authenticity of information. Visitors are reminded to arrive earlier to avoid delaying their visit as a longer time is required for such registration. To tie in with the Government's anti-epidemic efforts, the aforesaid arrangements aim to enable necessary contact tracing if a confirmed case is found, thus minimising the risk of further transmission of the virus.

The Hong Kong Science Museum is located at 2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East.

CHP investigates nine additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, March 25, the CHP was investigating nine additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 429 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 428 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, five are imported cases and four are epidemiologically linked with local cases.

A total of 291 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (March 11 to 24), including 219 local cases of which 40 are from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They

are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Result of the tender of the People's Bank of China RMB Bills held on March 25, 2021

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Result of the tender of the People's Bank of China RMB Bills held on March 25, 2021

Tender Result

Tender Date : March 25, 2021

Bills available for Tender : Six-month RMB Bills

Issuer : The People's Bank of China

Issue Number : BCHKFP21004

Issue Date : March 29, 2021

Maturity Date : September 27, 2021 (or the closest coupon payment date)

Application Amount : RMB 24,960 million

Issue Amount : RMB 5,000 million

Average accepted Coupon Rate : 2.51 %

Highest accepted Coupon Rate (Bills' Coupon) : 2.60 %

Lowest accepted Coupon Rate : 2.25 %

Allocation Ratio : Approximately 23.68 %

STEM Internship Scheme well received by universities and business community

A spokesman for the Innovation and Technology Commission said today (March 25) that the pilot STEM Internship Scheme held last summer and winter had attracted over 1 600 university students and more than 1 000 companies or organisations. It was well received by both universities and the business community.

According to the findings of the surveys conducted by participating universities after the completion of the summer and winter internships (see Annex), most of the students (94 per cent) upon completion of their internship gained a better understanding of the innovation and technology (I&T) field. Eighty-eight per cent of the students would consider pursuing

careers in I&T in the future. Furthermore, a vast majority of the participating employers (99 per cent) considered that the job performance of their interns had met or even exceeded their expectations. Ninety-six per cent of the employers planned to join the Scheme again.

The participating companies were mostly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or start-ups. About half of them were from the information technology sector with the rest from various business sectors, including biotechnology, electrical and electronic engineering, professional services and environmental protection. The internship positions covered various I&T elements, such as programme coding, web design, big data analytics, machine learning, robotics, artificial intelligence, electronic engineering, digital marketing, biotechnology and food technology.

Participating universities said that the Scheme had encouraged employers to create more I&T-related internship places, offering students the opportunity to apply their STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) knowledge in the workplace and understand the I&T work environment and culture at an early stage. In addition, some employers, mainly from SMEs, considered that the subsidy of the Scheme had alleviated the impact on their industries brought about by the relatively weak economic environment last year, enabling them to recruit interns to help develop business as usual.

"In view of the enthusiastic response from universities and the business community, the Financial Secretary announced the regularisation of the STEM Internship Scheme in the 2021-22 Budget. We are discussing with universities on various enhancement measures to attract more students and employers," the spokesman for the Commission said.

The STEM Internship Scheme aims to encourage students to experience I&T-related work and foster their interest in an I&T career in the future. It provides students with internship opportunities and assists enterprises in recruiting suitable I&T talents. It supports the nurturing of new blood in I&T, thereby enlarging the local I&T talent pool. The universities that will continue to participate in the Scheme this year are the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University and the Education University of Hong Kong. Interested students and employers may contact the relevant universities. Details are available at the website of the Innovation and Technology Fund (www.itf.gov.hk/en/funding-programmes/nurturing-talent/stem-internship-scheme).

April 2021 adjustment in ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department today (March 25) announced an adjustment to the auto-LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations from April 1 to April 30, 2021, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contracts of the dedicated LPG filling stations.

A department spokesman said that the adjustment on April 1, 2021, reflects the movement of the LPG international price in March 2021. The adjusted auto-LPG ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations will range from \$3.7 to \$4.26 per litre, representing an increase of \$0.05 to \$0.06 per litre.

The spokesman said that the auto-LPG ceiling prices were adjusted according to a specified pricing formula. The formula comprises two elements – the LPG international price and the LPG operating price. The LPG international price is the LPG international price of the preceding month. The LPG operating price is adjusted on the first day of February every year according to the movement in the Composite Consumer Price Index in the previous year.

The auto-LPG ceiling prices for respective dedicated LPG filling stations in April 2021 are as follows:

Location of Dedicated LPG Filling Station	Auto-LPG Ceiling Price in April 2021 (HK\$/litre)	Auto-LPG Ceiling Price in March 2021 (HK\$/litre)
Fung Yip Street, Chai Wan	4.26	4.21
Ngo Cheung Road, West Kowloon	4.26	4.21
Sham Mong Road, Mei Foo	3.92	3.86
Yip Wong Road, Tuen Mun	3.92	3.86
Marsh Road, Wan Chai	3.91	3.86
Fung Mat Road, Sheung Wan	3.84	3.79
Wai Lok Street, Kwun Tong	3.84	3.79
Yuen Chau Tsai, Tai Po	3.84	3.79

Cheung Yip Street, Kowloon Bay	3.89	3.84
Kwai On Road, Kwai Chung	3.89	3.84
Hang Yiu Street, Ma On Shan	3.70	3.64
Tak Yip Street, Yuen Long	3.70	3.64

The spokesman said that the details of the LPG international price and the auto-LPG ceiling price of each dedicated LPG filling station have been uploaded to the department website www.emsd.gov.hk. They are also posted at dedicated LPG filling stations to enable the trades to monitor the price adjustment.

Details of the pricing adjustment mechanism for dedicated LPG filling stations can also be viewed under the "What's New" section of the department website at www.emsd.gov.hk/en/what_s_new/current/index.html.