

## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, January 4, 2019 is 104.6 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

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## **Company and its director fined for late payment of wages**

Gulf Connexions Limited and its director were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay wages to employees. The company and its director pleaded guilty at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (January 4) and were each fined \$70,000, making a total of \$140,000.

The company failed to pay five employees' wages totalling about \$270,000 within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods in accordance with the Employment Ordinance (EO). The director concerned was convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the time limit stipulated in the EO," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

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## **Special traffic and transport arrangements for Community Chest 50th Anniversary Walk for Millions this Sunday**

The Transport Department (TD) today (January 4) reminded the public that special traffic and transport arrangements will be implemented in the vicinity of the Central Ferry Piers and North Point to facilitate the holding of the Community Chest 50th Anniversary Walk for Millions this Sunday (January 6).

The special traffic and transport arrangements will mainly include:

#### Road closures and traffic arrangements

1. The following roads will be temporarily closed from midnight to 10.30am:

- \* The section of Lung Wo Road (eastbound and westbound) between Man Yiu Street and Edinburgh Place;
- \* The section of Edinburgh Place northbound between Harcourt Road and Lung Wo Road; and
- \* Yiu Sing Street.

2. The following roads will be temporarily closed from 2am to 10.30am:

- \* Man Kwong Street (eastbound and westbound);
- \* Man Fai Street; and
- \* The section of Man Yiu Street (southbound and northbound) between Man Kwong Street and Man Po Street.

3. The following roads will be temporarily closed from 2am to 12.30pm:

- \* The section of Oil Street (north of Wang On Road);
- \* King Wah Road;
- \* The section of Fook Yum Road between King Wah Road and Wang On Road; and
- \* The slow lane of a section of Oil Street between Electric Road and Wang On Road.

4. The traffic direction at the section of Rumsey Street between Man Kat Street and Chung Kong Road will be temporarily reversed to one-way southbound traffic.

5. Traffic along Man Yiu Street southbound, Man Po Street eastbound and Man Cheung Street eastbound will be prohibited from entering Yiu Sing Street eastbound and Lung Wo Road eastbound. Affected vehicles will be diverted via Man Yiu Street southbound, Connaught Place and Connaught Road Central eastbound.

6. The on-street parking spaces on Lung Wo Road, Man Kwong Street and A2 Road will be suspended.

#### Public transport services

1. A total of 20 bus routes and two green minibus routes will be diverted;

2. The bus and green minibus termini at the Central Ferry Piers will be suspended from the first departure of the day; and

3. The taxi stands at Man Kwong Street, Expo Drive and Fook Yum Road will be suspended from 2am.

The above road closures and diversions will be implemented until the road closure is lifted. The public transport operators will display notices to remind passengers of the above arrangements.

The event will take a route via Edinburgh Place, Lung Wo Road, Yiu Sing Street, Man Yiu Street, Man Kwong Street and the Central – Wan Chai Bypass, and finish at Oil Street in North Point. Members of the public are advised to plan their journeys in advance, use railway services as far as possible and allow more travelling time to avoid possible delay. Commuters are advised to pay attention to the arrangements of route diversions and suspension/relocation of stops.

For enquiries on the special traffic and transport arrangements, please call 1823 or visit the TD's website ([www.td.gov.hk](http://www.td.gov.hk)) for more details.

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## **Centre for Food Safety announces test results on Lunar New Year food (first phase)**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (January 4) announced the test results of a recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on Lunar New Year (LNY) food (first phase). The test results on around 420 samples collected were satisfactory, except for a candied lotus seed sample found to contain a preservative at a level exceeding the legal limit, which was announced earlier.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "LNY is coming soon and the CFS is conducting this seasonal food surveillance project in two phases. During the first phase of the project, different types of LNY food including steamed puddings (e.g. turnip puddings and festive cakes), fried dumplings (e.g. sesame balls and crispy triangles), candied fruits, glutinous rice balls, melon seeds and dried aquatic products were collected from different retailers (including online retailers) for chemical and microbiological tests as well as nutrition content analysis."

Chemical tests targeted preservatives (e.g. sulphur dioxide, benzoic acid and sorbic acid), colouring matters (e.g. Sudan dyes) and metallic contaminants (e.g. cadmium, mercury and arsenic). Microbiological tests covered different food poisoning pathogens, such as salmonella, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Bacillus cereus* and coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms. For nutrition content analysis, the contents of total fat, sodium and sugars of the samples were tested to see if the test results were consistent with the declared values on the nutrition labels.

The spokesman urged the food trade to observe the relevant laws and regulations in the preparation of food, follow Good Manufacturing Practice and use permitted food additives only in an appropriate manner. Retailers should source food from reliable suppliers, and conduct quality checks of incoming materials and end products to ensure that ingredients used are within legal standards. In addition, the food trade should maintain proper records in accordance with the requirements of the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.

The spokesman also advised consumers to buy LNY food from reliable retailers with good hygiene conditions; make sure the packaging of prepackaged cakes and snacks is intact and the products have not expired; refer to the nutrition labels on the sugar, salt (sodium) and fat content and more for healthy choices; and pay attention to the hygiene conditions of food containers and the personal hygiene of staff when buying loose-packed food (e.g. candied lotus seeds, nuts and melon seeds).

"Consumers should choose food products with natural colours. Bright white pistachios may have been bleached and melon seeds with unnatural gloss may have had mineral oil added. Consumption of these food products can cause gastrointestinal discomfort," the spokesman said.

"Festive cakes that are not for immediate consumption should be kept refrigerated or stored according to the instructions on the package, and should be eaten before they expire. Reheat hot-served food thoroughly before consumption. Discard those with mould or an abnormal smell or taste. Leftovers should not be stored in the refrigerator for longer than three days and should not be reheated more than once. Foods like nuts and melon seeds should not be kept for a long time and mouldy ones should not be eaten," he added.

The spokesman reminded the public to maintain a balanced diet and avoid foods that are high in energy, sugar, salt or fat during LNY.

The CFS will continue to conduct surveillance on LNY food and the second phase results will be released in a timely manner to ensure food safety.

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## [Land Registry releases statistics for 2018](#)

The Land Registry today (January 4) released its statistics for 2018.

Land registration

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\* The number of sale and purchase agreements for all building units received for registration for 2018 was 79,193 (-5.5 per cent compared with 2017 but +8.5 per cent compared with 2016).

\* The total consideration for these agreements for 2018 was \$741.38 billion (+2.1 per cent compared with 2017 and +39.1 per cent compared with 2016).

\* The number of assignments of building units for 2018 was 105,293 (+1.6 per cent compared with 2017 and +36.1 per cent compared with 2016).

\* The total consideration for these assignments for 2018 was \$824.22 billion (+20.7 per cent compared with 2017 and +67.0 per cent compared with 2016).

#### Land search

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\* The number of searches of land registers made by the public for 2018 was 5,264,883 (+1.6 per cent compared with 2017 and +11.9 per cent compared with 2016).