

## Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

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 (February 9) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

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## Mastermind of syndicate arranging bogus marriages convicted of conspiracy to defraud and perverting the course of justice

The Immigration Department (ImmD) neutralised a crime syndicate arranging bogus marriages in a series of operations codenamed "Tracker" conducted since March 2017. A total of 37 Hong Kong and Mainland residents and foreign domestic helpers were arrested, including the mastermind of the syndicate who was a Hong Kong permanent resident aged 55. The mastermind was convicted of 4 counts of conspiracy to defraud and 1 count of perverting the course of justice at the District Court today (February 8) who will be sentenced on February 28.

An ImmD spokesman said that in the course of investigation of a case of suspected bigamy, a photo of the suspected mastermind was unearthed from the mobile phone of a female Mainland suspect, but she could not provide other details of the mastermind. Through online research and site visits after examining the clothing and backdrop of the photo, investigators successfully identified the mastermind. In May 2017, the mastermind was arrested. A pile of documents relating to bogus marriages including copies of Hong Kong Identity Cards, Mainland travel documents, foreign passports and transaction records, etc. were seized from the dwelling of the mastermind. Large quantity of personal information, photos and certificates of marriage, etc. of the persons involved were also found from the memory cards and mobile phones seized. Apart from nine Mainland residents suspected to have been involved in bogus marriages, investigators had for the first time unearthed eleven (eight Indian and three Nepalese) foreign domestic helpers who were

suspected to be involved in bogus marriages by applying for residence as dependants after coming to Hong Kong. After detailed analysis of the relevant information, two more foreign domestic helpers (one Indian and one Nepalese) suspected to be arranged by the same syndicate for entering bogus marriages with Hong Kong residents were identified.

"During the investigation, the Immigration Department arrested a total of 37 Hong Kong residents, foreign domestic helpers and Mainland residents (17 men and 20 women) aged 29 to 65. Fifteen arrestees were convicted of the offence of conspiracy to defraud. Of these 15 persons, 11 were sentenced to imprisonment of 10 to 18 months while the remaining four, including the mastermind, are pending sentence by court. The operation is still ongoing and more people may be arrested and prosecuted." the spokesman said.

"The Immigration Department will continue to spare no effort in combating bogus marriages and other related illicit activities. For people who have obtained their residence in Hong Kong by fraudulent means, their Hong Kong identity card and residence status will be invalidated according to the laws of Hong Kong. They will also be subject to removal back to their place of origin," the spokesman said.

The spokesman urged the public not to defy the law by participating in activities related to bogus marriages and not to make false oath before immigration officers for the purpose of procuring a marriage in Hong Kong. Those directing others to contract a bogus marriage may also be guilty of the offence of conspiracy to defraud.

Any person who for the purpose of procuring a marriage, or a certificate or license for marriage, knowingly and wilfully makes a false oath or makes or signs a false declaration shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to, upon conviction, imprisonment for seven years and a fine. Anyone who commits the offence of conspiracy to defraud is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years.

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## **CHP investigates four suspected food poisoning clusters**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 8) investigating four suspected food poisoning clusters affecting 14 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The first cluster involved two males and two females, aged 34 to 43, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea and nausea about 11 to 22 hours after

having dinner at home on February 5.

The second cluster involved two males and three females, aged four to 78, who developed similar symptoms about four to 13 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

The third cluster involved one male and one female, aged 53 to 55, who developed similar symptoms about 15 to 47 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

The fourth cluster involved two males and one female, aged 54 to 60, who developed similar symptoms about 12 to 19 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

Eight of the affected persons have sought medical advice and one required hospitalisation. All patients are in a stable condition.

The CHP's preliminary investigation revealed that all affected persons have consumed "Poon Choi" bought from a restaurant in Tuen Mun for the dinner.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

Food safety when handling "Poon Choi":

- Avoid early collection. Generally, half an hour to one hour before consumption is preferred. When collecting "Poon Choi", make sure it is kept at above 60 degrees Celsius;
- Read and follow the reheating instructions carefully and properly;
- Before consuming "Poon Choi", should reheat it thoroughly till the core

- temperature reaches at least 75 degrees Celsius; and
- Use communal chopsticks and spoons during consumption.

More health tips for enjoying "Poon Choi" are available on the [website of the CHP](#).

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## Travellers sentenced to imprisonment for smuggling agarwood (with photo)

Two travellers who smuggled agarwood have been sentenced to imprisonment for 16 months at the District Court today (February 8).

A spokesman of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that Customs officers intercepted two inbound male passengers, aged 51 and 32, at Hong Kong International Airport and seized about 17 kilograms and 24kg of agarwood from their luggage on August 16, 2018.

Upon investigation by the AFCD, the two men were charged with illegal import of an endangered species. They were convicted at the court on February 4. The court handed down 24 months' imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing today. The defendants were each sentenced to 16 months behind bars after one-third reduction as they pleaded guilty.

All species of *Aquilaria* are listed in Appendix II to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. They are regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance.

The penalties under the Ordinance have been drastically increased since May 1 last year. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction.

To enquire about the control of endangered species and to report suspected irregularities, the public can call the AFCD at 1823 or visit the website [www.cites.hk](http://www.cites.hk).



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## Appeal for information on missing man in Tin Sum (with photo)

Police today (February 8) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Tin Sum.

Lam Chi-wang, aged 28, went missing after he left his residence in Sha Kok Estate on February 6 night. His guardian made a report to Police yesterday (February 7).

He is about 1.7 metres tall, 55 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a square face with yellow complexion and short black hair. He was last seen wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt, grey shorts and brown slippers.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1176 or 5613 6963, or email to [rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.

