

Hong Kong's latest foreign currency reserve assets figures released

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (June 6) that the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to US\$437.8 billion as at the end of May 2019 (end-April 2019: US\$436.4 billion) (Annex).

Including unsettled foreign exchange contracts, the foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong at the end of May 2019 amounted to US\$430.6 billion (end-April 2019: US\$429.2 billion).

The total foreign currency reserve assets of US\$437.8 billion represent about seven times the currency in circulation or 45 per cent of Hong Kong dollar M3.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of June 2019, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

June 6	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
June 14	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
June 28	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
June 28	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex today (June 6):

Reporter: Would you consider a request from traders not to cull all pigs at the slaughterhouse when there is an African Swine Fever case? And what other measures would you take to maintain a stable supply of pork?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse resumes operation to provide slaughtering service after thorough cleansing. To strengthen the prevention of African Swine Fever at local level, the Government reached a consensus with the live pig trade to start imposing a daily clearance arrangement upon reopening of our Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse. It is projected today that there will be 1000 pigs from the Mainland, plus 400 pigs from local farms for (fresh pork) supply tomorrow, the Tuen Ng Festival. Regarding the 24 hours clearance (of live pigs) upon admittance into the slaughterhouse, under this arrangement, the lairages in different areas of the slaughterhouse will be cleared and undergo thorough cleansing every day to further enhance the bio-security of, and also minimise the risk of infection among pigs in, the slaughterhouse. Of course, we would continue to monitor. Our colleagues from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department would continue to monitor this new arrangement, and also discuss and continue to have close communication with the trade.

Reporter: How about the request from the traders?

Secretary for Food and Health: As far as the new arrangement is concerned, and also in terms of the bio-security, we would consult experts and also maintain close communication and discussion with the trade about the future situation.

Thirteen immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a territory-wide anti-illegal worker operation codenamed "Twilight" from June 3 to 4. A total of nine illegal workers and four suspected employers were arrested.

During the operation, ImmD Task Force officers raided 30 target

locations including food stalls, garbage collection points, an industrial building, massage parlours, offices, a residential building, restaurants and warehouses. Nine illegal workers and four employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised five men and four women, aged 30 to 55. Among them, a man and a woman were suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Meanwhile, four men, aged 33 to 68, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and

identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, June 6, 2019 is 105.3 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Fraudulent website related to Dah Sing Bank, Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Dah Sing Bank, Limited on fraudulent website, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on [the HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the website should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.