

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, December 30, 2021 is 101.1 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Special traffic and transport arrangements for New Year's Eve

The Transport Department (TD) today (December 30) reminded the public to take note of the special traffic and transport arrangements to be implemented for New Year's Eve (December 31) to facilitate holiday celebrations as follows:

Road closures will be implemented from 2pm tomorrow to 5am the following day in the vicinity of Lan Kwai Fong in Central.

As for public transport arrangements, the following service adjustments will be implemented tomorrow:

- (i) Eight MTR railway lines (other than Disneyland Resort Line and Airport Express) will enhance their service frequency tomorrow afternoon and extend their operating hours for an hour. All Light Rail routes will also extend their operating hours for an hour tomorrow;
- (ii) Some bus and green minibus routes will be adjusted, enhanced or will extend their operating hours. Special bus services will be provided tomorrow and on January 1, 2022;
- (iii) The operating hours of tram services will be extended to 2.30am the following day;
- (iv) The operating hours of Central to Mid-Levels Escalator and Walkway System will be extended to 3am the following day; and
- (v) Ferry service between Central and Tsim Sha Tsui will be extended to 1am the following day. For the ferry service between Central and Peng Chau, one additional sailing to Central and one additional sailing to Peng Chau will be operated at 1am and 1.45am on January 1, 2022 respectively.

Members of the public are advised to pay attention to the passenger notices issued by the public transport service operators concerned.

The TD advised the public to make use of public transport and avoid driving to busy areas. If driving is necessary, motorists are advised to drive with care and patience and should be aware that on-street parking spaces will be suspended due to road closure arrangements. Pedestrians are advised to walk on the pavement, pay attention to road safety, be considerate and patient, observe traffic lights and follow advice or instructions given

by the Police on-site.

It is expected that a large number of passengers will take public transport services during the holiday period and the waiting time may be longer than usual. The TD reminded passengers to plan their journeys in advance, observe order and heed advice on-site from the Police and staff of the public transport service operators concerned when waiting for the services.

The TD and the Police will closely monitor the traffic situation and implement appropriate measures whenever necessary. Motorists and the public are advised to pay attention to the latest traffic news as announced on radio, television, the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk) or the mobile application "HKeMobility".

Details of the special traffic and transport arrangements are available on the TD's website and mobile application "HKeMobility".

HKSAR Government continues to be resolute and spare no effort in safeguarding national security

In response to biased and erroneous remarks or reports by governments, media and organisations of the United States and western countries on the arrest of the editor and the then directors of Stand News for allegedly committing the offence of conspiracy to publish seditious publication under the Crimes Ordinance, a Government spokesman today (December 30) said:

Acts and activities that endanger national security are very serious crimes, which we are determined to tackle in accordance with the law. The law enforcement actions taken by the Police against Stand News are strictly according to the law and based on evidence.

We must point out that freedom of speech and freedom of the press are protected under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. Article 4 of the Hong Kong National Security Law also stipulates that such rights and freedoms shall be protected in accordance with the law in safeguarding national security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

However, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are not absolute. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, such freedoms can be restricted for reasons including protection of national security. We reiterate that no one is above the law.

The actions taken by the Police on this occasion were targeting at illegal acts of those arrestees, and have nothing to do with freedom of the press and of publication. We express our deep regret regarding the governments, media and organisations of the United States and western countries in respect of their attempt to twist facts and slandering remarks on the enforcement actions taken in accordance with the law. Such acts constitute gross interference in the affairs of Hong Kong, and reflect their double standards.

In the past year, people's lives have resumed as normal, and the national security risk has subsided. These achievements are hard to come by. We will continue to guard against any acts endangering national security, and will bring any person or entity violating the law to justice regardless of background.

Nine sports centres to reopen

Nine sports centres managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will gradually reopen for public use starting from January 7, 2022. These venues were temporarily closed earlier for anti-epidemic purposes.

Members of the public can reserve the fee-charging facilities of the following venues from 7am on the following dates via the Internet booking services of Leisure Link, counter bookings and self-service kiosks at venues already reopened, or via the Booking Offices of the District Leisure Services Offices during office hours:

Venues	Reopening dates	Booking commencement dates
Morse Park Sports Centre (Tel: 2326 2207)	January 7	January 1
Tseung Kwan O Sports Centre (Tel: 2701 2317)	January 11	January 5
Tin Fai Road Sports Centre (Tel: 2473 0229)	January 14	January 8
Lung Sum Avenue Sports Centre (Tel: 2673 4433)	January 14	January 8
Yau Oi Sports Centre (Tel: 2450 8850)	January 14	January 8

Kowloon Bay Sports Centre (Tel: 2750 9539)	January 14	January 8
Boundary Street Sports Centre (Tel: 2380 9751)	January 14	January 8
Ho Man Tin Sports Centre and Swimming Pool (Tel: 2762 7837 (Sports Centre) and 2715 0139 (Swimming Pool))	January 14 (sports centre) January 24 (swimming pool)	January 8
Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park Sports Centre (Tel: 2858 2493)	January 14 (fitness room, squash courts and children's play room only)	January 8

For further information, please visit the LCSD website (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/index.html).

Construction site contractor in Yau Tong convicted of illegally discharging muddy water

The contractor of a construction site on Tung Yuen Street, Yau Tong, namely Aggressive Civil & Foundation Engineering Limited (Aggressive Foundation), was convicted and fined \$17,000 at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (December 30) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO) by discharging not properly treated wastewater into the waters of the Victoria Harbour Water Control Zone off the construction site.

In April this year, enforcement officers of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conducted an inspection of Tung Yuen Street as well as its adjacent areas with the aid of a drone. During the inspection, it was found that there was a large area of muddy water in the coastal waters off a construction site on Tung Yuen Street. The enforcement officers thus entered the construction site for an investigation and found that the contractor had discharged wastewater generated by the construction site without proper treatment directly into nearby waters. The enforcement officers immediately collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentration of suspended solids was 1 800 milligrams/litre, greatly exceeding the upper limit of the relevant statutory discharge standards by 35 times. The EPD then initiated prosecution against Aggressive Foundation in accordance with the WPCO.

A spokesman for the EPD pointed out that construction site contractors must install suitable wastewater treatment facilities to collect and properly treat the wastewater generated from construction sites to avoid discharging not properly treated wastewater into Hong Kong waters, impairing inshore water quality and causing an adverse impact on the coastal environment.

Under the WPCO, it is an offence for any person to discharge wastewater into the waters of water control zones. 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.