

# Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, July 11, 2018 is 102.6 (up 0.5 against yesterday's index).

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## LCQ13: Statistics on New Territories small houses

Following is a question by the Hon Tanya Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

According to the New Territories small house policy, a New Territories male indigenous villager over 18 years old is entitled to one concessionary grant during his lifetime to build one small house (small house concessionary right). Lands zoned for "Village Type Development" (V zone lands) are primarily reserved for development of small houses. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of holders of unexercised small house concessionary right as at June 30 this year, and among them, (i) the number of those who had never lodged applications for building small houses and (ii) the number of those who were at the time residing abroad; the estimated number of those who might have the intention to lodge such applications in the coming decade; if such figures are not available, whether it will compile such statistics;

(2) of (i) the number of holders of unexercised small house concessionary right, and (ii) the respective numbers of applications for building small houses which were (a) received, (b) approved, (c) being processed and (d) rejected, by the Lands Department, in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 1);

Table 1

Year	(i)	(ii)			
		(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
2008					
...					
2017					

Total					
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(3) of the respective numbers of small houses which were (i) under construction and (ii) completed, in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 2);

Table 2

Year	(i)	(ii)
2008		
...		
2017		
Total		

(4) (i) in respect of V zone lands, of (a) their total area, (b) the total area of those on which small houses had been built, and (c) the total area of those available for small house development, as well as (ii) the total area of sites zoned for other planning uses and on which small houses had been built, in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 3); and

Table 3

Year	(i)			(ii)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	
2008				
...				
2017				
Total				

(5) of (i) the number of approved applications for premium assessment and (ii) the number of cases of transfer of titles, in respect of small houses in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 4)?

Table 4

Year	(i)	(ii)
2008		
...		
2017		
Total		

Reply:

President,

The Small House Policy has been implemented since 1972. Under the Policy, in general, a male indigenous villager aged 18 years old or above who is descended through the male line from a resident in 1898 of a recognised village in the New Territories may apply to the Government once during his lifetime for permission to build for himself a small house on a suitable site within his own village.

My reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The Lands Department (LandsD) does not have statistics on the number of indigenous villagers in the New Territories nor the number of those eligible for applying for small house grants.

The demand for small houses may change with factors such as the birth and growth of indigenous villagers, and whether or not an indigenous villager will apply for a small house grant depends on his own circumstances and wishes, while not all eligible indigenous villagers aged 18 years old or above will submit an application. Therefore, the Government does not project the number of small house applications in the next 10 years.

(2) As mentioned in (1) above, LandsD does not have statistics on the number of indigenous villagers in the New Territories nor the number of those eligible for applying for small house grants.

A breakdown in the numbers of small house applications received, approved, rejected and being processed by LandsD in the past 10 years is set out below.

Year	Number of small house applications received	Number of small house applications approved
2008	1 810	958
2009	1 769	1 290
2010	1 959	1 474
2011	2 374	1 041
2012	2 690	1 121
2013	2 566	1 011
2014	2 522	1 114
2015	2 547	989
2016	1 297	858
2017	1 129	818
Total	20 663	10 674

Note: Due to the variations in time required for processing individual small house application, the applications approved, rejected and being processed during the year may not correspond with the applications received during the year.

(3) LandsD does not have statistics on the number of small houses under construction each year.

The number of small houses completed with Certificates of Compliance (CCs) issued by LandsD in the past 10 years is set out below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of small houses completed with CCs issued</b>
2008	920
2009	847
2010	973
2011	812
2012	1 089
2013	1 151
2014	1 066
2015	904
2016	814
2017	799
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 375</b>

(4) Village Type Development (V) zones in existing statutory plans mainly reflect areas of recognised villages of indigenous villagers in the New Territories, and are for small house development by indigenous villagers. The purpose of setting up V zones is to concentrate village type developments therein for more orderly development. V zones are drawn up having regard to a series of planning factors, including the location of existing villages, the delineation of Village Environs, the local topography, the existing settlement pattern, site characteristics and the surrounding environment, environmental constraints, as well as the projections of demand for small houses of that area in the coming 10 years provided by relevant village representatives. As at December 31 of each of the past 10 years, the total land area of V zones is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total land area of V zones (hectares) (about)</b>
2008	3 154
2009	3 155
2010	3 260
2011	3 286
2012	3 294

2013	3 321
2014	3 338
2015	3 338
2016	3 368
2017	3 377

Increase in the land zoned V mainly reflects existing villages previously not yet covered by any statutory plans.

