

# Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, June 2, 2021 is 100.4 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).

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## ENB to offer more than 800 environmental-related jobs under Green Employment Scheme again

A spokesman for the Environment Bureau (ENB) said today (June 2) that about 800 environmental-related jobs will continue to be created or subsidised under the Green Employment Scheme (GES), including 500 time-limited jobs and 300 subsidised jobs under the Government's subsidy programme for graduates, offering more employment opportunities to further promote green actions this year.

The Government announced in the Budget this year to further earmark \$6.6 billion to create an additional 30 000 time-limited jobs. About 800 time-limited jobs will be created or subsidised under the GES, of which 500 jobs cover three categories of environmental protection work, namely "Electric Vehicles (EVs) Popularisation", "Use Less, Waste Less" and "Leave No Trace at Mountain and Sea". The jobs focus on promoting the popularisation of EVs, strengthening support for different waste reduction and recycling projects as well as promoting the "Leave No Trace at Mountain and Sea" outing concept. The full-time and part-time positions, lasting for about three months to a year, are suitable for candidates with different skills and qualifications.

Furthermore, the ENB has launched a subsidy programme for graduates under the GES, which aims to subsidise private companies and suitable organisations to employ fresh graduates working in areas related to environmental protection. It provides opportunities for graduates who are interested in environment-related fields to enter the industry, and nurtures talents for meeting needs on various environmental fronts. The programme was launched last year and received a positive response from the trades, with the number of applications exceeding the pre-set subsidy quota. The ENB has decided to launch the "Graduates Subsidy Programme 2021" this year to continue providing employers of eligible graduates with a monthly subsidy of \$5,610 to form part of the monthly salary paid to each eligible graduate for a period of 18 months. It is anticipated that the programme could benefit around 300 jobs.

"We understand that the local market is facing huge pressure and challenges due to the persistence of the epidemic. We hope that the subsidy

programme would provide relevant graduates with more green employment opportunities and help with professional succession in the environmental sector," the spokesman added.

In addition to a salary subsidy, the Environmental Academy of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) will continue to collaborate with various professional societies and organisations to provide the graduates with the professional training course "GreenPro Training Programme". The enriched course covers various environmental protection topics such as global environmental issues and sustainable development, environmental assessment and planning, climate change, air quality, waste management, water quality and noise control, with a view to better equipping the employed graduates with different areas of expertise in the field.

"Graduates Subsidy Programme 2021" will open for applications from July 2. Details about the subsidy programme and the application form are available at the EPD website ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/graduates\\_subsidy\\_programme.html](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/graduates_subsidy_programme.html)). Eligible companies and organisations wishing to apply for the subsidy should submit their applications from July 2 to September 30. For more information, please call 2835 1870 or email [graduates\\_subsidy2021@epd.gov.hk](mailto:graduates_subsidy2021@epd.gov.hk).

The GES, launched by the ENB last year, has created over 600 time-limited jobs in the realm of environmental protection and approved over 500 subsidised jobs under the Government's subsidy programme for graduates, to provide employment opportunities and promote environmental protection.

As well, the ENB has adopted a number of new measures on the promotion of cleaner energy and renewable energy, energy efficiency and green buildings, green transportation, waste reduction and recycling, green infrastructure and green innovative technologies. These measures will create a green economy and employment opportunities, and promote a green recovery. Over 5 000 employment opportunities are expected to be created in the next few years.

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## **LCQ1: Traffic problems in Southern District**

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (June 2):

Question:

Quite a number of personnel from the architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape sectors as well as residents in the Southern District

on the Hong Kong Island have pointed out that currently during peak hours, not only are the Aberdeen Tunnel and major roads in the Southern District quite congested, the train compartments of the MTR South Island Line are also very crowded. They are worried that with the gradual completion of a number of residential developments and industrial building conversion projects in the District, coupled with the forthcoming implementation of the "Invigorating Island South" initiative by the Government, the traffic congestion problem in the District will further deteriorate. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific measures to improve the external and local transport of the Southern District, and the timetable for implementing such measures;

(2) of the latest progress of the study on the MTR South Island Line (West) project, and the implementation timetable of the project; and

(3) whether it will conduct a study on the construction of the fourth road harbour crossing to connect the Southern District with the Kowloon Peninsula directly, so as to alleviate the traffic congestions at the Aberdeen Tunnel and the Cross-Harbour Tunnel?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Development Bureau, the Government's reply to the various parts of the Hon Tony Tse's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The existing peak-hour traffic flows of major external roads in the Southern District, such as Wong Chuk Hang Road, Aberdeen Praya Road, Pok Fu Lam Road and Aberdeen Tunnel, etc., are mainly northbound traffic in morning peak and southbound traffic in evening peak on weekdays. With the commissioning of South Island Line (East) in December 2016, which provides the residents with another transport means for travelling to and from the Southern District, the traffic of the major external roads mentioned above has been alleviated. For example, the average traffic flows of Aberdeen Tunnel and Pok Fu Lam Road (section between Sassoon Road and Chi Fu Road) decreased by 5.6 per cent and 4.4 per cent respectively in 2017, and the traffic flows of the concerned road sections also remained stable thereafter.

