

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 June 19 to noon today (June 20), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 253 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 52 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 60 714 samples of food imported from Japan (including 39 256 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 14 942 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, June 20, 2024 is 106.6 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Smart Traffic Fund approves three projects

The Transport Department (TD) today (June 20) announced that the 14th batch of three projects has been approved by the Management Committee on Smart Traffic Fund, involving a total grant of around \$23.9 million.

The three approved projects in the latest batch cover a simulation platform for multimodal transportation, smart roadside infrastructure, and a special purpose vehicle traffic management system. Details of the projects are available on the Fund's website (www.stf.hkpc.org).

The Fund accepts applications year-round to provide funding support to local organisations and enterprises for conducting research and application of innovation and technology with the objectives of enhancing commuting convenience, enhancing efficiency of the road network or road space, and improving driving safety. All applications are considered and assessed in batches by the Management Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner for Transport (Planning and Technical Services) and comprises representatives from the Government, experts in the industry and relevant stakeholders.

The TD appeals to interested organisations and enterprises for participation to help make the Fund a success, and to build Hong Kong into a more liveable and sustainable city by driving Hong Kong toward a new era of transportation.

Application details are available on the Fund's website. For enquiries, please contact the Hong Kong Productivity Council, the Secretariat of the Fund, on 2788 5536 or stf_sec@hkpc.org.

Red flag lowered at Golden Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department said today (June 20) that the red flag at Golden Beach in Tuen Mun District has been lowered.

The red flag was hoisted at the beach earlier on after an oil spill.

Speech by CS at Diversity List 2024 Launch Event (English only) (with video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the Diversity List 2024 Launch Event today (June 20):

Shalini (Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of The Zubin Foundation, Ms Shalini Mahtani), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to join you today – not just to catch up with our friends of ethnic minority communities, but also to congratulate all the talented individuals on this year's Diversity List presented by The Zubin Foundation.

Hong Kong has long been a diverse, multicultural metropolis. More than 300 000 ethnic minority residents call Hong Kong home, making up more than four per cent of our population.

According to the latest census, as of 2021, 15.2 per cent of our ethnic minority population were born in Hong Kong, about two per cent more than a decade earlier. The ethnic minority population is also younger, with a median age of 37.6.

Hong Kong's high degree of internationalisation is one of our distinctive advantages. We also proudly celebrate the cultural traditions, and civic contributions, that our ethnic minority communities bring to Hong Kong. Their wide-ranging talent, energy and innovation enrich us all.

The Zubin Foundation has long been a close partner of the Government. We

share a common vision of providing equal opportunities for our ethnic minorities and enabling their integration into the larger community.

The inter-departmental Steering Committee on Ethnic Minorities Affairs that I chair works to enhance support and services for ethnic minorities in wide-ranging areas – from education and employment, to community and social needs.

The Chief Executive, in his Policy Address last year, expanded Government support for our ethnic minority communities – in education, employment, integration into the community, and support services.

That includes setting up two additional support service centres – one in Kowloon Central, the other in the New Territories East – bringing the total to ten. The two new centres are expected to be open in the fourth quarter.

Eight Ethnic Minority Care Teams will begin service next month, with two others expected to be in place by year's end.

Education makes a big difference when it comes to community integration and employment. To that end, we are boosting support for non-Chinese-speaking students to help them learn Chinese.

Initiatives include providing diverse online learning materials and self-learning resources, as well as after-school Chinese-language courses, for lower primary non-Chinese-speaking students. We are also expanding the Summer Bridging Programme to cover all primary school grade levels, and enhancing school-based life-planning services.

As for employment, more than 50 civil service grades, including 18 degree or professional grades, in the Government have adjusted their Chinese-language proficiency requirements to increase job opportunities for ethnic minorities. Our government departments and disciplinary forces are gradually introducing their own job-oriented language tests. These provide additional prospects for applicants to meet job requirements.

We also offer job tasting, I am pleased to note. More than 140 students have participated in the Government's internship programme targeting non-ethnic Chinese university students since its launch in 2019.

In addition, the Racial Diversity Employment Programme of our Labour Department has been regularised, with additional measures to support ethnic minorities in learning vocational language. To date, the Programme has served more than 270 ethnic-minority job-seekers.

Meanwhile, we are working to better address the social needs of ethnic minorities. The Government's Ethnic Minority District Ambassador pilot scheme, launched in 2020, has been extended to 2026 in the welfare service units of non-governmental organisations, and our Social Welfare Department at large, to strengthen welfare support.

Last December, The Zubin Foundation was commissioned to operate a service centre, providing emotional support and counselling services for

ethnic minorities. I'm sure many of you have played a part in driving this important initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, with all the continuing efforts I have just mentioned, as well as the support from each and every one of you here today, we will inspire more of our ethnic minorities to fly high and, in turn, strengthen our community and our economy.

Once again, my congratulations to the outstanding individuals on this year's Diversity List. And my thanks to the Diversity List Committee for their commitment, and to The Zubin Foundation for making it all happen.

On that note, I wish you all the best of business, health, and opportunity in the coming year. Thank you very much.