

# Independent Review Committee submits report to Chief Executive

The following is issued on behalf of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service:

Having received oral evidence over a total of 21 days, on and between May 7, 2018, and October 16, 2018, from the representatives of 19 specifically identified interested parties, and that of two expert witnesses, together with a total of over 22,000 pages of their written submissions/reports and those of other parties and the closing submissions of counsel assisting the Committee, the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service submitted its report to the Chief Executive today (December 31).

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## Illegal worker jailed

A Vietnamese illegal worker was jailed by Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 29.

During operation "Twilight" on December 27, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Causeway Bay. A female Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 37, was arrested. When intercepted, she was working as a dish washer. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The illegal worker was charged at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 29 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. She pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. In addition, the female Vietnamese illegal worker was also charged with one count of using a forged Hong Kong identity card, one count of possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card and one count of landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration and was sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 15 to 16 months. All sentences are to run concurrently, making a total of 16 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.

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## [“Tide Tables for Hong Kong 2019” now on sale](#)

The Hong Kong Observatory publication "Tide Tables for Hong Kong 2019" is now on sale.

The tide tables list the predicted heights and times of daily high and

low waters at 12 locations in Hong Kong, namely Chek Lap Kok, Cheung Chau, Ko Lau Wan, Kwai Chung, Ma Wan, Quarry Bay, Shek Pik, Tai Miu Wan, Tai O, Tai Po Kau, Tsim Bei Tsui and Waglan Island. The bilingual publication, which also provides information on the phases of the moon, is a useful reference for engineers, shipping companies, wharf and container terminal operators, yachtsmen, and fishing and water sports enthusiasts.

At \$52 a copy, "Tide Tables for Hong Kong 2019" can be purchased at the Hong Kong Observatory Resource Centre, the Publications Sales Unit of the Information Services Department, the Kowloon Map Publications Centre of the Lands Department and the Marine Department Headquarters. The public can also purchase the publication through the online Government Bookstore at [www.bookstore.gov.hk](http://www.bookstore.gov.hk).

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## Schedule for issuing press releases on statistical data

Following is a reminder of the press releases on statistical data to be issued between January and March 2019. The schedule for issuing press releases on statistical data in 2019 was provided to the media in September 2018. No change has been made to the original schedule.

### January 2019

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Date	Press Release
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3	Retail sales statistics for November 2018
17	Unemployment and underemployment statistics for October – December 2018
17	Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for November 2018
18	Business expectations for first quarter 2019
22	Consumer Price Index for December 2018
28	External merchandise trade statistics for December 2018
30	Retail sales statistics for December 2018

### February 2019

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Date	Press Release
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1	Restaurant receipts and purchases statistics for fourth quarter 2018
19	Year-end population for 2018
19	Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for December 2018
21	Unemployment and underemployment statistics for November 2018 – January 2019
22	Consumer Price Index for January 2019
26	External merchandise trade statistics for January 2019
27	Gross Domestic Product for fourth quarter 2018 and the whole year of 2018 : data contained in the Budget supporting documents (Note)
March 2019	
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Date	Press Release
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5	Retail sales statistics for January 2019
5	Statistics on vessels, port cargo and containers for fourth quarter 2018
11	Quarterly business receipts indices for service industries for fourth quarter 2018
12	Construction output statistics for fourth quarter 2018
12	Statistics on trade involving outward processing in the mainland of China for fourth quarter 2018
14	Index of industrial production and producer price index for the industrial sector for fourth quarter 2018
15	Gross National Income and external primary income flows for fourth quarter 2018
18	Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for January 2019
19	Unemployment and underemployment statistics for December 2018 – February 2019
19	Chain volume measures of Gross Domestic Product by economic activity for fourth quarter 2018
21	Consumer Price Index for February 2019
22	Employment and vacancies statistics for December 2018
22	Balance of Payments and International Investment Position statistics for fourth quarter 2018

Note: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the fourth quarter of 2018 and the whole year of 2018 together with other supporting materials will be released along with the Financial Secretary's "Budget Speech". According to the Financial Secretary's Office, the Budget is scheduled to be delivered on February 27, 2019. No separate press release on the GDP for the fourth quarter of 2018 and the whole year of 2018 will be issued by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) on that day.

The schedule for regular press releases in the other months of 2019 can be downloaded from the website of the Census and Statistics Department ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/press\\_release/index.jsp](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/press_release/index.jsp)).

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## Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme Phase 2 to start tomorrow

The Department of Health (DH) will roll out the second phase of the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme (CRCSP) tomorrow (January 1), extending the coverage to Hong Kong residents aged 56 to 75, i.e. those born in the years 1943 to 1963, to enrol in subsidised screening tests for the prevention of colorectal cancer.

The CRCSP is heavily subsidised by the Government. Participants shall attend a medical consultation by an enrolled primary care doctor (PCD) to receive a Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) screening. A government subsidy of \$280 per consultation applies including the second consultation to follow up on a positive FIT test result. Meanwhile, under the standard colonoscopy service package targeted at FIT-positive participants, the subsidy amount is \$8,500 if polyp removal is necessary, while the amount is \$7,800 if no polyp removal is needed. Colonoscopy specialists may charge a co-payment not exceeding \$1,000 when providing the standard colonoscopy examination service.

The Programme, which started on August 6 this year, will be implemented in three phases to subsidise asymptomatic Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75 to undergo screening tests. Phase one covers people aged 61 to 75 as the first batch to join, while phase three will further extend the coverage to those aged 50 to 75. Details and the commencement date of phase three will be announced in due course.

Details of the screening pathway are as follows:

- (1) Eligible persons must first make an appointment with a PCD participating

in the Programme. After enrolment in the Programme, the participant will receive a government subsidy to undergo the FIT; and

(2) If the FIT result is positive, the participant will be referred to see a colonoscopy specialist who has enrolled in the Programme to receive a colonoscopy examination subsidised by the Government in order to find out the cause of bleeding.

FIT-negative participants under the CRCSP should receive FIT re-screening every two years until they pass the age of 75 in order to maximise the Programme's capability to prevent colorectal cancer. Since this September, FIT-negative participants have started receiving reminders via SMS, email or post when they are due for re-screening. They can visit any enrolled PCD clinic to receive subsidised FIT re-screening services.

Colorectal cancer is the most common cancer locally. In 2016, there were 5,437 newly diagnosed colorectal cancer cases, accounting for 17.3 per cent of all new cancer cases, or about one in six new cancer cases. In 2017, colorectal cancer resulted in 2,138 deaths, accounting for 14.9 per cent of all cancer deaths, or about one in seven cancer deaths. It is the second most common cause of cancer death in Hong Kong, coming only after lung cancer.

Colorectal cancer is preventable through adopting a healthy lifestyle and well-organised screening. Prognosis of colorectal cancer can be significantly improved by early detection and prompt treatment. Eligible persons are encouraged not to miss joining the CRCSP.

Eligible persons are also reminded to enrol in the electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHRSS) if they wish to join the Programme. For details, please visit the eHRSS website at [www.ehealth.gov.hk](http://www.ehealth.gov.hk) or call the Registration Office at 3467 6300.

For more information and the list of enrolled PCDs, please visit the DH's thematic website [www.colonscreen.gov.hk](http://www.colonscreen.gov.hk).

The DH also operates a dedicated hotline (3565 6288) to provide direct response to the public regarding CRCSP during office hours.