

S for IT visits Wong Tai Sin District (with photos)

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, today (May 17) visited a primary school and Wong Tai Sin Temple to get a better grasp of technological application in the community and the promotion of popular science education. A meeting with members of the Wong Tai Sin District Council (WTSDC) was also held.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the WTSDC, Mr Li Tak-hong, and the District Officer (Wong Tai Sin), Ms Annie Kong, Mr Yang started his visit at Baptist Rainbow Primary School to learn more about the "happy learning" and "flipped classroom" teaching concepts through watching students' participation in self-directed project-based learning. The school integrates science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in its school-based curriculum and implements the DreamStarter programme. Academic curricula are scheduled for the morning session and self-directed learning activities are held after lunch. Such an approach is conducive to enhancing students' creativity, communication and problem-solving skills.

Mr Yang then went to Wong Tai Sin Temple, where he visited the Taisui Yuenchen Hall and received a briefing on e-services that assist worshippers through application of technology. These include green worshipping at the Taisui Yuenchen Hall with the use of sensors, online prayer, online enquiry on fortune-telling sticks and one's "tai sui" of birth as well as Chinese zodiac sign. With Sik Sik Yuen's mobile application, visitors can enjoy GPS navigation and information on architectural features of the temple by scanning QR codes or NFC chips. A counting machine was also developed by Sik Sik Yuen to ensure that there are 100 fortune-telling sticks in every stick holder.

Sik Sik Yuen is dedicated to promoting science among the general public. It funded the Sik Sik Yuen Biotechnology Mobile Laboratory (MobileLab), which was built on a bus chassis. The MobileLab travels to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong on weekdays. Students learn about microbiology, biochemistry, DNA and genetics through hands-on experiments. Outreach activities are held on the MobileLab during weekends and school holidays to reach out to the public. As a partner of the annual large-scale popular science event InnoCarnival, the MobileLab held over 30 biotechnology workshops at the InnoCarnival held last year. Mr Yang toured the MobileLab and thanked Sik Sik Yuen for joining hands with the Government in promoting science in the community. He noted that the application of technology and the promotion of popular science are equally important. The Government is committed to collaborating with various stakeholders to cultivate an ecosystem favourable for innovation and technology development.

Before concluding the district visit, Mr Yang met with members of the WTSDC to exchange views on issues related to innovation and technology, as

well as district facilities and services.



Unemployment and underemployment statistics for February – April 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for February – April 2018) released today (May 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 2.9% in January – March 2018 to 2.8% in February – April

2018. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing February – April 2018 with January – March 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied, with a relatively notable decrease observed in the education sector.

Total employment decreased by around 5 800 from 3 872 400 in January – March 2018 to 3 866 600 in February – April 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 4 900 from 3 984 400 to 3 979 500.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 800 from 112 100 in January – March 2018 to 112 900 in February – April 2018. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 2 200 from 38 900 to 41 100.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "The labour market tightened further in February – April 2018 on the back of robust economic conditions. The unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) edged down by 0.1 percentage point to 2.8%, the lowest level in more than 20 years. The underemployment rate likewise stayed low at 1.0%. Total employment continued to record appreciable growth on a year-on-year basis."

"Compared to the preceding three-month period, a more notable decrease in unemployment rate was seen in the education sector. On a year-on-year comparison to net out seasonal influences, most major service sectors showed visible improvement in unemployment situation. In particular, jobless rates in the financing sector as well as the trade- and tourism-related segments posted discernible declines, thanks to the buoyant economic environment and continued recovery of tourist arrivals."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "Overall labour market conditions will likely remain tight in the near term amid the prevailing positive economic environment. Yet, we will stay vigilant and closely monitor the relevant developments."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) launched a special programme – "Career Let's go" from May to August to help this year's secondary school leavers find suitable work through a series of tailor-made activities. The "Youth Employment Start" resource centres will organise various training courses and an interactive drama to enhance the job-hunting skills of graduates as well as help them unleash their potential at work and learn the true value of working; and provide school leavers with career assessment and career consultation services. The LD will also canvass job vacancies suitable for secondary school leavers and organise a number of large-scale and district-based job fairs during which job-seekers may have on-the-spot job interviews with the recruiting employers.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will co-organise the Hong Kong

International Airport Career Expo 2018 with the Airport Authority Hong Kong at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from June 29 to July 1. Ample vacancies involving the aviation industry and airport operation will be provided. Moreover, a dedicated job expo for elderly care and rehabilitation services will be held on July 18 and 19 at MacPherson Stadium, Mong Kok. In addition, industry-based or district-based job fairs are regularly organised at the LD's industry-based recruitment centres and job centres located across the territory.

Further Information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for February – April 2018 covered a sample of some 25 000 households or 75 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the publication contains statistics for the quarter October – December 2017 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2018 will be available by end-May 2018. Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=B1050001).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the Social Analysis and Research Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).

Composite Interest Rate: End of April 2018

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (May 17) the composite interest rate at the end of April 2018.*

The composite interest rate, which is a measure of the average cost of funds of banks, increased by 2 basis points to 0.40% at the end of April 2018, from 0.38% at the end of March 2018 (see Chart 1 in the Annex). The rise in composite interest rate reflected increases in the weighted funding costs for both deposits and interbank funds during the month (see Chart 2 in the Annex).

The historical data of the composite interest rate from the end of the fourth quarter of 2003 to the end of April 2018 are available in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin on the HKMA website (www.hkma.gov.hk). The next data release is scheduled for June 20, 2018 and will provide the composite interest rate at the end of May 2018.

* The composite interest rate is a weighted average interest rate of all Hong Kong dollar interest bearing liabilities, which include deposits from customers, amounts due to banks, negotiable certificates of deposit and other debt instruments, and Hong Kong dollar non-interest bearing demand deposits on the books of banks. Data from retail banks, which account for about 90% of the total customers' deposits in the banking sector, are used in the calculation. It should be noted that the composite interest rate represents only average interest expenses. There are various other costs involved in the making of a loan, such as operating costs (e.g. staff and rental expenses), credit cost and hedging cost, which are not covered by the composite interest rate.

[Auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on June 2 and 3](#)

The Transport Department today (May 17) announced that two auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on June 2 (Saturday) and 3 (Sunday), in Meeting Room S221, L2, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 280 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public sale at each auction. The lists of marks have been posted at the department's website, www.td.gov.hk," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of \$1,000). Otherwise, the mark may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take

note of the following important points:

(a) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:

- (i) the identity document of the successful bidder;
 - (ii) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;
 - (iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and
 - (iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)
- Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.

(b) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.

(c) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(d) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.

(e) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, May 17, 2018 is 99.4 (same as yesterday's index).