

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Two men were charged with contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (August 8). A man was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, suspended for two years, and fined \$12,000. The other man was fined \$8,000.

The courts heard that in July last year and February this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Shanghai Street and Portland Street in Mong Kok. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The men responsible for managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaenq@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Record of Discussion of the Meeting of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee Currency Board Sub-Committee held on June 28

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

(Approved for issue by the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee on July 17)

Report on the Currency Board Operations (April 17 – June 14)

The Sub-Committee noted that during the review period, the Hong Kong dollar (HKD) traded within a range of 7.8427 – 7.8500 against the US dollar (USD). Since the first triggering on April 12, the weak-side Convertibility Undertaking (CU) was triggered 19 times and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority bought HK\$70.4 billion under the weak-side CU. The Aggregate Balance and the Monetary Base fell correspondingly after the multiple triggering of the weak-side CU, with the Monetary Base declining to HK\$1,643.77 billion at the end of the review period. The HKD firmed again towards the end of the review period, in part underpinned by seasonal demand for the HKD (e.g. corporate demand for dividend payments) and interbank demand in preparation for sizable initial public offering (IPO) activities.

The Sub-Committee noted that largely reflecting IPO-related demand, reduced interbank liquidity following triggering of the weak-side CU, expectation of US rate hikes and seasonal liquidity demand, HKD interbank interest rates picked up across the curve during the review period.

The Sub-Committee further noted that, in accordance with the Currency Board principles, all changes in the Monetary Base had been fully matched by changes in foreign reserves.

The Report on Currency Board Operations for the period under review is at the Annex.

Monitoring of Risks and Vulnerabilities

The Sub-Committee noted that in the US, although solid growth performance led the Federal Reserve Board (Fed) members to suggest a Dot Plot Median Forecast of four rate hikes in 2018, the Fed might need to weigh between rising inflationary pressures and downside risks to growth from trade conflicts further down the road.

The Sub-Committee noted that the US dollar strengthening and escalating trade tensions had put pressure on capital outflows from emerging market economies, and might weigh on their growth outlook.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Mainland China, domestic demand showed signs of moderation but investment in high-value added manufacturing sectors remained solid. Rising trade tensions and signs of slower growth would pose challenges for Mainland authorities to calibrate policies to strike a balance between reducing financial risks and achieving stable growth.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Hong Kong, economic growth accelerated in the first quarter and the growth momentum was expected to remain solid albeit at a slightly slower pace. The sanguine outlook was against the background of heightened uncertainties, particularly from the threat of trade tensions.

The Sub-Committee noted a study which examined the lower interest rate sensitivity of HKD money demand since the global financial crisis.

SCS visits Islands District

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, today (August 8) visited Islands District, exchanging views with Islands District Council (IDC) members on various issues, and getting an update on the latest developments of the district's major infrastructure projects and the Tung Chung New Town Extension (TCNTE) project.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the IDC, Mr Chow Yuk-tong, and the District Officer (Islands), Mr Anthony Li, Mr Law met with IDC members and exchanged views on issues that concern them. He also proceeded to HKIA Tower, where he was briefed by the Airport Authority Hong Kong on the three-runway system and the SkyCity project.

During the district visit, Mr Law observed from height at Ying Tung Estate in Tung Chung the various infrastructure and development projects, including the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, a cross-boundary transport infrastructure project connecting Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and the Tung Chung East reclamation works under the TCNTE project. He was also briefed on the projects' latest progress by colleagues of related departments.

Mr Law said he was pleased to learn that the TCNTE project, a large-scale land formation project, will allow the development of housing, the economy and the community to run in parallel. The project will provide about 50 000 residential flats and about 870 000 square metres of commercial floor space, accommodating an additional population of more than 140 000 and creating about 40 000 job opportunities.

Mr Law said, "Apart from a better grasp of public sentiments, district visits enable me to get updates on the latest developments in the community. In today's Islands District visit, I have conducted a journey on major infrastructure, which has enhanced my understanding of the efforts made by the civil service colleagues on these projects."

HAD to open temporary night heat shelters

The Home Affairs Department will open 18 temporary night heat shelters tonight (August 8) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's enquiries hotline before midnight on 2835 1473.

The 18 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –
Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex,
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern/Wan Chai –
Causeway Bay Community Centre
Waiting Lobby, 3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –
Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –
Hung Hom Community Hall
Multi-purpose Room, 1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices,
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –
Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –
Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate,
Nam Cheong Street, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre

Hall, G/F, 45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –
Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –
Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –
Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as either community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community and cannot continue to be open as heat shelters. People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas in any of the 21 designated community centres or community halls. Their opening hours are from 9am to 10pm. For addresses of the community centres or community halls, please browse the following webpage:

www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

Five amendment regulations under Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance to be gazetted on Friday

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

Five amendment regulations to amend the subsidiary legislation under the Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance (Cap. 541) will be gazetted this Friday (August 10). The amendments aim to refine the requirements relating to the identity documents that electors must produce in applying for ballot papers, which have been put in place by the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) through another set of amendment regulations on June 19, 2017.

"At present, an elector who is unable to produce the original of his or her identity document, typically a Hong Kong permanent identity card (HKID), in collecting the ballot papers may produce a document evidencing a report to a police officer of the loss or destruction of the person's identity document (commonly referred to as a 'memo of lost property'), together with the original of the person's valid passport or similar travel document showing his or her name and photograph, and a copy of his or her identity document in paper form showing his or her name, photograph and identity document number. The amendment regulations to be gazetted seek to relax the document requirement of the aforesaid alternative measures such that an elector who has lost his or her HKID will be allowed to collect a ballot paper by producing only the memo of lost property and the original of a valid passport or similar travel document showing his or her name and photograph, without presenting a copy of his or her HKID in paper form at the same time," a spokesperson for the EAC said today (August 8).

"We note that the information contained in the memo of lost property, i.e. the name and HKID number of an elector, could be used to cross-check against the information that appears on the passport or similar travel document concerned, and the relevant entry in the Final Register.

Furthermore, it is a criminal offence to make a false report to the police. As such, the authenticity of the information provided in the memo of lost property could thus be relied upon," the spokesperson explained.

Separately, the existing electoral legislation makes reference to "identity document" as defined under the respective EAC regulations or the main Ordinances when it comes to issuance of ballot papers. To provide greater clarity in the regulations, the amendment regulations to be gazetted also seek to change the reference to "identity document" in the relevant provisions to specific references to the identity documents that could be accepted by the presiding or polling officers (as appropriate) in issuing ballot papers to electors, i.e. the HKIDs and the Certificates of Exemption issued by the Immigration Department.

The five regulations to be amended are the Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Legislative Council) Regulation (Cap. 541D), the Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (District Councils) Regulation (Cap. 541F), the Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Election Committee) Regulation (Cap. 541I), the Electoral Procedure (Chief Executive Election) Regulation (Cap. 541J) and the Electoral Procedure (Rural Representative Election) Regulation (Cap. 541L).

The amendment regulations will be tabled at the Legislative Council (LegCo) on October 10, 2018 for negative vetting. Subject to the scrutiny by the LegCo, they will come into operation on December 10, 2018.