

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 is 101 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

CE to attend NPC session opening ceremony

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, will depart for Beijing via Shenzhen on Thursday (March 4) to attend the opening ceremony of the fourth session of the 13th National People's Congress the next day. The Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, will join the trip.

Mrs Lam will return to Hong Kong via Shenzhen on Sunday (March 7). During her absence, the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, will be the Acting Chief Executive.

Land Registry releases statistics for February

The Land Registry today (March 2) released its statistics for February 2021.

Land registration

* The number of sale and purchase agreements for all building units received for registration in February was 7,561 (+21.7 per cent compared with January 2021 and +71.3 per cent compared with February 2020)

* The 12-month moving average for February was 6,576 (4.2 per cent above the 12-month moving average for January 2021 and 9.0 per cent above that for February 2020)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in February was \$64.3 billion (-3.7 per cent compared with January 2021 but +82.1 per cent compared with February 2020)

* Among the sale and purchase agreements, 6,125 were for residential units (+34.3 per cent compared with January 2021 and +71.5 per cent compared with February 2020)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in respect of residential units was \$56.9 billion (+43.3 per cent compared with January 2021 and +87.2 per cent compared with February 2020)

Statistics on sales of residential units do not include sale and purchase agreements relating to sales of units under the Home Ownership Scheme, the Private Sector Participation Scheme and the Tenants Purchase Scheme unless the premium of the unit concerned has been paid after the sale restriction period.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months, the year-on-year rate of change and breakdown figures on residential sales have also been released.

As deeds may not be lodged with the Land Registry until up to 30 days after the transaction, these statistics generally relate to land transactions in the previous month.

Land search

* The number of searches of land registers made by the public in February was 366,285 (-17.9 per cent compared with January 2021 but +13.9 per cent compared with February 2020)

The statistics cover searches made at the counter, through the self-service terminals and via the Integrated Registration Information System Online Services.

[CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in 2020 \(with photos\)](#)

A total of 505 cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) in 2020, compared with 565 in 2019.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong at a press conference today (March 2), the Acting Consultant (Special Preventive Programme) of the CHP, Dr Ho Chi-hin said, "Sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission. Members of the public should use condoms consistently and properly so as to reduce the

risk of acquiring HIV.

"Despite a decrease in the number of reports of HIV infection in recent years when compared to the peak in 2015, a concentrated epidemic among vulnerable groups, such as young men who have sex with men, warrants our sustained attention."

Of the 505 HIV cases reported in 2020 which involved 418 males and 87 females, 272 (54 per cent) acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 137 (27 per cent) via heterosexual contact and two (0.4 per cent) via drug injection. The routes of transmission of the remaining 94 cases have yet to be determined due to incomplete information upon notification.

In the fourth quarter of 2020, 110 new cases of HIV infection were reported, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 10 785 since 1984.

Of the 110 HIV cases reported in the above-mentioned quarter which involved 93 males and 17 females, 53 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 27 via heterosexual contact and one via drug injection. The routes of transmission of the remaining 29 cases have yet to be determined due to inadequate information.

The new cases of the quarter were mainly reported by three major sources: public hospitals, clinics and laboratories (59 cases); the DH's AIDS Unit (14 cases); and private hospitals, clinics and laboratories (13 cases). Also, 78 of the HIV-infected people (73 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services under the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 22 new cases of AIDS were reported in this quarter, of which 10 cases (45 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact, and 11 cases (50 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact. The route of transmission of the remaining one case (5 per cent) has yet to be determined due to incomplete information upon notification. In this quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness was *Pneumocystis pneumonia*, a kind of chest infection.

Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 230 confirmed AIDS cases have been reported in Hong Kong.

Dr Ho said, "HIV is the cause of AIDS and, without treatment, about half of HIV-infected people will progress to AIDS within 10 years. On the contrary, early HIV treatment with antiretroviral drugs helps prevent AIDS and its complications. It also improves the quality of life and prolongs survival of those infected. Notably, people with HIV who achieve sustained viral suppression to an undetectable level by antiretroviral drugs have no chance of passing on the virus through sex.

"Members of the public with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early. They can call the DH's AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV test. HIV-positive people should seek specialist care as soon as possible."

The public may visit the following webpages for more information on HIV/AIDS: the DH's Virtual AIDS Office (www.aids.gov.hk), the Red Ribbon Centre (www.rrc.gov.hk), the AIDS Hotline website (www.27802211.com) and the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.gov.hk).



Judiciary introduces e-Appointment service for three registries

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary today (March 2) announced that an e-Appointment service, which is free of charge to the public would be launched on March 5 (Friday) for the Probate Registry, the Family Court Registry and the Lands Tribunal Registry for few specified types of services.

The newly introduced e-Appointment System enables unrepresented litigants/applicants to make online appointments for specified services on March 8 (Monday) and beyond.

Probate Registry of High Court

An online appointment service will be available to grantees who file an application for amendment of Grant where:

- (1) the deceased died on or after February 11, 2006; and
- (2) the original Grant is in the possession of the grantee(s); and
- (3) the Grant was issued without any limitation; and
- (4) Guarantee is not required; and
- (5) the application for amendment of Grant seems simple and straightforward and the nature of the estate is not complicated.

The new service will be accessible at www.judiciary.hk/en/court_services_facilities/pres_index.html

Registry of Family Court

The new service will be applicable to those who submit petitions for divorce or joint applications. It is accessible at www.judiciary.hk/en/court_services_facilities/fcci_index.html

Registry of Lands Tribunal

The online appointment service is applicable to the filing of new applications for three types of cases:

- (1) Possession Application for Domestic Premises;
- (2) Possession Application for Non-Domestic Premises; and
- (3) Building Management Application.

The new service is accessible at www.judiciary.hk/en/court_services_facilities/ldci_index.html

Unrepresented litigants/applicants may refer to the Guidance Notes of the respective registries at the above dedicated links for details of the e-Appointment service.

The Judiciary will review the experience of the above initial application of e-Appointment services with a view to refining and extending it incrementally to other services where appropriate.