

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, November 22, 2024 is 106.6 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (November 22) released the latest grading of water quality for 11 gazetted beaches that are open for swimming in November.

Eight beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), and three as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Golden Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Lido Beach	Stanley Main Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Casam Beach	

Compared with the grading released last week, Big Wave Bay Beach, Casam Beach and Silverstrand Beach have been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

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, the 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).

Approved Ho Chung Outline Zoning Plan amended

The Town Planning Board today (November 22) announced amendments to the approved Ho Chung Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

The amendments mainly involve (i) rezoning a site in Wang Che from "Conservation Area" to "Village Type Development"; (ii) rezoning a site comprising two land parcels at Ho Chung North Road from "Residential (Group D)", "Residential (Group E)" ("R(E)") and area shown as 'Road' to "Residential (Group C)3" ("R(C)3"); (iii) rezoning a site at Wo Mei Hung Min Road from "Green Belt" ("GB") to "R(C)4"; (iv) rezoning a site at Ho Chung Road from "R(E)" and "GB" to "Government, Institution or Community"; and (v) various zoning amendments to reflect the latest planned and as-built developments/road alignments.

The Notes and Explanatory Statement of the OZP are amended to take into account the above amendments. Opportunity is also taken to update the general information of various land use zones and the planning scheme area, where appropriate.

The draft Ho Chung OZP No. S/SK-HC/12, incorporating the amendments, is available for public inspection during office hours at (i) the Secretariat of the Town Planning Board, (ii) the Planning Enquiry Counters, (iii) the Sai Kung and Islands District Planning Office, (iv) the Sai Kung District Office, and (v) the Sai Kung Rural Committee.

Any person may make written representations in respect of the amendments to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board on or before January 22, 2025. Any person who intends to make a representation is advised to read the Town Planning Board Guidelines No. 29C on "Submission and Processing of Representations and Further Representations" (TPB PG-No. 29C).

Submission of a representation should comply with the requirements set out in TPB PG-No. 29C. In particular, the representer should take note of the

following:

* If the representer fails to provide his or her full name and the first four alphanumeric characters of his or her Hong Kong identity card or passport number as required under TPB PG-No. 29C, the representation submitted shall be treated as not having been made; and

* The Secretariat of the Town Planning Board reserves the right to require the representer to provide identity proof for verification.

The Guidelines and the submission form are available at the above locations (i) and (ii) and the Town Planning Board's website (www.tpb.gov.hk).

Copies of the draft Ho Chung OZP are available for sale at the Map Publications Centres in North Point and Yau Ma Tei. The electronic version of the OZP can be viewed on the Town Planning Board's website (www.tpb.gov.hk).

Former foreign domestic helper jailed for conspiracy to defraud

A former foreign domestic helper (FDH) was convicted of two counts of conspiracy to defraud and was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment on November 21 by the Shatin Magistrates' Courts.

The 53-year-old Filipina former FDH was a holder of recognizance form, which prohibits her from taking any employment. During a previous investigation into a case relating to overstaying ex-FDHs taking up unapproved employment in Hong Kong, the Immigration Department (ImmD) discovered that the former FDH acted as a middleman and recruited two Hong Kong residents to be false employers for remuneration. By using false residential and financial proofs, and a false FDH contract, the former FDH conspired with others to defraud the ImmD and arranged for foreign nationals to obtain FDH visas to work in Hong Kong illegally.

The ImmD subsequently mounted operations, during which the former FDH, two false employers and two false FDHs involved were arrested. One of the false FDHs had been convicted earlier for conspiracy to defraud and was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. More suspects could be arrested and charged as the investigation is continuing.

"It is an offence to make a false representation to an immigration officer. Offenders are liable to prosecution and to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years. In addition, anyone who commits the offence of conspiracy to defraud is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years. Furthermore, it

is an offence to make, possess or use false instruments. Upon conviction, offenders are liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned, "As stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land is prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment."

[Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan](#)

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on November 21 to noon today (November 22), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 150 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 52 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All

the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24, 2023, to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 101 605 samples of food imported from Japan (including 65 246 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 22 714 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.