Land under V zones on statutory plans is scattered across the territory and covers existing and recognised villages in the New Territories. Many small houses are built on land under private ownership, and the size of individual pieces of private land varies. In addition, whether the development of small house may indeed proceed on a particular site within the V zone would depend on the fulfillment of engineering and other conditions as required. As such, the Government does not have readily available information on the total area of land available for small house developments in these V zones.

Under the existing policy, each small house can have a roofed-over area of not exceeding 65.03 square metres. However, the area of land granted for a small house is subject to such constraints as the topography, condition and area of the small house site under application. As such, the area of land granted for individual small house development may vary from case to case. LandsD has no readily available statistics on the area of land on which small houses had been built (regardless of the zoning of land for various planning uses).

(5) In accordance with the existing policy, alienation of small houses before the issue of CCs is generally prohibited. If, after approval of his application and completion of a small house, a small house applicant intends to transfer ownership of his small house, he is required under the applicable alienation restriction to make an application to LandsD. If the application is approved, he is required to pay the necessary land premium. The number of approved cases for removal of alienation restriction by LandsD in the past 10 years is set out below.

Year	Number of approved cases for removal of restriction on alienation
2008	494
2009	474
2010	454
2011	493
2012	404
2013	485
2014	577

2015	462
2016	409
2017	435
Total	4 687

Since a small house applicant may transfer the ownership of his small house after LandsD's approval for his application for removing the applicable alienation restriction and his payment of the necessary land premium, and the transfer of ownership concerned is a private transaction of the small house applicant, LandsD does not have statistics on the number of small houses transacted.

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## [LCQ4: Provision of schools for the new public rental housing developments on Anderson Road](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Ip Kin-yuen and a reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

Located in the Anderson Road Development Area (Development Area), On Tat Estate, the intake of which was completed in 2016, and On Tai Estate, the intake of which will be completed within this year, can accommodate a total of 50 000 residents. While the authorities have planned to provide four kindergartens, three primary schools and one secondary school within the Development Area, so far only one half-day kindergarten has been completed and commissioned. This has resulted in quite a number of newly moved-in residents scrambling, for several months, for places in nearby schools for their children. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the authorities' projection on the population of children in the aforesaid estates who are of ages for attending kindergartens and primary and secondary schools; the criteria adopted for planning the number of kindergartens and primary and secondary schools within the Development Area; the original and latest schedules for the commissioning of those school premises, and the number of places to be offered to new students at each of the levels;

(2) of the specific measures to be put in place to assist the students concerned in obtaining school places pursuant to the "principle of vicinity"; the number of applications made by residents in the Development Area for

change of schools for their children and the outcome of them; and

(3) of the reasons why the construction progress of the school premises within the Development Area is lagging behind; whether it will review the relevant arrangements and expedite the progress of the works; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Under the prevailing mechanism, the Planning Department will reserve sites for kindergarten (KG) and school development when preparing town plans and planning large-scale residential developments having regard to the planned population intake and on the basis of the needs for community services, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. In the process, the Education Bureau (EDB) will be consulted.

When there are KG premises in public housing estates available for use, the EDB will take into account the supply and demand of KG places of the areas concerned and other relevant factors, and launch school allocation exercises (SAEs) as appropriate upon receipt of request from the Housing Department. Relevant factors include the demand and supply of KG places in the district and the "Tertiary Planning Units" (TPUs) concerned, school-age children population projections, reprovisioning needs of existing KGs, and provision of Government-owned quality KG premises to increase the number of KGs that need not charge school fees to defray rental expenses. For the four six-classroom estate KG premises at the Anderson Road Development Area, two are in On Tat Estate. One of them has already been in operation and the other one will commence operation in the 2018/19 school year. The remaining two premises are in On Tai Estate. According to information available to the EDB, the total KG places available in the TPU in which On Tai Estate is located and its neighbouring TPU are sufficient in meeting the demand of the KG student population. Nevertheless, having considered the above-mentioned factors on provision of premises, we would launch the relevant SAE shortly.

