

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, December 10, 2018 is 105.6 (up 0.2 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, December 8, 2018 was 105.4 (same as last Friday's index).

Man sentenced for criminally intimidating FEHD officer

A man was sentenced by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (December 10) to a 12-month probation order for criminally intimidating a Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) officer.

The incident took place on January 30, 2018 when a health inspector was threatened by the 54-year-old man at the FEHD's Kwai Tsing District Environmental Hygiene Office regarding the inspection of his staff canteen. He was then charged by the Police according to the Crimes Ordinance (Chapter 200).

"Criminal intimidation against law enforcement officers is wrong and inappropriate, and also carries legal consequences," an FEHD spokesman said.

He reminded the public to co-operate with public officers in the execution of their duties.

Steering Group discusses improved designs for recycling bins and litter containers in public places and related work plan to consult relevant stakeholders

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, chaired the seventh

meeting of the Steering Group on the Modification of Recycling and Refuse Collection Facilities in Public Places (the Steering Group) today (December 10) to discuss the improved designs for recycling bins (RBs) and litter containers (LCs) in public places and related work plan to consult relevant stakeholders.

The Stage 2 consultancy study commissioned by the Steering Group is being conducted to review the designs of RBs and LCs in public places. After endorsing the conceptual designs proposed by the consultant at its last meeting, the Steering Group set up a working group comprising some members of the Steering Group, representatives of frontline staff and relevant departments to study and discuss the design details. Taking into account the comments from the Steering Group and the working group, the consultant has made further improvements to the conceptual designs, and produced prototypes for the Steering Group's reference and for use in future consultation.

Mr Wong said, "At today's meeting, members discussed the improved designs and tried out the prototypes. The designs of RBs and LCs will follow ergonomic principles to facilitate frontline operation and use by the public. With the refinements, the design of the RBs and LCs is now more coherent to enable easy identification by the public. Members also agreed to conduct trials for RBs and LCs designed with a transparent feature at suitable indoor venues, to test whether transparency could improve the public's recognition of the types of recyclables being collected by the bins and encourage source separation.

"With reference to the experiences of other cities, the implementation of waste charging is usually complemented by adjustments to the design of RBs and LCs in public places. We anticipate that the improved designs of RBs and LCs could facilitate waste reduction and recycling, and will consult relevant stakeholders on the new designs shortly with a view to further improving them having regard to the views received."

The consultant will seek the views of frontline staff, the design industry, the academia and relevant stakeholders on the operation and design details of the new RBs and LCs in 2019. After collating and considering views received, the consultant will report and submit recommendations to the Steering Group.

To support the implementation of municipal solid waste charging, the Steering Group was set up in February 2016 to review the design and distribution of recycling and refuse collection facilities in public places, and recommend modifications to facilitate waste reduction and resource recovery in the community. Chaired by the Secretary for the Environment, the Steering Group comprises members from the design, architectural, planning, academia and business sectors, non-profit making groups, district personalities and relevant government departments. In respect of adjustments to the number and distribution of RBs and LCs, having regard to a set of general planning parameters recommended by a consultancy study, relevant government departments have put forward an adjustment plan. It is expected that the number of RBs will be increased by 45 per cent to 4 000, and the

number of LCs will be reduced by 40 per cent to 24 300 when municipal solid waste charging is implemented, enhancing the RB to LC ratio from 1:14 to 1:6.

CHP investigates case of invasive pneumococcal infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 10) investigating a case of invasive pneumococcal infection, and reminded the public to observe hygiene practices against the disease.

The patient was a 30-month-old boy, who developed fever, vomiting, choking and convulsion on November 26. He was brought to Caritas Medical Centre for medical attention on the same day and was directly transferred to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit of Princess Margaret Hospital for further management. His condition deteriorated and he died this morning.

His blood specimen tested positive for *Streptococcus pneumoniae* upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was pneumococcal bacteraemia.

Initial enquiries revealed that the boy had received pneumococcal vaccines. He had no recent travel history and his home contacts remained asymptomatic. No other similar cases or outbreaks have been reported so far at the nursery he attended. Investigations are ongoing.

"Pneumococcal infection is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus). It causes a wide range of diseases. More common ones include middle ear infection and chest infection. It may also cause various forms of invasive pneumococcal diseases, such as infection of the brain membranes and blood stream. The infection can be serious or even life-threatening," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Pneumococci are commonly found in the nose and throat of healthy people, particularly in children. Occasionally, these bacteria will cause an infection. They mainly spread through droplets via coughing and sneezing, close contact with the patients or contact with materials soiled with the bacteria.

To prevent pneumococcal infection, the CHP appealed to the public for pneumococcal vaccination and hygiene practices:

- Keep hands clean at all times. 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 secretion after coughing or sneezing;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly. When hands are not

visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;

- Cover nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of the soiled tissue paper into a lidded rubbish bin, and then wash hands thoroughly;
- Put on a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation. Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks while in such places; and
- Refrain from work or school when having respiratory symptoms. Seek medical advice if symptoms persist or deteriorate.

The public may visit the CHP's [invasive pneumococcal disease page](#) for more information.

Three illegal workers jailed

Three illegal workers comprising one Vietnamese, one Pakistani and one Indian were jailed by Shatin and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 7 and 8 respectively.

Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators received a referral from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate an illegal employment case in September. Enforcement officers arrested one male Pakistani worker aged 23, handling goods in Chek Lap Kok. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

Furthermore, during joint operations conducted by the ImmD, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion" on December 3, enforcement officers raided a residential building at Sham Shui Po. One female Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 44, was arrested. When intercepted, she was performing cleaning work.

In addition, during joint operations conducted by the ImmD and the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion" on December 5, enforcement officers raided a car park at Kwai Chung. One male Indian illegal worker, aged 33, was arrested. When intercepted, he was conveying goods. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The three illegal workers were charged at Shatin and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 7 and 8 respectively with taking employment

after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 15 months to 16 months and 25 days.

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.