

Post-office appointments for former politically appointed official Dr Ko Wing-man and former CPU Head Mr Shiu Sin-por

The Advisory Committee on Post-office Employment for Former Chief Executives and Politically Appointed Officials has advised on the proposed acceptance of appointments by Dr Ko Wing-man, former Secretary for Food and Health, and Mr Shiu Sin-por, former Head of the Central Policy Unit, after their departure from the Government on July 1, 2017.

The Advisory Committee considers that, subject to the observance of certain restrictions it has advised, the acceptance of the proposed appointments by Dr Ko and Mr Shiu would not give rise to any potential conflict of interest. The Advisory Committee also does not anticipate adverse public reaction or public perception to arise from the proposed appointments.

The Advisory Committee considers and advises on the post-office employment or appointment for former politically appointed officials and other former officials. In considering each case, the Advisory Committee has regard to the information provided by the former official concerned, the assessments by relevant government bureaux or offices, and the criteria for advice as stipulated in the guidance notes on post-office employment for politically appointed officials.

Details of the above-mentioned cases are available at the Advisory Committee's website (www.ceo.gov.hk/poo/eng/index.htm).

The membership of the Advisory Committee is as follows:

Professor Liu Pak-wai (Chairman)
Ms Elaine Lo Yuen-man
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Mr Thomas Brian Stevenson
Mr Simon Ip Sik-on

SCS visits Treasury (with photos)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, visited the Treasury today (May 18) and met with its management and staff of various grades to learn more about their work and challenges confronting them.

Accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Thomas Chow, Mr Law met with the Director of Accounting Services, Mr Charlix Wong, and the directorate staff and was briefed on the department's work in the provision of accounting and financial management services in the Government.

Mr Law then proceeded to the Pensions Division under the Establishment Branch to learn about the procedures of processing pension payments to retired civil servants and other eligible persons. He was also briefed by colleagues of the Information Systems Branch on the operation of the Data Centre, which provides round-the-clock services to support various service-wide accounting, financial management and costing application systems of the Government.

Mr Law then met with colleagues who participate in the department's mentorship programme to learn more about how the programme assists newly recruited Accounting Officers in integrating into the working environment, and facilitates the transfer of knowledge and experience on government financial management among colleagues.

At a tea gathering with representatives of various grades, Mr Law exchanged views on matters of concern. He expressed appreciation for colleagues' efforts and encouraged them to continue to provide professional and efficient accounting and financial support services to the Government.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, May 18, 2018 is 99.4 (same as yesterday's index).

Twenty-five immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations, including an operation codenamed "Twilight" and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion" and "Powerplayer" from May 14 to 17. A total of 21 illegal workers and four suspected employers were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 45 target locations including a factory, a fruit stall, a garage, recycling shops, recycling yards, residential flats, restaurants, commercial buildings, garbage collect depots and an industrial building under renovation. Sixteen illegal workers and three employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised 11 men and five women, aged 26 to 62. Among them, two men were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Furthermore, a man and a woman were also suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards. Meanwhile, three men, aged 42 to 56, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

During operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided three target restaurants in Central. Two illegal workers and an employer were arrested. The illegal workers comprised two men, aged 29 and 38 respectively. Among them, a man was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment. Meanwhile, a man, aged 50, was suspected of employing an illegal worker.

Furthermore, during operation "Powerplayer", enforcement officers raided 16 target locations in Kowloon East district including restaurants and industrial buildings. Three illegal workers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised two men and a woman, aged 28 to 56. Among them, a man was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment.

"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 also warned that it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

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 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.

Red tide sighted

A red tide has been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (May 18).

The red tide was spotted by staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department on May 12 at Silverstrand Beach, Sai Kung. A red flag was hoisted immediately.

The red tide has dissipated. No associated death of fish has been reported.

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

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) urged mariculturists at Ma Nam Wat fish culture zone 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 monitoring red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.