

Appointments to Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee

The Government announced today (August 2) that the Chief Executive has appointed Mr Chan Hak-kan and re-appointed Dr Lam Ching-choi as members of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee (the Committee). Their term of office in the Committee took effect from yesterday (August 1) and will last until June 30, 2024.

"We would like to express our gratitude to Mr Ip Kwok-him, the retiring member, for his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee in the past few years," a Government spokesman said.

Established in 1993, the Disaster Relief Fund provides a ready mechanism for Hong Kong to respond swiftly to international appeals for humanitarian aid in relief of disasters that occur outside Hong Kong. The Committee is tasked to advise on disbursement from the Disaster Relief Fund and monitor the use of grants by the recipients.

The current membership list of the Committee is as follows:

Chairman:

Chief Secretary for Administration (ex-officio)

Members:

Dr Lam Ching-choi

Mr Chan Hak-kan

Ms Lam So-wai

Mr Edmund Wong Chun-sek

Mrs Ann Kung Yeung Yun-chi

Professor Emily Chan Ying-yang

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury or representative (ex-officio)

Secretary for Labour and Welfare or representative (ex-officio)

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, August 2, 2022 is 100.7 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Land Registry releases statistics for July

The Land Registry today (August 2) released its statistics for July 2022.

Land registration

* The number of sale and purchase agreements for all building units received for registration in July was 4,997 (-20.6 per cent compared with June 2022 and -49.8 per cent compared with July 2021)

* The 12-month moving average for July was 6,139 (6.3 per cent below the 12-month moving average for June 2022 and 21.0 per cent below that for July 2021)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in July was \$41.9 billion (-21.1 per cent compared with June 2022 and -55.4 per cent compared with July 2021)

* Among the sale and purchase agreements, 3,671 were for residential units (-23.9 per cent compared with June 2022 and -51.6 per cent compared with July 2021)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in respect of residential units was \$33.9 billion (-25.0 per cent compared with June 2022 and -56.9 per cent compared with July 2021)

Statistics on sales of residential units do not include sale and purchase agreements relating to sales of units under the Home Ownership Scheme, the Private Sector Participation Scheme, the Tenants Purchase Scheme, etc, unless the premium of the unit concerned has been paid after the sale restriction period.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months, the year-on-year rate of change and breakdown figures on residential sales have also been released.

As deeds may not be lodged with the Land Registry until up to 30 days after the transaction, these statistics generally relate to land transactions in the previous month.

Land search

* The number of searches of land registers made by the public in July was 433,661 (-2.6 per cent compared with June 2022 and -18.2 per cent compared with July 2021)

The statistics cover searches made at the counter, through the self-service terminals and via the Integrated Registration Information System Online Services.

Construction site contractors in Pok Fu Lam convicted of illegally discharging muddy water

The contractors of a construction site in Pok Fu Lam, China Harbour Engineering Company Limited and China Geo-Engineering Corporation, were convicted for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO) by discharging not properly treated wastewater to a nearby stream, and were fined \$60,000 and \$30,000 respectively at Eastern Magistrates' Courts yesterday (August 1).

In January this year, enforcement officers of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conducted an inspection at the construction site at Kai Lung Wan North, Pok Fu Lam South. During the inspection, it was found that muddy water was being discharged from the construction site to a nearby stream, contaminating the channel. The enforcement officers immediately collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentration of suspended solids was 430 milligrams/litre, greatly exceeding the upper limit of the relevant statutory discharge standards by 14 times. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD then instituted prosecution in accordance with the WPCO against the contractors of the construction site, a joint venture of the two companies mentioned above.

An EPD spokesman said that contractors of construction sites should install proper wastewater treatment facilities and maintain their effective operation to collect and properly treat the wastewater generated from construction sites, so as to avoid polluting river channels, communal drains or the coastal environment.

Under the WPCO, it is an offence for any person to discharge wastewater into the communal drainage system or a water body. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. A maximum fine of \$400,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on subsequent convictions.

Government announces latest situation of fresh food supply from Mainland

A Government spokesman announced today (August 2) that the supply of fresh food from the Mainland yesterday (August 1) was sufficient and stable.

According to the latest information, the quantity of vegetables supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong yesterday (as of midnight) by land and water transportation was about 2 800 tonnes, comparable to the average daily supply from the Mainland on a normal day. The volume of vegetables sold through the wholesale markets of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Vegetable Marketing Organization was about 790 tonnes. The average wholesale prices of choi sum and pak choi stood at \$6.50 and \$6.70 per catty respectively yesterday. The supply of eggs to the wholesale market remained steady, with the average daily supply standing at about 3.3 million for the past week, comparable to the average daily supply on a normal day last year.

The total supply of chilled meat from the Mainland yesterday was about 44 tonnes. The supply of live pigs was plentiful.

The supply of chilled poultry from the Mainland was about 150 000 head yesterday, and over 10 000 live chickens were slaughtered locally. The supply was abundant.

Regarding the rice supply, in compliance with the requirement by the Government, stockholders of rice have to maintain the reserve stock of rice at a level sufficient for consumption by the local population for 15 days. The trade generally stocks double the required amount, which is sufficient for one month's consumption by Hong Kong citizens. In recent years, the import and consumption of rice in Hong Kong has stood at a steady level of around 320 000 to 330 000 tonnes per year. The import quantity (including reserve stock) as of end-June 2022 was 30 400 tonnes. Suppliers also maintain a reserve for food that can be stored, such as frozen meat, for around three months' stock generally.

The Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the Mainland authorities and major food suppliers to ensure a stable food supply.

The AFCD updates and publishes the fresh food supply information daily. Members of the public may visit the AFCD website for updates on daily supplies and wholesale prices of fresh food (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/agriculture/agr_fresh/agr_fresh.html).