The Transport Department (TD) has all along been committed to improving the local traffic conditions in the Southern District, which includes setting up loading and unloading area for large vehicles at the periphery of the Aberdeen centre area so as to reduce the access of large vehicles to the Aberdeen centre area, establishing no-stopping restriction zones in the district to avoid traffic obstruction, installing adaptive traffic signals at the Dam section of Tai Tam Road, and arranging the installation of traffic signals to regulate the traffic at junction of Pok Fu Lam Road and Pok Fu Lam Reservoir Road, etc. On the other hand, in view of the new development projects within the district, TD has actively requested the project proponents to implement traffic improvement measures, including improving the

traffic capacity at the junction of Pok Fu Lam Road and Victoria Road in the context of the Pok Fu Lam South housing development, and providing U-turn facilities within the Ocean Park Water World so as to improve the traffic of Shum Wan Road.

In order to facilitate early planning of the South Island Line (West) (SIL(W)), the Government invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to submit a project proposal in June 2019. We received the project proposal submitted by MTRCL in December last year. Relevant departments are considering the proposal and will duly consider the way forward taking into account the growth in transport demand from the development at the south of the Pok Fu Lam near Wah Fu, the redevelopment timetable of Wah Fu Estate and the Invigorating Island South (IIS) initiative.

We expect that the population of Pok Fu Lam will remain stable in the near future and have a more significant growth only after the completion of the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate. The relevant works of the SIL(W) can only be carried out after the residents have gradually moved from Wah Fu Estate to the reception estates at Pok Fu Lam South, thereby vacating the relevant space within Wah Fu Estate as the construction site of the railway project. We will endeavour to coordinate with the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and adjust public transport services as appropriate. Before finalising the railway scheme for SIL(W), the Government will consult the public in line with established procedures.

The objective of the IIS initiative is to transform the Southern District into a place of vibrancy for people to work, live and explore. When planning major development projects, the project proponents should conduct traffic impact assessments for the proposed developments in order to review the cumulative traffic impacts of their developments as well as other planned and committed development projects within the district, and should also propose and implement appropriate traffic improvement measures whenever necessary. Relevant policy bureaux and departments will carefully assess the potential traffic impacts arising from the development projects and measures so as to ensure that the capacity of road network is sufficient to support the relevant projects. The Government will continue to closely monitor the external and local traffic conditions of the Southern District.

(3) The Government proposed to take forward a group of priority transport corridors connecting the coastal area of Tuen Mun, Lantau, Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands and Hong Kong Island under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision. The transport corridors included the fourth cross harbour road tunnel, the completion of which could help divert and alleviate the traffic conditions of the existing three cross harbour tunnels and their connecting roads. The Legislative Council had approved the funding application for the "Studies related to Artificial Islands in the Central Waters". The studies are envisaged to commence in June this year.

Moreover, the Highways Department (HyD) and TD commenced the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" in December last year. Based on the final development strategy of the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning

Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" planning study which will soon be published by the Development Bureau, the studies will explore the layout of railway and major road infrastructure and conduct preliminary engineering and technical assessments for their alignments and supporting facilities, so as to ensure that the planning of large-scale transport infrastructure will complement or even reserve capacity to meet the overall long-term development needs of Hong Kong. The studies will also examine the impact of the proposed transport infrastructure on the existing transport network in order to formulate the corresponding strategies. The focus of the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" is on the areas other than those to be studied under the studies related to the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, and this will include the Southern District.

HyD, TD, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Planning Department, etc. will closely communicate and coordinate in respect of the above studies.

Thank you, President.

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above studies.

Thank you, President.

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## **CHP investigates one additional confirmed case of COVID-19**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, June 2, the CHP was investigating one additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and that the number of cases in Hong Kong remained at 11 849 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 848 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported case is an imported case.

Meanwhile, the CHP reported the latest epidemiological investigation progress regarding case 11846 announced on June 1 involving a 35-year-old male. The genetic analysis of the specimen conducted by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the DH revealed that the specimen was compatible with the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine strain. Further genetic analysis conducted by the Department of Microbiology of the University of Hong Kong also revealed the same finding. After examining the clinical, epidemiological and laboratory findings, this case is compatible with vaccine strain contamination and hence will not be classified as a case of COVID-19 infection and has been deleted. The exact source of the contamination will require further investigation. His close contacts will be released from the quarantine centre if they obtain a negative test result.

As the abovementioned local case 11846 was deleted, today's newly confirmed case has taken up the case number of 11846.

A total of 21 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (May 19 to June 1) and all of them are imported cases.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notices (CTNs). The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to

undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to CTNs published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop, and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website ([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases including mutant strains reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes. Moreover, vaccination may help keep people from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19, and, generally speaking, vaccines can also reduce the chance of transmission by those who have been vaccinated. People vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine can also generate herd immunity. Members of the public are urged to get vaccinated as soon as possible and book their vaccination appointments at the website ([booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp](http://booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp)).

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link [wa.me/85296171823?text=hi](https://wa.me/85296171823?text=hi), they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They

are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.