

# Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange and Collaboration Programme celebrates 20th anniversary (with photos)

The Ministry of Education and the Education Bureau (EDB) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (July 4) cohosted the Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange and Collaboration Programme 20th anniversary celebration opening ceremony and conference at South China Normal University in Guangzhou. Over 400 representatives from the education departments of various Mainland provinces and municipalities, Mainland expert teachers (METs) who participated in the programme in the past, and representatives from the Hong Kong education sector attended the events.

The Deputy Director of the Office of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan Affairs of the Ministry of Education, Mr Shu Gangbo; the Permanent Secretary for Education of the HKSAR Government, Ms Michelle Li; Deputy Director-General of the Department of Education of Guangdong Province Dr Feng Wei; the First-level Inspector of the Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological Affairs of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government (LOCPG) in the HKSAR, Mr Liu Maozhou; and Vice President of South China Normal University Professor Yang Chengwei, officiated at the opening ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, Ms Li said that it is a fine tradition of the Chinese nation to place importance on teaching and learning, which has been passed down from generation to generation, adding that strengthening the teaching force is the most important fundamental task for building a leading country in education.

She said that the programme had delivered fruitful results over the past 20 years, thanks to the unwavering support from the Ministry of Education; the Department of Education of Guangdong Province; the Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological Affairs of the LOCPG in the HKSAR; and the education departments of various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, as well as the dedication of all the METs who took part in the programme in the past. They have all contributed significantly to the education profession in both Hong Kong and the Mainland.

She said that, as this year coincides with the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the EDB of the HKSAR Government, with the support of the Ministry of Education, will pilot the Resource Teacher and Principal Training Programme to nurture Hong Kong teachers and principals with potential through the teacher training and exchange base at South China Normal University. The teachers and principals will also receive guidance from Mainland experts recommended by the Ministry of Education, further strengthening exchanges and collaboration between the two places and raising the quality of education with concerted efforts.

The Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange and Collaboration Programme was launched in the 2004/05 school year. Every year, the Ministry of Education selects outstanding teachers, and teaching and research fellows from different provinces and municipalities across the country, and sends them to Hong Kong to collaborate with schools and provide professional guidance on various subjects and cross-curricular areas (e.g. STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics) education and Chinese culture). So far, more than 800 METs have travelled to Hong Kong and more than 1 000 Hong Kong primary and secondary schools and kindergartens have participated in the programme.



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## Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, July 4, 2024 is 106.8 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

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# Transport Department approves second round of applications under Labour Importation Scheme for Transport Sector – public light bus/coach trade

The approval process for the second round of applications under the Labour Importation Scheme for the Transport Sector – Public Light Bus/Coach Trade has been completed. The Transport Department (TD) issued letters today (July 4) to all applicants on the application results.

The application period for the second round applications under the Scheme was from March 25 to April 26. A total of 129 applications, covering public light bus drivers and coach drivers, were received within the application period, involving 1 473 labour importation quotas. Subsequently, four applications were withdrawn.

After assessment by an interdepartmental liaison group (ILG) comprising representatives from the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Labour Department and the TD, all 125 applications were found eligible. After considering the recommendation of the ILG, the Commissioner for Transport approved the 125 applications. Since the number of eligible quotas being applied for in the second round exceeded the total number of quotas available for allocation (i.e. 849 remaining quotas in total), the quotas were allocated on a pro-rata basis to the eligible applicants.

A total of seven applications failed to meet the manning ratio requirement of full-time local staff and imported labour, and the number of eligible quotas being applied for under the applications concerned were adjusted downwards correspondingly. The consolidated results of the second round of applications are in the Annex.

A stakeholder consultative group, comprising the TD, relevant transport trades and labour representatives, has been set up. The TD has been maintaining close liaison and exchanging views with the consultative group on the implementation of the Scheme. The TD will also provide appropriate assistance to successful applicants in order to ensure their understanding of and compliance with the relevant requirements of the Scheme.

A spokesman for the TD said, "Over 80 per cent of the imported labour in the first round of applications have arrived in Hong Kong and started to perform driving duties after obtaining relevant driving licences and completing route training. We hope that the imported labour approved in the second round will receive training in Hong Kong soon, with a view to obtaining the respective driving licences and commencing their duties, so as to further alleviate the acute manpower shortage of public light bus/coach trade, and maintain the reliability of public transport services. The TD will continue to listen to the views of the consultative group on matters relating

to the Scheme and closely monitor its implementation."

The Chief Executive in Council endorsed in June 2023 the introduction of the Scheme to, on the prerequisite of safeguarding the employment of local labour, suitably allow the public light bus/coach trade to apply for the importation of labour to fill vacancies for drivers with a quota ceiling of 1 700. A total of 969 quotas were approved in the first round of applications in September last year, of which 118 quotas not used by the applicants after six months have been carried forward to the second round for allocation.

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## **Postal services to Italy subject to delay**

Hongkong Post announced today (July 4) that, as advised by the postal administration of Italy, due to the impact of severe weather, mail delivery services to the Aosta Valley region in Italy are subject to delay.

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## **Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan**

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on July 3 to noon today (July 4), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 145 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

([www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme\\_rafs/programme\\_rafs\\_fc\\_01\\_30\\_Nuclear\\_Event\\_and\\_Food\\_Safety.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html)).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website ([www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological\\_testing/Radiological\\_Test.html](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html)).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website ([www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html](http://www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html)).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 64 619 samples of food imported from Japan (including 41 682 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 15 642 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.