

Construction firms set to benefit from CPCF from June

By **JASLENE PANG**

WITH mounting pressure from the increase in foreign worker levies, more firms in the construction industry are looking forward to the \$250 million Construction Productivity and Capability Fund (CPCF), which was officially launched by Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Education, last night.

The Building & Construction Authority (BCA) said that there have been more than 300 enquires on the various schemes under the CPCF within a few weeks.

More than 2,000 firms have also attended briefings – conducted since mid-April – on the CPCF, whose application starts on June 1.

Addressing about 1,000 guests last night at Shangri-La Hotel, Ms Fu said that \$250 million is “no small amount” and is one quarter of the \$1 billion National Productivity Fund. “It shows the emphasis that the government is placing on the construction industry,” Ms Fu said.

A record 159 annual BCA awards were also pre-

sented by Ms Fu and BCA chairman Quek See Tiat last night. One of the awards is new and aims to identify best practices in parks design, construction management and upstream maintenance planning.

The CPCF consists of seven specific schemes to support three key areas – manpower development and skills upgrading, technology adoption and capability building. An example is the productivity enhancement voucher scheme, which supports 50 per cent of consultancy fee up to a maximum \$20,000.

The existing BCA-Industry Built Environment Scholarship will also get funding from the CPCF. This year saw 24 sponsors offering more than 35 scholarships, almost double the number of sponsors in 2009.

The fund is also coupled with policy changes such as a new tiered-levy system, reducing the man-year entitlement and enhancing the buildability framework.

Furthermore, BCA will be setting up a Centre for Construction IT at the BCA

Academy this year. The Centre will test-bed advanced IT solutions for the construction industry, conduct outreach programmes and support companies in their quest to tap on IT to enhance productivity.

BCA will also introduce a new Value-Added Productivity banding scheme to recognise builders with high value-added productivity levels as well as those who display great improvements in their value-added productivity.

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