

Red tides sighted

Twelve red tides have been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (February 26).

On February 22, staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) spotted eight red tides at Repulse Bay, South Bay Beach, Deep Water Bay Beach, Middle Bay Beach, Chung Hom Kok Beach, Turtle Cove Beach, Hong Kong Island; Ting Kau Beach, Tsuen Wan; and Lower Cheung Sha Beach on Lantau Island. Staff of the Environmental Protection Department spotted two red tides at Rambler Channel and Kwun Yam Beach, Cheung Chau, on the same day. In addition, staff of the LCSD also spotted two red tides at Stanley Main Beach, Hong Kong Island and Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach on February 23 and February 26, respectively.

Apart from the red tide persisting at Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach, the other 11 red tides have dissipated. No fish deaths associated with the 12 red tides have been reported as at today.

A spokesman for the working group said, "All 12 red tides were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters and is non-toxic."

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) urged mariculturists at Lo Tik Wan, Sok Kwu Wan, Po Toi, Ma Wan and Cheung Sha Wan fish culture zones to monitor the situation closely and increase aeration where necessary.

Red tide is a natural phenomenon. The AFCD's proactive phytoplankton monitoring programme will continue to monitor red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.

Fraudulent websites and phishing SMS messages related to Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited on fraudulent websites and phishing SMS messages, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on [the HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the websites concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the websites should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Monetary Statistics for January 2021

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

According to statistics published today (February 26) by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, total deposits with authorised institutions increased by 9.8 per cent in January 2021. Among the total, Hong Kong dollar deposits and overall foreign currency deposits grew by 18.6 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively. Renminbi deposits in Hong Kong increased by 10.5 per cent to RMB797.7 billion at the end of January. The total remittance of renminbi for cross-border trade settlement amounted to RMB581.3 billion in January, compared with RMB535.8 billion in December 2020.

Total loans and advances increased by 11.8 per cent in January. Among the total, loans for use in Hong Kong (including trade finance) expanded by 16.7 per cent, and loans for use outside Hong Kong edged up by 0.3 per cent. The Hong Kong dollar loan-to-deposit ratio increased to 83.9 per cent at the end of January from 83.5 per cent at the end of December 2020, as Hong Kong dollar loans increased at a faster pace than Hong Kong dollar deposits.

In January, changes in deposits and loans were partly driven by initial public offering (IPO) activities. Excluding IPO loans and the resulting creation of deposits, total deposits and Hong Kong dollar deposits would have increased by 3.2 per cent and 5.3 per cent respectively in January, and total loans and advances would have increased by 2.6 per cent in January.

Hong Kong dollar M2 and M3 both expanded by 17.3 per cent in January, and grew by 23.3 per cent and 23.2 per cent respectively compared to a year ago. The seasonally-adjusted Hong Kong dollar M1 increased by 5.9 per cent in January, and rose by 31.0 per cent compared to a year ago, reflecting in part investment-related activities. Total M2 and M3 both went up by 9.0 per cent in January, and expanded by 15.2 per cent and 15.1 per cent respectively from a year earlier. Excluding deposits created by IPO loans, Hong Kong dollar M2 and M3 both would have increased by 5.1 per cent in January, and increased by 10.4 per cent compared to a year ago. Total M2 and M3 both would have increased by 2.8 per cent in January, and risen by 8.6 per cent compared to a year ago.

As monthly monetary statistics are subject to volatilities due to a wide

range of transient factors, such as seasonal and IPO-related funding demand as well as business and investment-related activities, caution is required when interpreting the statistics.

Residential Mortgage Survey Results for January 2021

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced the results of the residential mortgage survey for January 2021.

The number of mortgage applications in January 2021 increased month-on-month by 15.1 per cent to 13,112.

Mortgage loans approved in January 2021 decreased by 1.7 per cent compared with December 2020 to HK\$37.8 billion. Among these, mortgage loans financing primary market transactions decreased by 22.5 per cent to HK\$5 billion and those financing secondary market transactions increased by 1.5 per cent to HK\$27.1 billion. Mortgage loans for refinancing increased by 6.8 per cent to HK\$5.8 billion.

Mortgage loans drawn down during January 2021 decreased by 5.9 per cent compared with December 2020 to HK\$24.9 billion.

The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to HIBOR increased from 95.2 per cent in December 2020 to 95.5 per cent in January 2021. The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to best lending rates decreased from 2.6 per cent in December 2020 to 2.2 per cent in January 2021.

The outstanding value of mortgage loans increased month-on-month by 0.6 per cent to HK\$1,590.9 billion at end-January 2021.

The mortgage delinquency ratio remained unchanged at 0.04 per cent and the rescheduled loan ratio remained unchanged at nearly 0 per cent.

Hospital Authority announces senior

appointment (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) spokesperson announced the following senior appointment today (February 26):

Dr Ching Wai-kuen will be appointed as Hospital Chief Executive (HCE) of Cheshire Home, Chung Hom Kok, Ruttonjee and Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals, and Tung Wah Eastern Hospital with effect from May 1, succeeding Dr Beatrice Cheng who will take up the post of Cluster Chief Executive of New Territories East and HCE of Prince of Wales Hospital on the same day.

Dr Ching is a specialist in psychiatry and community medicine. He is currently the HCE of Yan Chai Hospital and Service Director (Primary and Community Health Care) of Kowloon West Cluster. He is a seasoned senior executive with ample management experience both at cluster and corporate levels. Prior to his current position, he was the Chief Manager (Medical Grade) in HA Head Office and then the HCE of Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital at Sandy Bay, MacLehose Medical Rehabilitation Centre and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Fung Yiu King Hospital.

The HA Chairman, Mr Henry Fan, and the Chief Executive, Dr Tony Ko, congratulate Dr Ching on his new appointment and wish him every success in taking up the new role.

