

Red flag at Silver Mine Bay Beach lowered

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (March 7) that the Environmental Protection Department has classified the water quality at Silver Mine Bay Beach in Islands District as Grade 3, which means the water quality has improved and the beach is suitable for swimming. The red flag has been lowered.

The red flag was hoisted at the beach earlier on due to the water quality being classified as Grade 4 and unsuitable for swimming.

Special traffic and inclement weather arrangements for 7th Hong Kong Games' Jockey Club Vitality Run

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) today (March 7) announced that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in the vicinity of Yuen Wo Road in Sha Tin this Sunday (March 10) to facilitate the staging of the 7th Hong Kong Games' Jockey Club Vitality Run.

Road and cycle track closures

The following road sections will be closed to all vehicular traffic (except for emergency vehicles) during the times specified below:

From 5am to 10.30am

- The section of Yuen Wo Road southbound between Sha Tin Rural Committee Road and Fo Tan Road;
- The section of Sha Tin Rural Committee Road eastbound between Yuen Wo Road and Tai Chung Kiu Road;
- The section of Tai Chung Kiu Road northbound between Sha Tin Rural Committee Road and Fo Tan Road;
- The section of Fo Tan Road westbound between Yuen Wo Road and Tai Chung

Kiu Road; and

From 8.30am to 9.30am

- The section of Yuen Wo Road north of New Territories Fire Command Headquarters (near the Hong Kong Sports Institute).

The following cycle track section will be closed during the time specified below:

From 5am to 10.30am

- The section of cycle track along the western riverside of the Shing Mun River Channel between Twin Bridge (located near Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works) and Sha Tin Rural Committee Road.

Traffic diversions

During the above-mentioned road closure periods, the following traffic diversions will be implemented:

- Motorists on Yuen Wo Road southbound or Fo Tan Road eastbound heading to Sha Tin Central will be diverted to travel via Fo Tan Road eastbound, Tai Chung Kiu Road southbound, Sha Tin Rural Committee Road westbound and Yuen Wo Road northbound;
- Motorists on Sha Tin Rural Committee Road eastbound or Yuen Wo Road northbound heading to Tai Chung Kiu Road/Shatin Wai Road are advised to travel via Yuen Wo Road northbound, Fo Tan Road eastbound and Tai Chung Kiu Road southbound;
- Motorists on Sha Tin Wai Road westbound or Tai Chung Kiu Road northbound heading to Ma On Shan/City One Shatin/Kwong Yuen areas are advised to travel via Sha Tin Rural Committee Road westbound, Yuen Wo Road northbound, Fo Tan Road eastbound and Tai Chung Kiu Road northbound; and
- Motorists on Sha Tin Road westbound or Tai Chung Kiu Road southbound heading to Fo Tan Road/Yuen Wo Road are advised to travel via Tai Chung Kiu Road southbound, Sha Tin Rural Committee Road westbound and Yuen Wo Road northbound.

During the above cycle track closure period, cyclists may use the cycle track along the Banyan Bridge, Tai Chung Kiu Road and Twin Bridge to travel between Sha Tin, Tai Po and Ma On Shan.

Actual implementation of the road and cycle track closures, traffic control and public transport diversions will be made by police officers on-site at the time depending on the traffic and crowd conditions. Appropriate traffic signs will be provided and police officers will be stationed on-site to guide the public.

As it is expected that a large number of participants will arrive at Sha Tin Sports Ground and the vicinity of Yuen Wo Road within a short period of time on the event day, participants are advised to allow sufficient time for getting to the venue to avoid being late and to travel to Sha Tin by public transport, a spokesman for the LCSD said.

For the special traffic arrangements, please visit the Transport Department website (www.td.gov.hk).

If inclement weather occurs on the event day, the following arrangements will be made:

- If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is issued or in force by 6am on the event day, the activity will be cancelled.
- If the weather deteriorates during the activity, the organiser may suspend it in view of the circumstances. Participants should pay attention to the announcements on the spot.

Two illegal workers jailed

Two Vietnamese illegal workers were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (March 6).

During operation "Twilight" on March 4, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Fanling. Two male Vietnamese illegal workers, aged 40 and 47, were arrested. When intercepted they were working as dishwashers. An employer suspected of employing the illegal workers were arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The two illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. Among them, a Vietnamese male illegal worker was also charged with one count of using a forged Hong Kong identity card and was

sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. All sentences are to run concurrently, making a total of 15 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. 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 the 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 will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening on 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.

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority (HA) is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

In addition, the weekly bulletin "Surge in Brief" (appended) will be issued every Thursday to illustrate the past month's trends of key service statistics in public hospitals. "Surge in Brief" can be accessed in the HA Winter Surge designated webpage (www.ha.org.hk/goto/wintersurge/en).

Red flags hoisted at some beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (March 7) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.