

Voter registration for 2020 to close on May 2

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) today (April 20) appealed to eligible persons/bodies who have not yet registered as geographical and/or functional constituency electors to submit new registration applications by the statutory deadline of May 2, so that their registration particulars can be included in the final registers to be published in July this year, and they will be able to vote in the 7th Legislative Council General Election.

"Completed application forms can be submitted to the REO by post (13/F, Kowloonbay International Trade and Exhibition Centre, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay), by fax (2891 1180), or by email (form@reo.gov.hk). Applications may also be submitted via the REO e-Form Upload Platform (www.reo-form.gov.hk). When submitting their voter registration applications forms, applicants should also provide their telephone numbers and email addresses, so that the REO can contact them more promptly and efficiently when needed," a spokesman for the REO said.

Due to the shortened service hours or closures of certain government facilities in response to the epidemic, the REO reminds members of the public who opt to submit applications by post to send out their application forms early in order not to miss the statutory deadline. When submitting applications by email, members of the public should avoid attaching a large number of voter registration application forms to a single email and sending it to REO's email account, as it may cause delivery failure because of the large file size.

After sending their voter registration applications through email, applicants are advised to check if they receive a confirmation email (see attached) which is automatically sent by the REO email server. If they do not receive a confirmation email, applicants are advised to resend their voter registration application by email or through the other aforesaid submission channels. Applicants who submit their application forms through the REO e-Form Upload Platform should take note of the application number generated by the system, so that they may check the status of their applications afterwards when needed.

To facilitate members of the public in submitting their application forms by the statutory deadline of May 2, the REO will make special arrangements for its office on 13/F of Kowloonbay International Trade & Exhibition Centre, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay to remain open until 11.59pm on May 2 to receive application forms.

In addition, the REO again urges registered electors who received inquiry letters issued by the REO to, as per the instructions of the letter, reply as soon as possible by the statutory deadline of May 2 this year via post, fax or email, so as to maintain their voter registration status.

The specified application forms for voter registration can be obtained from the REO, the District Offices and the management offices of public housing estates. They can also be downloaded from the voter registration website (www.voterregistration.gov.hk).

For enquiries, please call the REO hotline at 2891 1001. Members of the public may also check their registration status and particulars at any time by logging into the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (www.voterinfo.gov.hk).

Application for new niches at Tsang Tsui and Wo Hop Shek columbariums to open from May 11

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will allocate some 40,000 new extendable niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium in Tuen Mun and Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI in Fanling, which will be open for application starting from May 11.

An FEHD spokesman said today (April 20), "Further to the previous allocation of some 20 000 niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium (Phase I) and Wong Nai Chung Road Columbarium in 2019, the FEHD will launch a new round of niche allocation. A total of 44 950 extendable niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium and Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI will be allocated, including 22 680 standard niches (7 080 smoke-free niches and 15 600 non-smoke-free niches) and 220 non-smoke-free large niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium; and 21 720 standard niches (11 490 smoke-free niches and 10 230 non-smoke-free niches) and 330 large niches (160 smoke-free niches and 170 non-smoke-free niches) at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI. The application period will start from May 11 till June 10."

Applicants should only file one application form to apply for either a large niche or standard niche for the same deceased person. When applying for a large niche, the applicant has to fill in at least three deceased persons' particulars in the application form. For applying for a standard niche, the applicant has to fill in at least one deceased person's particulars.

The spokesman said, "In order to expedite the allocation process, the priorities of successful applicants for niche allocation and the designated niches assigned to them are to be determined by drawing of lots and computer balloting. The niches will not be chosen by the applicants themselves. The successful applicants can make use of the niche location enquiry system on the FEHD website to enquire as to the location of the niches concerned. If

the applicant decides to take up the designated niche, he or she must complete the relevant formalities and settle the payments at the Public Niche Allocation Office according to the scheduled date and time.

"In addition, to encourage co-location of ashes and take into consideration those who have failed in the last allocation exercise, these two categories of applicants – if meeting the criteria for the respective category – will be given an additional ballot paper under that category to enhance the chance of a successful ballot exercise. In exceptional cases, for applicants who were unsuccessful in the most recent two consecutive niche allocation exercises, two additional ballot papers will be allotted under that category.

"As regards the ashes interment period, the initial interment period is 20 years after allocation of a niche to the applicant and can be extended at 10-year intervals thereafter upon payment of the prevailing prescribed fee. On expiry of the 20-year/10-year interment period, as long as the related persons confirm extension of the interment period and pay the prevailing prescribed fee, the use of the allocated niche can be continued."

The spokesman added, "Since the quantity and type of niches (standard/large; smoke-free or non-smoke-free) available for allocation in these two columbaria are different, the chance of successful allocation varies. When deciding the type of niche to be selected for application, applicants should make reference to the relevant information in the application form for assessing the chance of successful allocation."

Starting from May 11, application forms can be downloaded from the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk) or obtained from the department's Hong Kong or Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office, District Environmental Hygiene Offices, Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of Home Affairs Department, Post Offices on Cheung Chau, Lamma Island, Peng Chau and at Mui Wo and Tai O or by fax via hotline 2841 9111. The completed application form together with copies of the required documents shall be submitted within the application period by fax (2333 1716), email (apply_newniche@feh.gov.hk), or in person to the FEHD Hong Kong or Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office or by post to the above offices.

