

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, August 24, 2018 is 104.4 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Test results of seasonal food surveillance project on mooncakes (first phase) all satisfactory

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (August 24) announced the results of a seasonal food surveillance project on mooncakes (first phase). The results of 160 samples tested were all satisfactory.

A spokesman for the CFS said that samples of over 20 brands covering traditional, snowy, ice-cream and other types of mooncakes had been collected from various retailers (including online retailers) and food factories for chemical and microbiological tests and nutrition content analysis.

The chemical tests covered colouring matters such as Sudan dyes, preservatives such as sulphur dioxide and sorbic acid, aflatoxins and metallic contaminants. Microbiological tests covered pathogens such as *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Salmonella* and coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms. For nutrition content analysis, the contents of sodium and total fat of the samples were tested to see if they were consistent with the declared values on the nutrition labels.

The spokesman reminded people to maintain a balanced diet and avoid excessive eating of mooncakes as they are generally high in sugar and fat. Some types also contain relatively high levels of salt. Eating too much fat will increase the risk of being overweight and obese while dietary sugar intake is a determinant of body weight and dental caries. In addition, excessive sodium intake will increase the risk of developing hypertension, fatal stroke and coronary heart disease.

He advised people to refer to nutrition labels, particularly on the sugar, salt and fat contents, to make a healthier choice. People should avoid mooncake types with high levels of fat or sugar, i.e. containing more than 20 grams of total fat or more than 15g of sugar per 100g of food. As for reducing salt intake, people can choose low-sodium mooncake types, i.e. containing less than 120 milligrams of sodium per 100g of food.

He said that people should consider their health conditions and consume mooncakes in an appropriate amount during the Mid-Autumn Festival. He advised people to share mooncakes with their family members and friends, as this not only enhances the festive atmosphere, but also allows them to taste mooncakes of different flavours and avoid overconsumption.

Members of the public should observe the following Five Keys to Food Safety in the purchase, storage and consumption of mooncakes to prevent food-borne diseases:

- * Buy mooncakes from reliable outlets rather than patronising unlicensed hawkers. Check whether the mooncakes are properly packaged, pay attention to the expiry dates before purchase and eat them before the expiry dates;
- * Store mooncakes according to the instructions on the package if they are not to be consumed immediately. Keep snowy mooncakes at 4 degrees Celsius or below and ice-cream mooncakes at minus 18 degrees C or below, and consume them as soon as possible after taking them out from the refrigerator;
- * Use an icebox to carry snowy or ice-cream mooncakes outdoors and consume them as soon as possible;
- * Wrap mooncakes properly and separate them from raw food when storing in a refrigerator to prevent cross-contamination; and
- * Maintain good personal hygiene. Wash hands properly with liquid soap and running water before handling mooncakes.

The spokesman also reminded food traders to adhere to the Good Manufacturing Practice. Other than purchasing food ingredients from reliable suppliers, they should also comply with legal requirements when using food additives.

"Snowy and ice-cream mooncakes, which do not undergo a baking process at high temperature, need to be handled hygienically during processing, transportation and storage to avoid contamination and growth of germs," he said.

The CFS will continue to conduct surveillance on mooncakes and the second phase results will be released in a timely manner to ensure food safety.

[Health risk category for Air Quality](#)

Health Index may reach "Serious" Level

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has recorded higher than normal pollution levels. At 2pm today (August 24), the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at a general station reached 8, corresponding to the "Very High" health risk category.

There are sunny periods with light winds in Hong Kong today. Higher than normal levels of nitrogen dioxide have been recorded in the territory since this morning. Hong Kong is being affected by an air mass with higher background pollutant concentrations. In addition, the light wind hinders effective dispersion of air pollutants. The sunshine enhances photochemical smog activity and the formation of ozone and fine particulates, resulting in high pollution in the Pearl River Delta region. The high level of ozone has promoted the formation of nitrogen dioxide, particularly in parts of the urban areas and at the roadside. It is expected that the AQHI at some general and roadside air monitoring stations may reach the "Serious" level later today.

