

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, May 20, 2022 is 99.1 (down 1.1 against yesterday's index).

Ten persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operations (with photo)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations codenamed "Lightshadow" and "Twilight" and a joint operation with the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion" for four consecutive days from May 16 to yesterday (May 19). A total of seven suspected illegal workers, one suspected employer and two suspected aiders and abettors were arrested.

During the operations, ImmD Task Force officers raided 66 target locations including food and beverage areas, gardens, premises under renovation, a residential building, restaurants and a vegetable stall. A total of four suspected illegal workers, one suspected employer and two suspected aiders and abettors were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprised two men and two women, aged 30 to 45. Among them, one woman was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits her from taking any employment. Furthermore, one man, aged 51, was suspected of employing the illegal workers. Meanwhile, one man and one woman, aged 32 and 71, suspected of aiding and abetting persons who breached their condition of stay in Hong Kong, were also arrested.

In addition, during operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided 12 target locations in Western district including a fruit stall and restaurants. A total of three suspected illegal workers were arrested. The suspected illegal workers comprised three women, aged 43 to 53.

An ImmD spokesman said, "Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him or her 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."

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. Under the prevailing laws, 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 upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$100,000 and up to 10 years' imprisonment."

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. Under the Immigration Ordinance, the maximum penalty for an employer employing a person who is not lawfully employable, i.e. 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, has been significantly increased from a fine of \$350,000 and three years' imprisonment to a fine of \$500,000 and 10 years' imprisonment to reflect the gravity of such offences. The director, manager, secretary, partner, etc, of the company concerned may also bear criminal liability. 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. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for one year. In that connection, the spokesman would like to remind all employers not to defy the law by employing illegal workers. The ImmD will continue to take resolute enforcement action to combat such offences.

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 ImmD officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats 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 intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter or temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments immediately.



Exchange Fund Notes tender results

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Exchange Fund Notes tender results

Tender date	: May 20, 2022
Paper on offer	: EF Notes
Issue number	: 02Y2405
Issue date	: May 23, 2022
Maturity date	: May 23, 2024
Coupon	: 2.35 per cent p.a.
Competitive Tender Result	
Amount applied	: HK\$8,950 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$1,200 MN
Average price accepted (yield)	: 100.16 (2.28 PCT)
Lowest price accepted (yield)	: 100.13 (2.30 PCT)
Pro rata ratio*	: About 31 PCT
Average tender price (yield)	: 99.97 (2.38 PCT)
Non-competitive Tender Results (for applications submitted through Hong Kong Securities Clearing Company Limited)	
Amount applied	: NIL
Amount allotted	: NIL
Allotment Price (yield)	: NIL

* "Pro rata ratio" refers to the average percentage of allotment with respect to each tender participant's tendered amount at the "lowest price accepted" level.

EMSD releases latest lift maintenance cost information of private residential and commercial premises

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (May 20) released the latest maintenance cost information on lifts in private residential and commercial premises for public reference in choosing registered lift contractors.

The EMSD had earlier engaged an independent consultant to conduct a sampling survey on the maintenance costs of lifts in private residential and commercial buildings in Hong Kong. The consultant analysed the data collected from some 7 600 lifts at about 1 960 locations, and calculated the average monthly maintenance costs of the lifts as follows:

Private residential buildings

Lift travel level	Rated speed of lift	Average monthly lift maintenance cost	Changes as compared with last survey (Note)
1 to 15	≤1.0m/s	\$4,660	+3.8%
	>1.0m/s	\$5,288	+3.1%
16 to 25	≤1.5m/s	\$5,012	+1.4%
	>1.5m/s	\$6,715	+3.3%
26 to 35	≤1.75m/s	\$6,235	+2.5%
	>1.75m/s	\$8,890	+7.5%
More than 35	≤2.5m/s	\$8,639	+0.6%
	>2.5m/s	\$9,762	+7.2%

Private commercial buildings

Lift travel level	Rated speed of lift	Average monthly lift maintenance cost	Changes as compared with last survey (Note)
1 to 15	≤1.5m/s	\$6,487	+1.2%
	>1.5m/s	\$8,516	+5.9%
16 to 25	≤2.0m/s	\$7,658	+11.9%
	>2.0m/s	\$11,327	+1.8%
26 to 35	≤3.0m/s	\$9,644	+3.1%
	>3.0m/s	\$14,292	+1.6%
More than 35	≤3.5m/s	\$18,810	+14%
	>3.5m/s	\$26,198	+0.5%

The cost information is available in the Responsible Persons' Corner on

the EMSD's website

(www.emsd.gov.hk/en/lifts_and_escalators_safety/responsible_persons_corner/index.html). The EMSD will update it on a half-yearly basis.

In choosing registered lift contractors, the responsible persons for lifts are advised to make reference to the materials published in the Responsible Persons' Corner in addition to the price factor. The materials include:

- * performance ratings of registered contractors;
- * sample contracts for procurement of lift maintenance services;
- * a guidebook for persons responsible for lifts;
- * guidelines for selection of registered contractors for provision of maintenance services;
- * guidelines for modernisation of existing lifts;
- * guidelines for management of lift maintenance works;
- * a checklist for building management staff to conduct daily safety inspection of lifts; and
- * common questions and answers on lift management.

Note: The above price figures were updated on March 31, 2022, whereas the previous price figures were updated on September 30, 2021.

Hong Kong Customs combats sale of pirated electronic games and counterfeit gaming accessories (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (May 19) launched a special operation to combat the sale of pirated electronic games and counterfeit gaming accessories. A total of 283 sets of game consoles loaded with suspected pirated electronic games and 160 suspected counterfeit gaming accessories with an estimated market value of about \$280,000 were seized. Eight persons were arrested.

Customs earlier conducted spot checks at popular electronic games retail shops in various districts and used a big data analytics system to trace shops selling suspected pirated electronic games through online platforms. After an in-depth investigation, with the assistance of the copyright owner, Customs yesterday took enforcement action and raided seven retail shops and two storage facilities in Sham Shui Po. The suspected pirated and counterfeit items in the case were seized.

The seized game consoles had various designs. Some came with the design

of arcade game controllers, while some had the design of retro home game consoles or lightweight handheld game devices. These game consoles were preloaded with about 3 000 to 4 000 types of suspected pirated electronic games, most of which were nostalgic games. Some of the seized game consoles could even access designated websites for downloading more suspected pirated electronic games.

During the operation, seven men and one woman aged between 34 and 44 were arrested, comprising four shop owners and four salespersons.

An investigation is ongoing. The likelihood of further arrests has not been excluded.

Customs reminds traders that both new and nostalgic electronic games are under copyright protection. Selling pirated games is a serious crime that they must not take part in.

Consumers should respect intellectual property rights and refrain from buying any pirated games. Customs also reminds members of the public that the unknown websites connected with the pirated game consoles might contain computer viruses or malware which can pose a risk to users.

Under the Copyright Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any infringing items commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy and imprisonment for four years.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