Insofar as planning of public sector primary and secondary school building projects is concerned, land is a scarce resource and construction of new secondary and primary school premises involve immense resources. We have to consider with prudence if addition of a new operating school would be commensurate with the long term sustainable development of the district concerned so as to avoid negative impacts on the steady development of the school sector as a whole. As far as reserved school sites at a public housing development are concerned, the EDB has to consider factors including the planned development of the area concerned, the school-age population projections which are compiled based on the population projections updated regularly by the Census and Statistics Department and the projection of population distribution released by the Planning Department, the actual number of existing students and school places available at various levels, the prevailing education policies, other factors which may affect the supply

and demand of school places, etc., in order to decide if a premises should be used for operating a new school or re-provisioning an existing school, and when to kick-start the relevant school building programme. Furthermore, a new school building project, from planning to completion, involves various stages. Variations and uncertainties may come into play during the process.

The EDB has reserved four 30-classroom school sites at the Anderson Road Development Area, including three for primary school use and one for secondary school use. The building works for one of the primary school premises are expected to complete by December 2018. The secondary school building project is undergoing the detailed design stage, and we will seek funding approval for it as soon as practicable. Regarding the remaining two reserved primary school sites, we have launched an SAE in end-2017 to allocate one of the sites for re-provisioning purpose. The allocation result will likely be announced by the end of this month. We have also commenced the preliminary preparatory works for the project at the other primary school site, and we plan to launch the SAE in 2019.

The EDB has the responsibility to provide sufficient public sector school places for all school-age students. At present, the provision of public sector secondary school places is planned on a territory-wide basis. Under the Secondary School Places Allocation mechanism, netting of school places from neighbouring areas would be arranged as and when necessary to ensure a stable supply of school places in each district and to provide parents with more choices. As far as the Kwun Tong district is concerned, there are still a considerable number of secondary school places available at present.

The provision of public sector primary school places is planned on a district basis. Under the Primary One Admission (POA) System, allocation of primary one (P1) places is school net-based. Under each POA cycle, the supply and demand of P1 places in individual districts/school nets are subject to changes due to various factors, e.g. whether parents would choose to apply for public sector schools, the number of newly arrived children, the timing of new housing estates intake (including the school-age population concerned and parents' willingness to change schools), leading to possible year-on-year changes. In accordance with the consensus reached with the sector, the EDB has been adopting flexible measures to increase the provision of places to meet the projected transient demand for school places so as to minimise the impacts on schools when the demand subsides. Such measures include borrowing school places from neighbouring school nets, using vacant classrooms to operate additional classes, operating time-limited schools in vacant school premises, temporarily allocating more students to each P1 class, etc.

On Tai Estate and On Tat Estate are situated in School Net 46 and School Net 48 respectively in the Kwun Tong district. Over the past few years, school places were borrowed from School Net 46 to School Net 48 in order to provide enough school places and choices in accordance with the aforementioned established arrangements. Under such arrangements, both school nets are not required to borrow school places from other districts.



With the gradual intake of the public housing estates in the Anderson Road Development Area, the EDB has distributed through various channels information leaflets about schools in the Kwun Tong district and the procedures about transfer of school to residents who are going to move into the district for reference. We have also been discussing with the schools concerned to make good use of their vacant school places to cater for the needs of students newly moved into the district. For parents who wish to arrange transfer of school for their children, they may either approach the EDB or contact their preferred schools direct.

In POA 2017, there were about 40 and 70 new applications for admission to P1, including requests for change of school net due to change in residential address and late applications from new arrivals, from the residents in School Net 46 (including On Tai Estate) and School Net 48 (including On Tat Estate) respectively. All the children concerned have been allocated public sector P1 places in the district. As regards POA 2018, the EDB has received 60 and 40 such new applications from the residents in School Net 46 and School Net 48 respectively during the period between the school choice-making for central allocation in February and June 2018. All the applicant children concerned have also been allocated public sector P1 places in the district. There are still surplus public sector P1 places in Kwun Tong. The EDB would keep in view the situation and provide timely assistance to parents as needed.