Applicants can also fill in the online application form and submit the application online. The FEHD advises applicants to submit application forms online so as to avoid postal delay or non-delivery.

The FEHD will notify the successful applicants by SMS, email or post of the serial number of the designated niche allocated. Applicants can also check the results of their applications on the next day after the drawing of lots and computer balloting at the FEHD website, Hong Kong or Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office, Public Niche Allocation Office or through the enquiry hotline 2841 9111.

Leaflets regarding the arrangement of this niche allocation exercise are available for collection from tomorrow (April 21) at the department's Hong

Kong or Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office, District Environmental Hygiene Offices, Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of Home Affairs Department, Post Offices on Cheung Chau, Lamma Island, Peng Chau or at Mui Wo and Tai O. For details, please visit the FEHD website, or call 2841 9111 or email to enquiry_newniche@fehd.gov.hk.

The FEHD has launched a subscription scheme for the new niche allocation announcement since February 27 this year to facilitate members of the public to receive the department's relevant announcements. Subscribers can choose to receive notifications by SMS and/or email.

Information on the Cemeteries and Crematoria Offices and Public Niche Allocation Office of FEHD is as follows:

Hong Kong Cemeteries and Crematoria Office

Address: 1J Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley, Hong Kong

Tel: 2570 4318

Fax: 2591 1879

Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office

Address: Upper Ground Floor, 6 Cheong Hang Road, Hung Hom, Kowloon

Tel: 2365 5321

Fax: 2176 4963

Public Niche Allocation Office

Address: Upper Ground Floor, Block B, 6 Cheong Hang Road, Hung Hom, Kowloon

Tel: 2330 5635

Fax: 2333 1716

LegCo to resume Second Reading debate on Appropriation Bill 2020

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will hold a meeting on Wednesday (April 22) at 11am and Thursday (April 23) at 9am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, the Second Reading debate on the Appropriation Bill 2020 will resume and Members will speak on the Bill.

Meanwhile, Members will also ask the Government 22 questions on various policy areas, all of which require written replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website (<http://www.legco.gov.hk>). Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the

proceedings of the meeting at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

Correctional officer stops remand person in custody committing self-harm

A correctional officer stopped a remand person in custody who was committing self-harm at Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre today (April 19).

At 3.06pm today, the 25-year-old female remand person in custody was found emotionally unstable and banged her head against the wall inside the cell of the institution hospital. An officer at the scene immediately ordered her to stop the act and called for reinforcement. The person in custody was found conscious. She was required to be sent to a public hospital for further treatment after receiving examination and treatment by the institution medical officer. A clinical psychologist of the department will follow up on the case.

A spokesman for the Correctional Services Department said, "The department uses all possible measures to prevent persons in custody from attempting suicide or self-harm. These measures include administrative arrangements, the improvement of institutional facilities, staff training and first aid services."

The person in custody was remanded for the offence of wounding with intent in April 2020.

Prosecutions made independently and free from any interference

In response to certain media reports and local and overseas comments made concerning the arrest and prosecution of a number of persons for organising and participating in unauthorised assemblies, a Government spokesman reiterated that investigations by law enforcement agencies and prosecutions by the Department of Justice (DoJ) are carried out in strict accordance with the law.

"Under section 10 of the Police Force Ordinance, the Police have the duty to take lawful measures to arrest persons based on sufficient evidence

and according to the laws in force. The Police are duty bound to handle every case in a fair, just and impartial manner," the spokesman said.

"Article 63 of the Basic Law provides that 'the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall control criminal prosecutions, free from any interference.' The prosecutors have always been discharging this constitutional duty independently and professionally, without fear or favour. No one should interfere or attempt to interfere with independent prosecutorial decisions which are based on an objective assessment of all admissible evidence and applicable laws, made strictly in accordance with the Prosecution Code which is available to the public," the spokesman added.

As the Secretary for Justice has explained on many occasions, the Prosecution Code of the DoJ provides clear, consistent guidelines and principles for carrying out prosecution work. It is the responsibility of the prosecutors to apply the highest of professional standards in handling all criminal cases. A prosecutor must not be influenced by any investigatory, political, media, community or individual interest or representation. All prosecutorial decisions are based on admissible evidence, applicable laws and the Prosecution Code, without political consideration. Cases will not be handled any differently owing to the political beliefs or background of the persons involved. Prosecutions would only be commenced if there is sufficient admissible evidence to support a reasonable prospect of conviction.

"The HKSAR Government always respects and protects human rights and freedoms. However, these rights are not absolute. As pointed out by the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal at the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year 2020, "it is important to understand that the enjoyment of these rights has limits so as not to affect adversely to an unacceptable level the enjoyment by other members of their community of their rights and liberties".

As legal proceedings are on-going, it is inappropriate for anyone to comment on the cases as it would create a public discussion which may amount to a trial by the public. No one should embark upon baseless speculations. These types of accusations may be perceived as purporting to influence the proper discharge of public duties," the spokesman said.

The rule of law is a core value in Hong Kong. Any unfair and unfounded allegation made with a view to undermining and discrediting our independent criminal justice system is vehemently refuted.