

# Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, December 21, 2022 is 102.8 (down 0.3 against yesterday's index).

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## Music Office's Outreach Music Interest Courses open for applications

The Outreach Music Interest Courses (OMIC) organised by the Music Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) are now open for applications. Members of the public are welcome to apply for 90 courses, ranging from Chinese and Western musical instrument foundation classes to music workshops, which will be held from March to August next year.

The OMIC will launch two new online courses, including the music appreciation course "A Feast of Violin Music", which will introduce timeless violin classics and different violin playing techniques. The course welcomes persons aged 15 or above to apply. Another online course, the "ABC of Musicianship", is designed for adult beginners to learn about basic music elements, rhythmic training and sight-singing techniques. The fees of the courses are \$225 and \$335 respectively.

The Music Office will also offer the new "iPad Music Making" and rerun the "Let's e-Orch!" for adults to enjoy music making or ensemble playing by using the free music app GarageBand. The course fees are \$445 and \$835 respectively.

In addition, the Music Office will offer introductory courses on kalimba, little harp, keyboard, ukulele, classical guitar and folk guitar; instrumental enrichment courses of liuyeqin, yangqin, zheng, pipa, erhu, violin, viola, cello and percussion (glockenspiel and practice pad); ensemble training of Western strings and Chinese instruments; Western music theory (Grades 1 and 2); and aural training. The course fees range from \$250 to \$1,045.

The OMIC will continue to provide Chinese and Western musical instrument foundation classes covering liuyeqin, pipa, yangqin, zheng, erhu, violin, viola, cello and percussion (glockenspiel and practice pad). The course fee is \$1,110.

All courses are conducted in small groups in Cantonese. Participants of online courses are required to prepare their own electronic device equipped with a wireless or broadband data connection, a webcam and Zoom software in advance. On-site courses will be held at different venues across the

territory, namely the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Sha Tin Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Tuen Mun Town Hall, North District Town Hall, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre, Kwai Tsing Theatre, Ko Shan Theatre, Hong Kong Central Library and the Music Office's music centres in Wan Chai, Mong Kok, Kwun Tong, Sha Tin and Tsuen Wan.

Online applications are now available at the Music Office website [www.lcsd.gov.hk/musicoffice](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/musicoffice). Course prospectuses and application forms are also available at various performance venues of the LCSD and music centres of the Music Office. The deadline for applications is January 17. Oversubscribed courses will be processed by ballot. For courses not fully taken up after the first round of application, places will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis from February 17.

For enquiries, please call 3842 7773, 2598 0801 or 2598 8335.

In accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Vaccine Pass) Regulation (Cap. 599L) and relevant requirements of administrative instructions, all persons entering indoor venues under the management of the LCSD must comply with the relevant requirements of the Vaccine Pass. According to the latest requirements on the Vaccine Pass announced by the Government, all persons whose Vaccine Pass QR code is displayed in red are not allowed to enter the performance venues managed by the LCSD, music centres of the Music Office and public libraries.

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## [Twenty-two building plans approved in October](#)

The Buildings Department approved 22 building plans in October, with seven on Hong Kong Island, five in Kowloon and 10 in the New Territories.

Of the approved plans, 13 were for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, five were for commercial developments, two were for factory and industrial developments, and two were for community services developments.

In the same month, consent was given for works to start on 12 building projects which, when completed, will provide 125 233 square metres of gross floor area for domestic use involving 2 966 units, and 47 387 sq m of gross floor area for non-domestic use. The department has received notification of commencement of superstructure works for six building projects.

The department also issued 15 occupation permits, with four on Hong Kong Island, four in Kowloon and seven in the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation, the gross floor area for domestic use was 128 181 sq m involving 2 156 units, and 58 864 sq m was for

non-domestic use.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in October totalled about \$6.2 billion.

In addition, six demolition consents involving six building structures were issued.

The department received 2 923 reports about unauthorised building works (UBWs) in October and issued 1 826 removal orders on UBWs.

The full version of the Monthly Digest for October can be viewed on the Buildings Department's homepage ([www.bd.gov.hk](http://www.bd.gov.hk)).

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## **SCOLAR invites programme proposals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research:

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) today (December 21) invited eligible local organisations to submit programme proposals for the following programmes. All of the programmes are funded by the Language Fund.

### (1) Promotion of Chinese 2023/24 and 2024/25

Local organisations are invited to submit proposals for innovative and educational activities to promote Chinese language with a view to improving Chinese language learning of local primary and secondary students, and continuously enhancing their interest in writing and reading, as well as developing their oral and expression skills in Chinese.

### (2) Promotion of Putonghua 2023/24 and 2024/25

Local organisations are invited to submit proposals for innovative and educational activities to promote the use of Putonghua among students as well as the general public, with a view to encouraging them to enhance their proficiency in Putonghua and creating a diversified Putonghua learning environment.

### (3) English Alliance 2023/24 and 2024/25

Local organisations are invited to submit proposals for activities to promote English language with the theme of "Authentic and Creative Use of English", which focuses on providing local primary and secondary students with an enjoyable and meaningful English learning experience so as to arouse their interest in English and boost their confidence in using the language.

(4) Programmes on Supporting Non-Chinese Speakers in Learning Chinese 2023/24 and 2024/25

- Project on Supporting Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Children in Learning Chinese

Local non-profit-making organisations are invited to submit proposals for fun and educational activities with the theme of "Learning Chinese in a Fun and Leisurely Way" to support NCS children aged 3 to 12 in learning Chinese language.

- Vocational Chinese Language Programme for NCS School Leavers

Local post-secondary institutions and educational or training organisations are invited to develop and operate vocational Chinese language courses pegged at Level 1 or 2 of the Qualifications Framework for NCS school leavers. These courses should aim at building participants' competence and confidence in using Chinese, thus enhancing their employability.

(5) Sponsorship Projects 2023/24

Local organisations are invited to submit proposals for language-related event-based or competition-based projects in the community for creating a conducive language learning environment for Hong Kong people, with a view to promoting biliteracy (Chinese and English languages) and trilingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English).

All programme proposals must reach SCOLAR (address: Room 1702, 17/F, Skyline Tower, 39 Wang Kwong Road, Kowloon Bay, Kowloon) by noon on February 3, 2023. Interested organisations may visit the SCOLAR website ([www.scolar.gov.hk](http://www.scolar.gov.hk)) for more details, including the respective application guidelines and information of the relevant briefing sessions.

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## **Postal services to Thailand subject to delay**

Hongkong Post announced today (December 21) that, as advised by the postal administration of Thailand, due to flooding, mail delivery services to Thailand for areas with the postcodes listed below are subject to delay.

Postcodes
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80xxx, 84xxx, 90xxx, 92xxx, 93xxx, 94xxx, 95xxx and 96xxx