Regarding applications for transfer to schools in the Kwun Tong district, the EDB has arranged 160 primary students newly moved to On Tai Estate or On Tat Estate to change to schools in the district in the 2017/18 school year. As at end-June this year, the EDB has received a total of about 200 applications from students residing in On Tat Estate or On Tai Estate applying for transfer to Primary 2 (P2) to Primary 6 (P6) classes of the schools in the Kwun Tong district in the 2018/19 school year. As the situation in respect of school places available and vacant classrooms has only become clearer by early July, the EDB is working with the schools concerned on the additional P2 to P6 classes to be operated and has started to inform parents of the school placement arrangements of individual levels for their children. All the students could be referred to schools in the district for admission. As regards the transfer to KGs and secondary schools, in the current school year the EDB has received only a few cases seeking placement assistance for the 2018/19 school year. All these cases have been handled in accordance with our prevailing practice and applicants have been provided with information on the vacancies of the KGs and secondary schools in the district. The EDB will provide referral support if needed.

In sum, the EDB has to take into account various factors before initiating a school building project. Hence, the commencement date of a new estate school may not necessarily tie in with the population intake schedule of the new public housing estate concerned. We will continue to provide necessary assistance to parents who need to seek transfer of school for their children as a result of moving home.

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## Test results of targeted surveillance on coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms in ready-to-eat food all satisfactory

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 11) announced the results of a recently completed targeted food surveillance project on coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms (including *Staphylococcus aureus*) in ready-to-eat food, which showed that all samples passed the test.

A spokesman for the CFS said that a total of 300 ready-to-eat food samples were collected from different retail outlets (including online retailers) and food factories for testing of coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms this year. The samples included meat, poultry and their products (for example shredded chicken, siu mei and lo mei), salad, sashimi and sushi, dessert, Chinese cold dishes, sandwiches and steamed rice rolls.

The spokesman pointed out that *Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacterium that can cause food poisoning. It exists widely in the environment and is commonly found in the nasal cavity, throat, hair and skin of healthy individuals. It is also present in large numbers in wounds and infected regions. If food handlers do not observe good personal hygiene, *Staphylococcus aureus* can pass to foods from them. Foods stored at ambient temperature for a prolonged period will allow the toxin-producing *Staphylococcus aureus* to multiply and form elaborate enterotoxins which can cause food poisoning. Although most cases of infection are caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*, other coagulase-positive staphylococci species can also produce enterotoxins which can lead to food poisoning.

Food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms is usually associated with foods that require considerable handling during preparation and no subsequent cooking is required before consumption. The poisoning risk cannot be eliminated by reheating as enterotoxins produced by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms cannot be destroyed under normal cooking temperatures. Common symptoms of food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms include nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, often accompanied by diarrhoea.

"Despite the fact that test results of the samples were all satisfactory, the trade and the public should not take the risk lightly. They should always maintain good personal, environmental and food hygiene to ensure food safety. To prevent food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms, members of the public are reminded to keep

perishable foods or leftovers at or below 4 degrees Celsius or above 60 degrees C. The trade should adhere to the Good Manufacturing Practice that cooked food should be cooled from 60 degrees C to 20 degrees C as quickly as possible (within two hours), and from 20 degrees C to 4 degrees C within four hours or less," the spokesman said.

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## **LCQ18: Illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by motor vehicles**

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So Wai-man, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

Under section 93 of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374), the Commissioner for Transport (the Commissioner) may suspend the licence of a motor vehicle concerned in respect of the offences specified in Schedule 4 (including section 52 (in contravention of the restriction on the use of vehicles)). The period of suspension for the first offence is three months and that for subsequent offence in respect of the same motor vehicle is six months. Any person who uses a private car without a valid hire car permit to carry passengers for reward (commonly known as "white licence cars' service") is in breach of section 52. Some members of the public have pointed out that as white licence cars' service has become rampant in recent years, the authorities should amend the legislation to lengthen the period of suspension of the licences of white licence cars or even cancel their licences permanently to enhance the deterrent effect. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of vehicles the licence of which was suspended under the aforesaid provision in each of the past three years and the periods of suspension concerned, together with a breakdown by vehicle class and the offence involved;

