

LegCo Secretariat releases Research Brief on “Opportunities and challenges facing maternal workforce in Hong Kong”

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

The Legislative Council Secretariat (the Secretariat) today (July 16) released a Research Brief on "Opportunities and challenges facing maternal workforce in Hong Kong".

Between 1997 and 2018, labour force in Hong Kong has gone up by a total of 567 000 to 3.66 million. Females take up nine-tenths of incremental growth in labour force, significantly lifting the proportion of females in total workforce from 37 per cent to 45 per cent. The additional female workforce has replenished the manpower gap upon progressive retirement of ageing male workforce and enlarged its contribution to the local economy.

While work participation rate of women at prime working age of 25-54 leaped from 59.7 per cent to 72.7 per cent in 21 years, some 458 000 of females at prime age were not working in 2018 and amongst them, about four-fifths were held back by housework and childcare responsibilities. Incentivizing women to work could mitigate the downward pressure on manpower supply, improve the livelihood of grassroots families and promote social mobility.

However, there are persistent concerns that inadequate policy support to local working mothers is restraining female employment. Work participation of younger mothers aged 25-39 has receded during 2007-2018, partly because childcare services are highly inadequate. Moreover, childcare services cannot entirely meet user requirements due to their short caring hours, low affordability and location mismatch. Overseas experience suggests that accessible childcare services are one of the "most effective ways to tackle barriers to female employment". Despite a few policy pledges to enhance childcare services made in the 2019-20 Budget, the Government is facing land constraints that result in long implementation time for some of the services.

Rigid workplace arrangements also held back mothers from work. At least 50 000 homemakers aged 30-59 indicated their willingness to work if "suitable jobs" with conditions such as flexible working hours come up. Although the Government has been promoting family-friendly employment practices, it is largely a voluntary campaign and feedback from employers is reportedly rather lukewarm. Meanwhile, there are complaints about "motherhood penalty" in face of implicit discrimination on the grounds of family status at the workplace.

The subjects of women employment and childcare services fall within the policy areas of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Manpower and the

LegCo Panel on Welfare Services.

The Research Brief is prepared by the Secretariat's Research Office of the Information Services Division with a view to enhancing information support for Members. It is a concise summary aiming at explaining a subject matter which may be of interest to Members and the general public.

The Research Brief is now available on the LegCo Website at www.legco.gov.hk/research-publications/english/1819rb02-opportunities-and-challenges-facing-maternal-workforce-in-hong-kong-20190716-e.pdf.

Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions enters admission stage

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (July 16) reminded students who have completed online enrolment and on-site verification for the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions (the Admission Scheme) that they should log on to the designated website during the period from July 24 to August 1 to check their admission results, as well as submit and check supplementary enrolment results.

Students concerned should log on to the website of the Education Examinations Authority of Guangdong Province (eea.gd.gov.cn) (Chinese version only), choose "Admission of Hong Kong Students" under the "Application and Examination" menu, click "Hong Kong Students Admission (Student Login)", and then log on to the system of the Admission Scheme for 2019 with their candidate numbers and passwords for checking whether they have been admitted by the institutions they have applied for. Institutions will release first-round admission results in batches in order of priority as follows:

1. Release of first priority admission results by institutions – 8am on July 24
2. Release of second priority admission results by institutions – 8am on July 26
3. Release of third priority admission results by institutions – 8am on July 27
4. Release of fourth priority admission results by institutions – 8am on July 28

Students who are not admitted during the first round but meet the minimum entrance requirements can complete their supplementary enrolment through the admission system from 10am on July 28 to 3pm on July 29. During the supplementary enrolment stage, students can choose two institutions and, for each institution, make four programme choices. Students who have

completed their supplementary enrolment can log on to the admission system from July 31 to August 1 to check whether they have been admitted by the institutions. Institutions will release supplementary enrolment results in batches in order of priority as follows:

1. Release of first priority supplementary enrolment results by institutions – 8am on July 31
2. Release of second priority supplementary enrolment results by institutions – 8am on August 1

Students who have been admitted during the first round or supplementary enrolment stage should receive an acceptance letter from their respective institutions by post before September 1. Students who have not received an acceptance letter by the said date may contact the relevant institutions directly for enquiry. Contact information of the student admission offices of the institutions are listed in the programme directory of the Admission Scheme for 2019 (Chinese version only) on the EDB's website (www.edb.gov.hk/expo18).

