

Government launches Green Bond Grant Scheme

The Government announced today (June 15) the launch of the Green Bond Grant Scheme (GBGS), as promulgated in the 2018-19 Budget, to subsidise eligible green bond issuers in obtaining certification under the Green Finance Certification Scheme (GFCS) established by the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency.

"The GBGS aims to encourage green bond issuances to make use of Hong Kong's competitive capital markets and our sophisticated financial and professional services. From a broader perspective, the enhanced transparency and accreditation standards of green financial products would be conducive to strengthening market confidence in green finance, and help establish Hong Kong as a global green finance hub," a government spokesperson said.

The full cost of obtaining certification under the GFCS for eligible green bond issuances will be granted, up to a maximum of \$800,000 per bond issuance. First time and repeated issuers with their green bonds of any tenor issued and listed in Hong Kong, and denominated in any currency at a minimum size of \$500 million (or the equivalent in foreign currency), are welcome to apply. The GBGS will be valid for a period of three years. Further details on the grant eligibility criteria are available in the Annex.

Progress in the handling of banking complaints by HKMA

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (June 15) the progress made in its handling of banking complaints received as at end-May 2018. Banking complaints include cases concerning general banking services and conduct-related issues.

In May 2018, 157 cases were received and the handling of 163 cases was completed. As at end-May, the handling of 458 cases was in progress.

A table summarising the progress made in the handling of banking complaints by the HKMA is attached.

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (June 15) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From June 8 to 14, the CHP recorded three confirmed DF cases. The patients had been to Thailand (two cases) and Indonesia (one case) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (June 14), 32 cases had been confirmed this year, all of which were imported cases. The cases were mainly imported from Thailand (15), the Philippines (seven) and Cambodia (three).

DF remains endemic in some areas in Asia. In Guangdong, there were 38 cases this year as of June 14. The latest figures for 2018 reveal that 17 302 cases have been recorded in Thailand, 1 223 in Singapore (since December 31, 2017) and 53 in Japan. In the Americas, the latest figures indicate that 110 291 cases have been filed in Brazil in 2018.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days (DF) or at least 21 days (Zika virus infection) upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a concentration of DEET of up to 30 per cent.

The public may refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#) for details.

Inter-departmental drill on emergency response to flooding held in Tai O (with photos)

The Islands District Office (IDO), in collaboration with relevant government departments and local organisations, conducted a rescue and evacuation drill today (June 15) to enhance preparedness in the event of serious flooding in Tai O and to promote residents' understanding of the emergency response arrangements.

The Fire Services Department (FSD), the Police, the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), the Drainage Services Department (DSD), the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Housing Department, the Civil Aid Service (CAS), the Tai O Rural Committee, the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council and the Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association Tai O Community Work Office participated in the drill.

According to the emergency response plan, when the HKO forecasts that the sea level at Tai O would rise to 3.3 metres above Chart Datum (mCD) or more in the coming few hours during a tropical cyclone, the HKO will issue an early alert to relevant government departments/organisations and resident representatives/fishermen representatives by SMS. Upon receipt of the early alert, the IDO will activate an emergency co-ordination centre at the Tai O Rural Committee Office, jointly set up by the IDO, the FSD, the Police, the SWD, other government departments concerned and relevant non-governmental organisations. The emergency co-ordination centre will co-ordinate any necessary evacuation, rescue and emergency relief efforts for Tai O.

Meanwhile, upon receipt of the early alert from the HKO, the resident representatives/fishermen representatives will help to disseminate the information to residents so that the residents can stay vigilant on flooding and take refuge in safe locations if needed. Temporary shelters at the Tai O Rural Committee Office, the Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association Tai O Community Work Office on the ground floor of Lung Tin Shopping Centre and the Lung Tin Transit Centre will be opened for residents in need.



Twenty immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations, including operations codenamed "Twilight" and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion", from June 11 to 14. A total of 14 illegal workers and six suspected employers were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 32 target

locations including restaurants, retail shops, warehouses, a market, a sports ground, industrial buildings, commercial buildings and residential buildings. A total of 11 illegal workers and four employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised five men and six women, aged 24 to 54. Among them, three men and two women were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Another woman was suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card. Meanwhile, four men, aged 21 to 45, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

Furthermore, during operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided 20 target locations in Kowloon East districts, Tsing Yi and Kwai Chung including restaurants, food stalls, retail shops, industrial buildings and residential buildings. Three illegal workers and two employers were arrested. The three male illegal workers, aged 40 to 45, were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Meanwhile, two men, aged 39 and 51, 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 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.