

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).

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 Subsequently, four applications were withdrawn.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.

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.

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).

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).

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).

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.

Fraudulent website and internet banking login screen related to DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited relating to

a fraudulent website and an internet banking login screen, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the website or login screen concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.