Missing man in North Point located

A man who went missing in North Point was located.

Wong Tsun, aged 87, went missing after he was last seen on Lau Li Street near Electric Road on July 14 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on July 15.

The man was located in a hospital on Pokfulam Road in the small hours of today (July 16). No suspicious circumstances were detected.

Hong Kong team achieves encouraging results at International Physics Olympiad (with photo)

Five secondary school students representing Hong Kong achieved pleasing results at the 50th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO), winning five silver medals. The IPhO aims at nurturing students who are talented in physics, as well as promoting physics education and enhancing contacts and co-operation among scientists all over the world. This year, the IPhO was held from July 7 to 14 in Tel Aviv, Israel, with around 360 students from 81

countries/regions participating in the event.

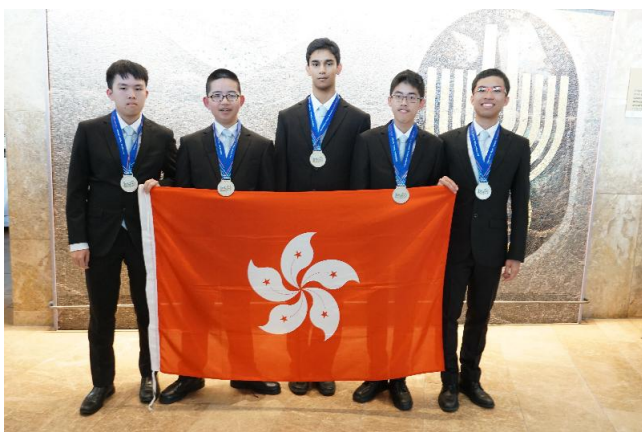
The five silver medallists were Chau Chun-wang (St Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary and Primary School), Gaurav Arya (King George V School), Li Tat-sang (Sing Yin Secondary School), Jeff Kwan (St Paul's Co-educational College) and Lau Sze-chun (Diocesan Boys' School).

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, congratulated the Hong Kong team today (July 16) on their remarkable performance. "The impressive results achieved by the Hong Kong team this year showcase their potential in physics. The Education Bureau will continue to support and nurture more students with talent and interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to strengthen Hong Kong's competitiveness globally," Mr Yeung said.

"The Government attaches great importance to the nurturing of talents by providing policy and resources support to the development of gifted education. The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in October last year approved an injection of \$800 million into the Gifted Education Fund. Funding support would be provided not only to the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education (HKAGE) for the enhancement of its services but also to different organisations for offering diversified off-school advanced learning programmes to gifted students in order to unleash their potential," he added.

"In addition, the Education Bureau will continue to support schools in various aspects to promote STEM education. The Quality Education Fund will, as from August 1, receive a new round of applications for 2019/20, with 'STEM Education' as one of the seven priority themes. We will also introduce in the new school year the Life-wide Learning Grant. Schools can make use of the new resources to organise diversified experiential learning activities, including those related to STEM education, to enable students to fully develop their potential."

The members of the Hong Kong team distinguished themselves in the Hong Kong Physics Olympiad last year. They subsequently completed the physics enhancement programme provided by the HKAGE. The outstanding students in the programme were then selected as contestants representing Hong Kong to participate in the IPhO this year. The Hong Kong team was fully funded by the Education Bureau to join this competition.



Red flag lowered at Repulse Bay Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department said today (July 16) that the red flag at Repulse Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island has been lowered and the beach has been reopened.

The beach was closed earlier on after an oil spill.