

# Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, April 24, 2020 is 108.8 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

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## Public urged to keep up anti-mosquito efforts

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (April 24) announced that the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for March rose to 0.8 per cent from 0.1 per cent in February, indicating that the infestation of *Aedes albopictus* in the areas surveyed was not extensive. Nevertheless, in view of the first local dengue fever (DF) case recorded in April this year, and that the warm and humid weather of spring is favourable for large-scale mosquito breeding in a short period of time, the FEHD reminds the public to carry out effective prevention and control measures against mosquitoes early before the onset of the rainy season. Relevant government departments have also commenced the All-out Anti-mosquito Operations on April 15 to enhance anti-mosquito work throughout the territory. Meanwhile, starting from this month, the FEHD will, in addition, release the density index, as derived from the newly designed gravidtraps, to indicate the density of adult *Aedes albopictus* in the surveyed areas.

Among the 57 areas surveyed last month, positive ovitrap indices, ranging from 0.8 per cent to 6.7 per cent, were recorded in 25 areas. As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for March rose slightly to 0.05 per cent from zero in February.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever as well as the Zika virus infection. DF is commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, and has become endemic in many countries in Southeast Asia. The World Health Organization also issued warnings that the number of DF cases recorded in Asia last year was higher than before. Hong Kong has recorded the first local DF case this year in this month and the dengue activity in neighbouring areas has remained high. The relatively high temperature in spring coupled with the approach of the rainy season is conducive to the proliferation of mosquitoes and the community must remain vigilant and continue to take effective mosquito control measures."

The spokesman said that relevant government departments have enhanced co-operation to eliminate potential breeding places for mosquitoes ahead of the rainy season, and commenced the All-out Anti-mosquito Operations on April 15 which will run until the end of the rainy season to start the fogging

operations specifically at risky areas to eradicate adult mosquitoes.

The spokesman said, "The major anti-mosquito measures of the All-out Anti-mosquito Operations include carrying out fogging in the scrubby areas within a 100-metre radius around residences weekly to kill adult mosquitoes; carrying out inspections, removing stagnant water, applying insecticide and disposing of abandoned water containers weekly to prevent mosquito breeding; and trimming of grass to discourage resting of adult mosquitoes on the site. The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue the above mosquito prevention and control work in areas under their purview, and will strengthen publicity and education campaigns in the coming months. In addition, the FEHD has also started the second phase of its Anti-mosquito Campaign on April 20 which lasts until June 19. During the period, the district offices of the FEHD have targeted areas which have drawn particular concern, such as locations in close proximity to human residences, schools, construction sites, public housing estates, hospitals, illegal cultivation sites, waterfront public and private cargo handling areas, cross boundary check points, typhoon shelters and cross boundary ferry terminals to remove accumulations of water and carry out mosquito prevention and control work. The FEHD will, after the second phase of the campaign, conduct territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control special operations so as to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign."

To better quantify the activities level of *Aedes albopictus*, and to enable various departments to grasp mosquito infestation conditions and conduct more targeted preventive and control measures, the FEHD has put in place about 5 000 newly designed gravidtraps across the territory starting from this month as a replacement for the ovitraps currently in use to trap and directly count the number of adult mosquitoes. The FEHD will release the new gravidtrap index from April so as to replace the ovitrap index to reflect the distribution of *Aedes albopictus*. The FEHD will also release a new index, namely the density index, to indicate the density of adult *Aedes albopictus* in the surveyed area. As the number of adult mosquitoes can be counted directly from the newly designed gravidtrap, and thus there is no need to wait for the hatching of eggs or larvae, the time required for releasing the gravidtrap index and density index for individual surveyed areas will be about two weeks, which is shorter than the time required for releasing the existing ovitrap index which takes about three weeks.

The spokesman added that as *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, members of the public should carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, changing the water in vases and scrubbing the inner surfaces as well as removing the water in saucers under potted plants at least once a week, properly disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drilling large holes in unused tyres. He also advised public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and level all defective ground surfaces to prevent accumulations of water. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

In addition, rural areas and the vicinity of shrubby areas are natural

habitats for mosquitoes, other insects and animals. Members of the public living in rural areas may install mosquito screens on windows and doors if necessary. Those staying in the natural environment should take appropriate personal protective measures against mosquitoes, such as avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time, wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying DEET-containing insect repellent. Members of the public are reminded to make reports to relevant government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

The spokesman reiterated that effective mosquito control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The community must work together with the Government to carry out effective mosquito control measures.

The ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department website at [www.fehd.gov.hk](http://www.fehd.gov.hk). Details of the gravidtrap index and the density index will be released on the website later this month.

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## Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (April 24) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (i.e. Discovery Bay, see Note 2).

Twenty-six beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 11 as Fair (Grade 2) and two as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	Pui O Beach
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Shek O Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Discovery Bay	South Bay Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach	St Stephen's Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach	Stanley Main Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Trio Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lower Cheung Sha Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Approach Beach	Kadoorie Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Lido Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Casam Beach	Ting Kau Beach
Golden Beach	

Grade 3 beaches are:

Butterfly Beach	Castle Peak Beach
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Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Note 1: To tie in with the response level under the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance having been raised to the Emergency Response Level and to encourage people to avoid gathering, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that all beaches will continue to be temporarily closed until further notice.

Note 2: Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

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## **CHP announces no new confirmed cases of COVID-19 today**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (April 24), no new confirmed cases of COVID-19 had been recorded, and that the number of cases in Hong Kong remains at 1 036 so far (comprising 1 035 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and

avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contact with infected persons who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 3pm today, a total of 98 089 calls had been received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing

facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.

Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

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## **TD invites tenders for operation of six major licensed ferry services for outlying islands**

The Transport Department (TD) today (April 24) invites tenders for the operation of the six major licensed ferry services for outlying islands (the six major routes) (Tender Reference: TD 382/2019), including (i) Central-Cheung Chau, (ii) Inter-islands between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau, (iii) Central-Mui Wo, (iv) Central-Peng Chau, (v) Central-Yung Shue Wan, and (vi) Central-Sok Kwu Wan routes.

The current licences of the six major routes, which lasted for 10 years in aggregate, will expire on March 31, 2021. The TD invites tenders for the operation of the six major routes for a five-year licence period commencing on April 1, 2021 (i.e. from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026).

A TD spokesman said that for the purposes of maintaining the financial viability of the six major routes, alleviating the burden of fare increases on passengers, enhancing service quality and promoting the development of a green city, the Government would continue to provide Special Helping Measures to the six major routes; and launch a new Vessel Subsidy Scheme to assist the selected ferry operators to replace the fleets of the six major routes and introduce greener vessels in phases, straddling 10 years starting from 2021.

Having regard to factors such as passenger demand, overall fleet requirements, flexibility in vessel deployment, operational efficiency, and after consulting the Islands District Council, the six major routes are grouped into two tender packages for tendering.

### Package 1

Central-Cheung Chau, Inter-islands between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau and Central-Mui Wo routes

### Package 2

Central-Peng Chau, Central-Yung Shue Wan and Central-Sok Kwu Wan routes

Tenderers are required to propose a fare for each fare type of each relevant route, but the proposed fare for each fare type must not exceed the existing fare level of the respective route by more than 5 per cent. Tenderers should also include in their submissions fare concession proposals which will be considered in the tender evaluation.

"The opportunity is taken to enhance the level of services of the six major routes in the new five-year licence period. Tenderers' proposals should observe our requirements to enhance the services through provision of additional sailings, extending service hours, etc, to meet passenger demand," the spokesman said.

Moreover, in support of the Government's development of a smart city, tenderers are required to submit proposed measures in the tender documents, including dissemination of real-time arrival/departure time of ferry routes and number of remaining seats via mobile phone applications and opening up such data in a machine-readable format for use by the public under the Public Sector Information Portal ([data.gov.hk](http://data.gov.hk)).

Tenderers must submit their tenders in sealed envelopes. The cover of the tender submission should be clearly marked with the tender reference and the subject of the tender (but should not bear any indication which may relate to the identity of the tenderer). The tender submission should be addressed to the Commissioner for Transport and placed in the TD Tender Box situated next to the reception counter of the TD on 10th floor of South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, before noon on June 30, 2020. Late tenders will not be accepted.

Interested parties may obtain the tender documents starting from April 27 (Monday) during office hours at the Ferry and Paratransit Division of the TD on 14th Floor, South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon.