

ENB to launch graduates subsidy programme under Green Employment Scheme

The Environment Bureau (ENB) announced today (June 17) that a subsidy programme for graduates will be launched under the Green Employment Scheme (GES) to subsidise private companies to employ fresh graduates working in areas related to environmental protection, ecological conservation, green energy and energy conservation, climate change, sustainable development and more, with a view to providing job opportunities to graduates interested in environment-related fields and to nurturing talents for meeting needs on various environmental fronts. The programme will be implemented by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and applications will open on June 26.

A spokesman for the ENB said, "A sum of about \$24 million has been earmarked under the Anti-epidemic Fund for the programme to provide employers of fresh graduates with a monthly subsidy of \$5,610. This subsidy will form part of the monthly salary of each eligible fresh graduate paid by their employers for a period of 18 months."

The subsidy programme will be implemented from 2020-21, covering more than 200 jobs. In addition to the salary subsidy, the Environmental Academy of the EPD will collaborate with various professional societies and organisations (including the Hong Kong Institute of Qualified Environmental Professionals Limited as well as other societies and organisations) to provide graduates with professional training to help the employed graduates become better equipped with environmental expertise in different areas.

"We understand that a number of companies are facing business challenges brought about by the impact of the epidemic and the economic downturn. We hope the subsidy programme would provide the relevant graduates with more green employment opportunities and help with professional succession in the environmental sector," the spokesman added.

The EPD has commissioned the Hong Kong Productivity Council to implement the subsidy programme. Eligible private companies will be able to download the application form from the relevant website. Applications can be submitted together with supporting documents from June 26 to August 28. For more information, please call 2835 1870 or email graduates_subsidy@epd.gov.hk.

Furthermore, among the over 500 time-limited jobs created under the GES covering three categories of environmental protection work, namely "Electric Vehicles (EVs) Popularisation", "Use Less, Waste Less" and "Leave No Trace at Mountain and Sea", recruitment for more than 100 jobs commenced in late May and early June.

Jobs open for recruitment include the 30 Project Co-ordinator (electric vehicles) positions under "EVs Popularisation", 30 posts of Project Assistant (Waste Reduction and Recycling) and 40 waste reduction and recycling green ambassadors (food waste) under "Use Less, Waste Less", and 45 jobs offered by Community Green Stations through their operators. The feedback has been positive with over 5 000 applications received.

Regarding the 150 green ambassador and 50 cleaning worker positions created for further promoting the "Leave No Trace at Mountain and Sea" outing concept, the first-round recruitment process for around half of them began this month. Recruitment for other vacancies including 50 eco-tour guides and artisans, 100 ambassadors participating in coastal cleaning and publicity work and more than 10 waste reduction and recycling green ambassadors will gradually commence in the coming months.

Subsidy to taxi or red minibus drivers under second round of Anti-epidemic Fund

The Transport Department (TD) said today (June 17) that over \$1.2 billion of the subsidy under the two rounds of the Anti-epidemic Fund has been disbursed to the transport trades, and the subsidy to taxi or red minibus (RMB) drivers under the second round of the Fund is open for application starting from today until September 30.

Under the Fund, the government provides a monthly subsidy of \$6,000 for each eligible active taxi or RMB driver for a period of 6 months, from April 1 to September 30, 2020. In response to the trade's views that some of the taxi and RMB drivers have not yet renewed their driver identity plates in time, the TD decided to make appropriate relaxations on the eligibility requirements. In addition to the drivers who hold a valid taxi or public light bus (PLB) driver identity plate during the period between January 1 and March 31, 2020, the drivers who hold an old driver identity plate and have already renewed their taxi or PLB driver identity plate during the period between April 1 and May 7, 2020, are considered eligible for applying the subsidy.

The drivers are also required to provide valid rental agreement or declarations during the period between January 1 and March 31, 2020, and the period between April 1 and September 30, 2020. If they cannot provide the valid rental agreement or declarations during the period between April and September 2020, they can choose to apply for a one-off subsidy of \$7,500. For the eligibility requirements and details, please visit the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk).

The TD issued letters to taxi and PLB trade organisations today to inform them of the eligibility requirements and application arrangements. Eligible taxi and RMB drivers must submit application via the GovHK portal (<https://eform.one.gov.hk/form/td0015/en/>). The subsidy can be disbursed to the designated local bank account provided in the application within one month upon receipt of the applications and completion of the checking. The first payment is expected to be disbursed by end of this month.

For details on the subsidies for transport trades under the Fund, please visit the TD's website.

