

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, February 22, 2019 is 103.3 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Immigration Department clarifies rumours on Internet

In response to public enquiries about the recent rumours on the Internet that Mainland visitors are suspended from visiting Hong Kong in March 2019 due to immigration system upgrades, the Immigration Department (ImmD) stressed today (February 22) that this is totally unfounded and urged the public not to be misled.

For enquiries, please call ImmD's enquiry hotline at 2824 6111 or email enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

Checklist on Procedural Propriety on Building Management published

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) published today (February 22) the Checklist on Procedural Propriety on Building Management.

The Checklist tabulates the requirements and best practices related to the convening of a general meeting of an owners' corporation (OC). The content of the Checklist includes the relevant requirements and best practices under (i) the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344) (BMO), (ii) the revised Codes of Practice under the BMO, and (iii) the Administrative Guidelines on Best Practices on Building Management, with a view to assisting compliance by Management Committees (MCs) of OCs, Deed of Mutual Covenant (DMC) managers and property management companies (PMCs).

For easy reference by MCs of OCs, DMC managers and PMCs, the Checklist is compiled according to the procedures of convening and conducting a general meeting of an OC, including the ways to give notice of meeting and the content of the notice, the procedures relevant to proxy instruments, matters to take note of when presiding at and conducting a general meeting and actions after the conclusion of a general meeting.

The HAD encourages MCs of OCs, DMC managers and PMCs to adopt the Checklist. If the best practices contained in the Checklist cannot be complied with, the MC Chairman, DMC manager or PMC should state the reasons on the Checklist. The MC Chairman, DMC manager or PMC should also display in a prominent place in the building the completed Checklist before the meeting and the updated Checklist after the meeting to increase transparency.

The HAD also encourages MCs of OCs, DMC managers and PMCs to provide a copy of the completed Checklist to the District Building Management Liaison Teams of the District Offices to share their experience and views in adopting the best practices contained in the Checklist.

The Checklist can be downloaded from the [dedicated homepage](#) on building management of the HAD.

Fourteen immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a territory-wide anti-illegal worker operation codenamed "Twilight" from February 18 to 21. A total of 10 illegal workers and four suspected employers were arrested.

During the operation, ImmD Task Force officers raided 38 target locations including a bar, commercial buildings, companies, an elderly home, an industrial building, massage parlours, residential buildings, restaurants, shops and vegetable stalls. Ten illegal workers and four employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised seven men and three women, aged 25 to 57. Among them, two men were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Meanwhile, two men and two women, aged 37 to 75, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are 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. The Court of Appeal has issued a

guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

[Grading of beach water quality released](#)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (February 22) released the latest grading of water quality for four gazetted beaches which are open all year round for swimming.

Four beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach
Golden Beach
Repulse Bay Beach
Silverstrand Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades 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, an 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 storm 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 department's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.