According to the Hong Kong Observatory, there will still be light winds for a couple of days. It is expected that pollution levels will remain higher than normal until the wind strengthens early next week.

With a health risk category in the "Very High" range or above, children, the elderly and persons with existing heart or respiratory illnesses are advised to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities to a minimum or avoid such activities. The general public are advised to reduce, or reduce to a minimum, outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce time staying outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. As health effects of air pollutants may vary for individuals, persons who are in doubt or experience discomfort should seek advice from health-care professionals. The public may visit the Centre for Health Protection's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html) for more information on health effects of air pollution and relevant health advice.

The Education Bureau (EDB) urges all schools to visit the EDB's website for appropriate measures to safeguard students' health and take note of changes in the index. The relevant hyperlink is as follows:
www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html.

When the AQHI is at the "Very High" level, employers of outdoor workers performing heavy manual work are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees such as reducing outdoor physical exertion and the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. At the "Serious" level, employers of all outdoor workers are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees.

Members of the public can check the current AQHI readings at the EPD's website (www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html) or by calling the hotline 2827 8541.

Eight immigration offenders arrested (with photo)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide enforcement operation codenamed "Twilight" and a joint operation codenamed "Windsand" with the Hong Kong Police Force yesterday (August 23) to combat illegal employment activities. A total of seven illegal workers and a suspected employer were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided two target locations including a restaurant and an industrial unit under renovation. Three illegal workers and an employer were arrested. The illegal workers comprised two men and one woman, aged 24 to 44. The woman was also suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity card. Meanwhile, the male employer, aged 50, was suspected of employing the illegal workers.

Furthermore, during operation "Windsand", four Mainland visitors comprising two men and two women, aged 22 to 42, were arrested for breaching their conditions of stay by being involved in suspected parallel goods trading at Ka Fu Close and San Wan Road in Sheung Shui. The goods included electronic products, food, daily necessities and skin-care products.

Since September 2012, a number of "Windsand" operations have been conducted, during which a total of 3 434 Mainlanders and 19 Hong Kong residents were arrested for suspected involvement in parallel goods trading. Of these, 237 Mainlanders were prosecuted for breach of conditions of stay, while the remaining 3 197 people were repatriated. Among those prosecuted, 226 were sentenced to imprisonment for four weeks to three months, while charges were withdrawn for the other 11 people.

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

The spokesman warned that 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 a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to 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. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD, as a standard procedure, will 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 officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat 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 interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.



Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after attending radio programmes today (August 24):

Reporter: Mr Chan, I just want to ask about the 80 000 passenger figure again which is like significantly lower than the figure quoted in 2015 when the Government asked for more extra funding. Do you think people in Hong Kong would feel that they're cheated this time?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: I would say that the patronage contained in the Legislative (Council) paper back in 2015 or even earlier is indeed higher than what we have been trying to inform the public today. But I would emphasise even at those days, those figures are being quoted and given based on some scientific simulation models which are commonly used in global cross-boundary infrastructure. For the figures we quoted today or yesterday, actually these are figures that are based on similar models, but with the addition of change in the frequency of high-speed rail train. For example, like normal days from Monday to Thursday, there would be about 70 pairs of trains, for weekends 82 (pairs), and then on peak days it would be about 114 pairs. And these changes in the number of train pairs today would indeed bring changes to the patronage. So we are actually trying to review as much as possible to let the public and everybody of Hong Kong know the exact situation.

Reporter: ... the number of non-stop trains can't be increased in the future if the passenger numbers go up and under what sort of condition would that go ahead?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: At this moment in time, because it's something new for Hong Kong and therefore we are not for sure how many patronage we are going to have on day one. We do have an agreement with the China Railway (Corporation) in future – if the patronage will change or the fill-up rate is high, then we would kick in the mechanism to talk about additional train pair and perhaps also additional train destination, and hopefully would bring more benefits and choices for Hong Kong people. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)