The People's Bank of China will issue Renminbi Bills through the Central Moneymarkets Unit of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority

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

The People's Bank of China (the PBOC) will issue Renminbi Bills through the Central Moneymarkets Unit of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (the HKMA). Please find attached the tender notice and the tender information memorandum of the Renminbi Bills to be issued by the PBOC. Please also find attached the tender-related information provided by the Issuing and Lodging Agent through the HKMA.

SJ expresses sorrow over passing of retired Judge of Court of First Instance of High Court Mr Justice Nguyen

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, today (June 16) was saddened by the passing of Mr Peter Nguyen, a retired Honourable Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court and a former Director of Public

Prosecutions.

Mr Nguyen was called to the Bar in the United Kingdom in 1970. In the same year, he served as an Assistant Crown Counsel in the then Legal Department and was subsequently promoted to the post of Crown Counsel. He joined the private practice in 1974. Mr Nguyen returned to the Government and held the post of Director of Public Prosecutions from 1994 to 1997. He was appointed Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court in 1998 and retired in 2008. Mr Nguyen was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1995.

Ms Cheng said, "Mr Nguyen had offered distinguished and dedicated service to the Hong Kong community and the Government, making significant contributions to the criminal justice system over the years. I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Mr Nguyen's family on behalf of the Department of Justice."

[Hong Kong ranked fifth in World Competitiveness Yearbook 2020](#)

Hong Kong was ranked fifth globally in the latest World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY) 2020 published by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), down from second last year. IMD attributed Hong Kong's lower ranking to a decline in economic performance, social turmoil as well as the rub-on effect of the Chinese economy.

Among the four competitiveness factors in WCY 2020, Hong Kong's ranking in "Economic performance" dropped from 10th to 28th, with the "Domestic economy" sub-factor sliding from 18th to 49th while other economic sub-factors like "International trade" and "International investment" remained unscathed. In addition, Hong Kong's rankings in "Government efficiency" and "Business efficiency" remained unchanged at first and second respectively, and that in "Infrastructure" improved to 14th, indicating that Hong Kong's core competitiveness remains intact.

Among various sub-factors, Hong Kong's ranking remained first globally in "Business legislation". Within the "Institutional framework" sub-factor, Hong Kong's ranking improved from second to first globally in the indicator "Legal and regulatory framework" and from 19th to first in the indicator "Exchange rate stability". These top-of-the-world rankings reaffirm Hong Kong's institutional strengths, particularly in legal and monetary affairs.

Commenting on the lacklustre economic performance and social unrest last year that affect Hong Kong's ranking, a Government spokesperson said today (June 16), "The unprecedented social unrest that has taken place in Hong Kong since June last year dealt a severe blow to inbound tourism, local

consumption activities and investment sentiment in the second half of 2019, pushing the economy into recession. The social unrest involving a high level of violence, acts of vandalism and intimidation of people holding a different political standpoint has also affected how Hong Kong was perceived, as certain survey indicators of the IMD report showed that survey respondents were deeply concerned about Hong Kong's social and political stability.

"For Hong Kong to be able to leverage on our competitive advantages, law and order, and social stability are of paramount importance. In view of the emerging threats and organisations advocating 'Hong Kong Independence', it is clear that without adequate safeguards for national security, Hong Kong's stability will be at risk. It is thus critical, essential and urgent for the National People's Congress to take the decision to establish and improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to safeguard national security from the state level in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law. The national security legislation aims to prevent, curb and sanction an extremely small minority of criminals who threaten national security. This ensures the continuous successful implementation of the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle and helps maintain an environment that is conducive to business and investment, thereby safeguarding the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong."

The spokesperson added, "We must stress that the national security legislation will not affect Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy under 'One Country, Two Systems'. Under 'One Country, Two Systems', our economic integration with the Mainland will bring economic opportunities to us. Our much-valued institutional strengths and core competitiveness will also remain intact: they include the rule of law and judicial independence, open and flexible markets, a simple and low tax regime, an efficient public sector and a favourable business environment with a level playing field.

"The HKSAR Government is committed to enhancing the competitiveness and vibrancy of the Hong Kong economy. Faced with further economic setbacks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the HKSAR Government has implemented various packages of initiatives to protect jobs, support enterprises and revive the economy. We will strive to maintain our competitive advantages, and at the same time step up investment in infrastructure, and innovation and technology in order to add growth impetus to our development. Moreover, Hong Kong is poised to be both an active promoter and a beneficiary of important national development strategies such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative alongside the further opening up and deepening of economic reform in the Mainland.

"We have every confidence in Hong Kong's long-term economic development."