

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, June 20, 2025 is 103.2 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Approved Kwun Tong (North) Outline Zoning Plan referred back for amendment

The Town Planning Board (the Board) announced today (June 20) that the Secretary for Development has referred the approved Kwun Tong (North) Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) to the Board for amendment to reflect the latest land use proposals.

The OZP incorporating the respective amendments will be exhibited for public inspection under the provisions of the Town Planning Ordinance.

The Kwun Tong (North) OZP was last approved by the Chief Executive in Council in January 2016.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (June 20) released the latest grading of water quality for 39 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (see Note 2).

Twenty-four beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 15 as Fair (Grade 2) and one as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach*	Lo So Shing Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Lower Cheung Sha Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Repulse Bay Beach*
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach*	Shek O Beach*

Chung Hom Kok Beach	South Bay Beach*
Deep Water Bay Beach*	St. Stephen's Beach
Golden Beach*	Stanley Main Beach*
Hap Mun Bay Beach*	Tai Po Lung Mei Beach*
Hung Shing Yeh Beach*	Tong Fuk Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Trio Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lido Beach*	Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach*	Kadoorie Beach
Approach Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach*
Butterfly Beach*	Middle Bay Beach
Castle Peak Beach	Pui O Beach*
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach*
Clear Water Bay Second Beach*	Silverstrand Beach*
Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach [Non-gazetted beach]	Ting Kau Beach*
Hoi Mei Wan Beach	

Grade 3 beach is:

Casam Beach*

Compared with the grading released last week, Silverstrand Beach has been upgraded from Grade 3 to Grade 2.

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.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a tropical cyclone or heavy rainfall.

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) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666. Members of the public can also obtain the latest daily water quality forecast information for all beaches that are open for swimming

through the EPD's dedicated webpage on the beach water quality forecast (www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast).

Note 1: Lifesaving services are provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department at 21 gazetted beaches, marked with an asterisk (*) above, from June 1. For details, please refer to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Special Announcement (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/beach/index.html).

Note 2: This refers to Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach which has no lifesaving service.

Appointment of non-permanent judge from another common law jurisdiction of the Court of Final Appeal

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Chief Executive has, on the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission and with the endorsement of the Legislative Council, made the following appointment:

Non-permanent judge from another common law jurisdiction of the Court of Final Appeal

(for a term of three years commencing June 23, 2025)
The Honourable Sir William Willow Gibbes Austen Young

HKMA and PBoC launch Payment Connect (with photos)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the People's Bank of China (PBoC) announced today (June 20) the launch of Payment Connect on June 22, 2025. A launch ceremony for Payment Connect was held in Beijing today. The Governor of the PBoC, Mr Pan Gongsheng; Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council Mr Wang Lingui; and

the Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, attended the ceremony and delivered remarks. The ceremony was officiated by Deputy Governor of the PBoC Mr Lu Lei. Representatives from system operators and participating institutions from the Mainland and Hong Kong also attended the ceremony.

Payment Connect refers to the linkage between the Mainland's Internet Banking Payment System (IBPS) (Note 1) and Hong Kong's Faster Payment System (FPS) (Note 2), which supports secure, efficient and convenient real-time cross-boundary payment for residents and institutions in both places. By simply inputting the recipient's mobile number or account number, residents in both places can make instant small-value cross-boundary remittances.

Mr Yue said, "Payment Connect is one of the key initiatives in strengthening co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong. The connection between the faster payment systems in both places enhances the efficiency of cross-boundary payments, supporting trade activities and personnel exchange. This development will further promote Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre and offshore Renminbi business hub. Payment Connect will cater to the daily needs of residents in both places for cross-boundary remittances and payments. It also signifies another milestone for the FPS in expanding cross-boundary payment."

Six institutions each from the Mainland and Hong Kong (Annex) will participate in the Payment Connect upon its launch. They will roll out the service gradually and more institutions will join over time.

Note 1: The Mainland China's Internet Banking Payment System (IBPS) is the faster payment system in the Mainland, built by the China National Clearing Center under the guidance of the People's Bank of China. IBPS enables user to make real-time cross-bank retail payment transactions through the mobile banking or online banking of his/her bank. By using the system, user can handle cross-bank account management, fund transfer, fund consolidation and other services without leaving home, and obtain instant transaction processing results.

Note 2: The HKMA launched the Faster Payment System (FPS) in September 2018. This system connects banks and stored-value facility operators (SVFs), enabling the public to make real-time cross banks and cross SVFs fund transfers anytime and anywhere, by using the recipient's mobile number or email address.