(2) of the respective numbers of cases in each of the past three years in which the registered owners of vehicles, under section 90 of Cap 374, (i) made representations in writing to the Commissioner and (ii) applied in writing to the Commissioner for a hearing before a Transport Tribunal (Tribunal) to show cause why the vehicle licences should not be suspended; among such cases, the respective numbers of cases ruled by the Tribunal that the owners concerned had shown the cause, with a breakdown by vehicle class and the offence involved; and

(3) given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council in May this year in respect of the permanent cancellation of licences of white

licence cars, the authorities indicated that the Transport Department was then reviewing the need to raise the penalty for the relevant offences and would consult the trade concerned, of the details and timetables of the review and the consultation exercise?

Reply:

President,

The Government has all along been concerned about the situation on illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by private cars and light goods vehicles (LGV). The Government has been taking stern enforcement actions against illegal carriage of passengers for reward and will not condone such activities. Sections 52(3) and 93 and Schedule 4 of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374) stipulate that an offender who uses a private car or LGV for the illegal carriage of passengers for reward, or who solicits or attempts to solicit any person to travel in such vehicles, is liable to a fine of \$5,000 and three months' imprisonment on the first conviction. The licence of the subject vehicle may also be suspended for three months. On the second or subsequent conviction, the offender is liable to a fine of \$10,000 and six months' imprisonment. For a subsequent offence in respect of the same motor vehicle, the licence of that vehicle may be suspended for six months. Besides, according to section 69 of Cap 374, if a person is convicted of any offence under Cap 374 in connection with the driving of a motor vehicle (including illegal carriage of passengers for reward), the court may disqualify him from driving for such period as it thinks fit.

In accordance with section 90(2)(c)(i) of Cap 374, the registered owner whose vehicle licence was suspended may make representations in writing to the Commissioner showing cause why the vehicle licence should not be suspended within 14 days after the receipt of the notice issued by the Commissioner; or by virtue of section 90(2)(c)(ii) of Cap 374, he may apply in writing to the Commissioner for a hearing before a Transport Tribunal to show cause why the vehicle licence should not be suspended. The Transport Tribunal is a statutory organisation independent of the Government, comprising non-official members appointed by the Government, including persons from the legal sector, District Council members and other professionals. Every case hearing of the Transport Tribunal is conducted by a chairman and two panel members.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Frankie Yick's question is as follows.

(1) The breakdown of cases involving the suspension of motor vehicle licences by the Transport Department (TD) from 2015 to 2017 in accordance with the section 93 of Cap 374 is tabulated below. In all these cases, the drivers have breached section 52(3) of Cap 374 by driving or using a motor vehicle, or suffering or permitting a motor vehicle to be driven or used, for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward without obtaining a valid hire car permit. As all cases are first offences, the licences were suspended for three months.

Year	Number of vehicles with their licences suspended			
	Private car	LGV	Private light bus	Total
2015	1	16	1	18
2016	6	2	1	9
2017	7	2	0	9

(2) During the same period, the TD has not received any representations made in writing to the Commissioner in accordance with section 90(2)(c)(i) of Cap 374 showing cause why the vehicle licences concerned should not be suspended.

As for applications made under section 90(2)(ii) of Cap 374 to the Commissioner for a hearing before a Transport Tribunal to show cause why the vehicle licences should not be suspended, the drivers of all these cases have contravened section 52(3) of Cap 374. The number of cases by vehicle types is tabulated below.

Year	Number of cases applying for a hearing before a Tribunal			
	Private car	LGV	Private light bus	Total
2015	0	1	1	2
2016	3	0	0	3
2017	2	0	0	2

All the judgments handed down by the Transport Tribunal in respect of the cases in the last three years upheld the decision that the vehicle licences concerned should be suspended.

(3) The Government is currently reviewing the need to raise the penalties for offences related to illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by motor vehicles so as to enhance the deterrent effects. We aim to report specific proposals to the Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council and consult Members in the 2018-19 legislative year.