

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, May 14, 2018 is 98.9 (down 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, May 12, 2018 was 99 (same as last Friday's index).

Five illegal workers jailed

Five illegal workers comprising two Indians, two Vietnamese and a Pakistani holding recognisance forms were jailed at Shatin and Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 11 and 12 respectively.

Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators received a referral from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate an illegal employment case in July last year. Enforcement officers arrested one male Indian worker, aged 40, disposing of construction waste in Sai Kung. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

During operation "Twilight" conducted on January 31, ImmD investigators raided a nail beauty shop in Tsim Sha Tsui. A female Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 19, was arrested. When intercepted, she was manicuring nails for a customer. Upon identity checking, she produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was a non-refoulement claimant.

In addition, during operation "Twilight" conducted on May 8, ImmD investigators raided two residential buildings in To Kwa Wan. One male Indian illegal worker and one male Pakistani illegal worker, aged 38 and 29, were arrested. When intercepted, they were disposing of rubbish. Upon identity checking, they produced for inspection recognisance forms issued by the ImmD, which prohibit them from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that they were non-refoulement claimants.

Furthermore, during an anti-illegal worker operation mounted on May 10, ImmD investigators raided a restaurant in Yuen Long. A male Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 54, was arrested. When intercepted, he was washing dishes. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. In addition,

he was also suspected of using and being in possession of a false instrument.

The five illegal workers were charged at Shatin and Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 11 and 12 respectively with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 15 months to 22 months and two weeks. In addition, one of them was also charged with using a false instrument and was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment of which part of the sentence is to run consecutively, making a total of 16 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD 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 on 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.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 14) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From May 6 to 12, two community-acquired LD cases were reported. Both patients have underlying illnesses.

The first male patient, aged 64, lives in Block B, Green Leaves Garden, 15-17 Yuen Chau Kok Road, Sha Tin District, while the second male patient, aged 61, lives in Choi Yat House, Choi Ha Estate, 18 Choi Ha Road, Kwun Tong District.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of May 12, 17 LD cases had been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled

freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Remove strainers in water taps and shower heads quarterly for cleaning;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and they need to be changed periodically;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2- μm filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

[CCF to hold public consultation session on Saturday](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Community Care Fund Secretariat:

The Community Care Fund (CCF) will hold a public consultation session this Saturday (May 19) to gauge public views on the formulation of assistance programmes. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

The consultation session will be held from 5pm to 6.30pm at Auditorium, Basement, Breakthrough Centre, 191-197 Woosung Street, Jordan, Kowloon (MTR Jordan Station, Exit C2).

Those who would like to attend the consultation session may call the CCF Secretariat at 2835 2279 during office hours (from 8.45am to 1pm and from 2pm to 6pm, Mondays to Fridays) or complete the online registration form at the CCF's website (www.communitycarefund.hk/en/form.asp) for seat reservation.

[Chinese Opera Festival to stage Xinchang Diaoqiang and Ninghai Pingdiao operas](#)

The Chinese Opera Festival in June will stage Xinchang Diaoqiang and Ninghai Pingdiao operas, both of which originate from China's "Four Major Ancient Singing Styles" and were inscribed onto the first national list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Audiences will be able to witness the charm and uniqueness of these ancient genres of Chinese opera. The Festival is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

The Xinchang Diaoqiang Heritage Protection and Development Centre of Zhejiang won great acclaim when it debuted in Hong Kong during the Chinese Opera Festival of 2013. On its return in June the troupe will perform the traditional Xinchang Diaoqiang opera "The Battle at Jiujiang". With national class performers, the troupe proudly presents this classic of the genre. With its vivid enactment of the ingenious Zhang Dingbian and the eloquent Hua Yunlong, along with its stratagems and plots, this production is presented in the style of northern opera sang but sung in the southern style. The production includes the light-hearted "The Old Water-carrier", which tells the story of an underprivileged old water-carrier who has no fear of the law and insists on pursuing justice, eventually proving the innocence of a misjudged murderer.

Pingdiao opera involves countless unique stunts, one of the best known being the shuaya or tusk stunt, in which the performers hold buckteeth in their mouths while simultaneously singing, reading or dancing as the plot progresses. Shuaya is regarded as having the same standing as bian lian, Sichuan opera's face-changing stunt. Featuring shuaya maestro Xue Qiaoping, the Pingdiao Art Heritage Centre of Ninghai will unveil for local audiences the rough and delicate yet wild and refined acuity of national-class

artistry.

Details of the performances are as follows:

June 22 (Friday) 7.30pm

Xinchang Diaoqiang Opera "The Battle at Jiujiang"

June 23 (Saturday) 7.30pm

Ninghai Pingdiao Opera Excerpt "Meeting the Judge from Li Huiniang"

Xinchang Diaoqiang Opera "The Old Water-carrier"

June 24 (Sunday) 2.30pm

Excerpts: Ninghai Pingdiao Opera "Jinlian Killing the Bandit Lijiao" and Xinchang Diaoqiang Opera "The Farewell on the Bridge" from "Autumn in the Han Palace", "Catching Sanlang Alive" from "The Water Margin", "Autumn River" from "The Story of the Jade Hairpin", "Ghost of a Woman who Hangs Herself" from Mulian Opera, and "Taking the Robe with His Spear on the Bridge" from "Guan Yu Travelling Alone for Thousands of Miles"

All performances will be staged at the Auditorium, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing. Tickets priced at \$150, \$250 and \$320 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk).

For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.cof.gov.hk.

Meet-the-Artists sessions (in Putonghua) on "The Ancient Provenance of Diaoqiang opera of the Eastern Zhejiang Region and the Intangible Cultural Heritage 'Shuaya' and the Art of Pingdiao Opera" featuring Wang Ying, Tian Min, Zhang Zhanghai, Wang Jiayu, Xue Qiaoping, Tang Jiefei will be held at 7.30pm on June 21 (Thursday) at AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Admission is free. Limited seats will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.