

CE expresses sorrow over passing of Father Alfred Deignan

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (December 11) expressed deep sorrow over the passing of veteran educator Father Alfred Deignan.

"Having dedicated a major part of his life to education in Hong Kong, Father Deignan had been a supervisor, principal and teacher of Wah Yan College, Hong Kong and Wah Yan College, Kowloon, as well as the warden at Ricci Hall of the University of Hong Kong. Upholding the principle of education for all, Father Deignan cared about each of his students, winning their trust, respect and love. Apart from education, he was also dedicated to religious and social services, making significant contributions to Hong Kong.

"I visited Father Deignan to consult him about his views on education in Hong Kong when I was the Chief Executive-elect.

"On behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, I would like to express my condolences on the passing of Father Deignan," Mrs Lam said.

LegCo subcommittee meeting

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Subcommittee to Examine the Implementation in Hong Kong of Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council in relation to Sanctions originally scheduled for tomorrow (December 12) at 9am in Conference Room 2B of the LegCo Complex will start at 9.30am.

Hong Kong Customs mounts operation to combat illicit cigarette activities (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a territory-wide anti-illicit cigarette

operation codenamed "Harvest" from October 24 to today (December 11) and seized about 820 000 suspected illicit cigarettes in total with an estimated market value of about \$2.2 million and a duty potential of about \$1.6 million.

During the operation, Customs officers detected a total of 117 illicit cigarettes cases and arrested 111 men and 15 women, aged between 23 and 79.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Customs reiterates that it will continue to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette activities.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182, or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Four illegal workers jailed](#)

Four illegal workers comprising two Bangladeshis and two Sri Lankans were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (December 10).

During operation "Twilight" on November 1, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a fish market in Lau Fau Shan. Two male Bangladeshi and two male Sri Lankan illegal workers, aged 37 to 46, were arrested. When intercepted they were working as odd-job workers. Upon identity checking, they produced for inspection recognisance forms issued by the ImmD, which

prohibit them from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that they were non-refoulement claimants.

The four 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 were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment.

The 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 of 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.

SHA commends 94 awardees for promoting arts, sports and greening

The Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA), Mr Lau Kong-wah, today (December 11) presented commendation certificates and award pins to 94 persons for their outstanding contributions to the promotion of arts and culture, sports and recreation, and community greening.

Speaking at the SHA's Commendation Scheme Presentation Ceremony, Mr Lau expressed his gratitude to the awardees for their tremendous contributions to society in promoting the development of arts and culture, sports and recreation, and community greening in Hong Kong over the years.

Mr Lau also praised them for sparing no effort in their respective sectors, which helped lead to the city's remarkable achievements in arts and sports. He said he was confident that through their concerted efforts, the arts, cultural and sports activities in Hong Kong would become even more popular and diverse, and would continue to occupy an important position internationally.

The SHA's Commendation Scheme, introduced in 2002, aims to give recognition to individuals who make outstanding achievements and contributions to the development of sports and recreation, culture and arts, community building and community services.