

Missing man in Tsim Sha Tsui located

A man who went missing in Tsim Sha Tsui has been located.

Pradip Das, aged 30, an Indian, went missing after he left his residence on Carnarvon Road on March 2 morning. His friend made a report to Police on March 4.

The man was located on Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui last night (May 15). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

Distance Business Programme to open for applications from enterprises on May 18

The Innovation and Technology Commission today (May 16) announced that the Distance Business Programme under the Anti-epidemic Fund of the Government will accept applications from enterprises from 9am on Monday (May 18) until October 31.

"To support enterprises to continue their business and services during the epidemic, the Programme provides funding support through fast-track processing for enterprises to adopt information technology (IT) solutions for developing distance business. We believe various sectors in Hong Kong will benefit from the Programme," a spokesman for the Commission said.

Under the Programme, the funding ceiling is \$100,000 for each IT solution and the relevant training expenses for the employees. Each enterprise may receive total funding of up to \$300,000 to undertake a distance business project to be completed within six months. Each enterprise can submit only one application with no more than three IT solutions. The approved project cannot benefit from other government funding schemes at the same time.

The Programme covers 12 IT solution categories relating to distance business as follows:

- Online business;
- Online order taking and delivery, and smart self-service systems;
- Online customer services and engagement;
- Digital customer experience enhancement;
- Digital payment/mobile point of sale;

- Online/cloud-based financial management systems;
- Online/cloud-based human resources management systems;
- Remote document management, cloud storage and remote access services;
- Virtual meeting and conference tools;
- Virtual team management and communications;
- Cybersecurity solutions; and
- Other online/custom-built/cloud-based business support systems.

All private enterprises (excluding publicly listed companies, statutory bodies and non-government organisations funded by the Government) with a valid Business Registration Certificate, ongoing business commenced before January 1 this year and substantive business operation in the industry related to the project in the application at the time of application are eligible.

The Government has established the Distance Business Programme Vetting Committee to oversee the implementation of the Programme. The Committee is chaired by the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, with members from the technology and professional services sectors, academia and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. The Hong Kong Productivity Council is the Secretariat of the Programme.

The Secretariat will conduct eligibility checking and preliminary screening, and then submit the applications to the Distance Business Programme Vetting Committee for consideration. Vetting criteria include relevance of the proposed project to the applicant's business, reasonableness of the implementation details and budget, and the relevant technical capability of the service provider. To ensure fair and reasonable allocation of resources, the Programme Secretariat will process up to 10 funding applications involving services provided by the same system integrator being the service provider each week. The rest of the applications will be processed in the following week.

The Programme will accept and process applications through an online system. If an application contains all the required information and documents, the Programme Secretariat will endeavour to inform the applicant of the outcome within about 10 working days. The actual processing time will depend on the number of applications received and the complexity of the projects. To avoid delays, applicants should ensure the accuracy of the information and documents provided. The Government reminds applicants that providing untrue information or false documents in an attempt to receive funding constitutes a criminal offence and offenders may be subject to prosecution.

The Programme also provides an IT Service Providers Reference List to offer relevant market information merely for enterprises' reference. The Reference List with the first batch of IT Service Providers is available on the Programme website and will be updated regularly.

Eligible enterprises may submit applications online. Details are available on the Programme website (u.hkpc.org/dbiz). For enquiries, please contact the Programme Secretariat by phone on 2788 5070 during business hours

(9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except public holidays)) or via email at dbiz@hkpc.org.

EDB clarification

Regarding a media report which claimed that officials of the Education Bureau (EDB) already knew the questions of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination before the commencement of the examination and "set up a trap to frame others", a spokesman for the EDB today (May 16) clarified that the EDB so far has not deployed any staff member to join the Moderation Committee (MC) of the History subject of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

According to the EDB's record, a teacher being employed by the EDB had already been invited by the HKEAA to serve on the relevant MC in his personal capacity before joining the EDB. After employment, the teacher has applied for outside work to continue his duties in the MC. Due to the confidentiality protocol, the staff member concerned did not and cannot disclose the content of the examination questions to anyone including colleagues or seniors in the EDB.

The HKEAA takes full responsibility of the membership of the MC. In the past two years, the EDB repeatedly requested to nominate staff to join different subjects' committees. But it is entirely the HKEAA to decide on the acceptance of nomination, duties to be assigned and at which stage a member would be involved in setting and moderating questions.

In 2019, the EDB nominated a staff member to join the MC of the History subject of the HKEAA but no officer was eventually invited. The EDB has also asked for joining the MCs of other subjects. Even if a staff member is invited to serve as a member of the committee, he should abide by strict confidentiality and must not disclose the content of the examination questions to others including any person in the EDB.

The controversy this time is about the appropriateness of the HKDSE History Examination questions. The EDB urges all sectors to face up to the relevant issues together and not to be deliberately misled or have their attention diverted.

A media organisation, before grasping the facts, reported that the EDB knew the questions before the examination and "set up a trap to frame others". The EDB expresses deep regret as it has seriously undermined the integrity of the bureau.

Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector under Anti-epidemic Fund continues to disburse subsidies

The Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector (ASPM) under the Anti-epidemic Fund is open for applications and continues to disburse subsidies.

The ASPM is implemented by the Property Management Services Authority (PMSA). As of today (May 16), the PMSA has received over 8 700 applications for the ASPM, of which over 5 400 applications have been approved. The approved applications involve subsidies of over \$200 million and benefit more than 27 200 building blocks and around 51 300 front-line property management (PM) workers. Please refer to the website of the PMSA (www.pmsahk.org.hk/en/index.html) for the names of the properties for which applications have been approved.

The Government launched the ASPM under the Anti-epidemic Fund to subsidise owners' organisations (OOs) or PM companies of eligible buildings to provide the Anti-epidemic Hardship Allowance to the front-line PM workers. The ASPM will also provide the Anti-epidemic Cleansing Subsidy to OOs or PM companies. Phase I of the ASPM covers private residential and composite (i.e. commercial cum residential) buildings, whereas Phase II of the ASPM covers industrial and commercial buildings (including shopping malls).

The application deadlines for Phase I and Phase II of the ASPM are May 31 and June 15 respectively. Eligible PM companies and OOs are reminded to submit their applications to the PMSA as soon as practicable. For details on the ASPM, please contact the PMSA at 3696 1156 or 3696 1166, or visit the website of the PMSA.

Territory-wide flag-selling activity cancelled

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been informed by the Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Social Service that the territory-wide flag-selling activity in public places scheduled to be held today (May 16) has been cancelled, a spokesman for the SWD said.

For enquiries, please contact Ms Wong of the organisation at 2331 2877.