

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, July 20, 2018 is 103.8 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Auction of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on August 4

The Transport Department today (July 20) announced that the auction of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on August 4 (Saturday), in Meeting Room S421, L4, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 280 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public auction. The list of marks has been posted at the department's website, www.td.gov.hk," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of \$1,000). Otherwise, the mark may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

- (a) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:
- (1) the identity document of the successful bidder;
 - (2) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;
 - (3) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and
 - (4) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.) Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.

(b) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.

(c) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(d) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.

(e) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk.

Thirty-three immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations, including an operation codenamed "Twilight" and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion", from July 16 to 19. A total of 23 illegal workers, eight suspected employers and two overstayers were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 14 target locations including a beauty centre, a beverage stall, a commercial building, garbage collection depots, offices, a residential flat, restaurants, shops and a shopping mall. A total of 13 illegal workers and six employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised five men and eight women, aged 21 to 56. Among them, one man and one woman were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Furthermore, two men and one woman were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards. Meanwhile, two men and four women, aged 26 to 51, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

During operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided 21 target locations in Tsuen Wan and Kowloon East districts, including a factory, food stalls, an industrial building, a residential flat, restaurants, shops and warehouses. Ten illegal workers and two employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised seven men and three women, aged 24 to 60. Among them, three men were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Meanwhile, two men, aged 31 and 56, were suspected of employing the illegal workers. Furthermore, two male overstayers, aged 54 and 62, were arrested.

"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.

Launch of HKMA's Facebook Page

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) launched its Facebook Page today (July 20) with a view to strengthening its communications with the public through the social media. The HKMA will share information on its Facebook page in a light-hearted manner, through uploading photos, videos and animations. This will facilitate better understanding about the work of the HKMA and enhance public knowledge of financial products and services.

The HKMA welcomes members of the public to view, follow and share information of the page by visiting the URL or scanning the QR code below: www.facebook.com/hkmagovhk.

Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after attending the Legislative Council's Public Accounts Committee public hearings today (July 20):

Reporter: Mr Chan, there are some residents who asked for a later allocation into the estate, being that some of them are concerned maybe there's need for further testing before they actually move into the flats. Can the Government consider such a demand?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: We have to balance between the need for accommodation and the concern on water safety. So far we will continue to allocate flats for those who are in need of accommodation. By the time when they are given the allocation, they do have a choice to refuse it and wait for another allocation.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)