

Suspected case tests negative for MERS-CoV

The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health today (November 30) reported that the suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) pending results yesterday (November 29), upon preliminary testing, tested negative for MERS Coronavirus.

Three illegal workers jailed

Three Pakistani illegal workers, each holding a recognisance form, were jailed at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (November 29).

Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators received a referral from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate an illegal employment case in October. Enforcement officers arrested three male Pakistani illegal workers, aged 25 to 29, who were found conveying goods in Tuen Mun. 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. An employer suspected of employing the illegal workers was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The three 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 charges and were each sentenced to 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.

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.

Tenders invited for separate tenancies of government properties

The Government Property Agency is inviting separate tenders for five-year tenancy of (i) Shop No. 505, (ii) Shop No. 506, (iii) Shop No. 507, (iv) Shop No. 508, (v) Shop No. 509 and (vi) Shop No. 510, 1/F, Passenger Clearance Building, 33 Shun Fai Road, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, Lantau.

The premises should only be used for general retail and service purposes (excluding the sale of cigarettes, cigars or other tobacco products).

The tender notices were uploaded today (November 30) to the Agency's website: www.gpa.gov.hk. Tender documents are available for collection at the Government Property Agency, 31/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, during office hours (8.30am to 5.45pm from Mondays to Fridays). The documents can also be downloaded from the Agency's website.

Interested tenderers who wish to inspect the sites should make prior appointment with the Government Property Agency by calling 2594 7697 on or before December 7 this year.

Tenderers must submit their tenders by placing them in the Government Logistics Department Tender Box at the Ground Floor, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, before noon on January 8, 2019. Late tenders will not be accepted.

Postal services to New South Wales in Australia subject to delay

Hongkong Post announced today (November 30) that, as advised by the postal administration of Australia, due to the impact of severe weather, all mail delivery services to New South Wales (postcodes 2XXX, 1695 and 3129) are subject to delay.

Clear Water Bay Second Beach to reopen

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 (LCSD) announced today (November 30) that Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District will reopen tomorrow (December 1). The beach was temporarily closed earlier for clearance of debris and fallen trees as well as repairs of the shark prevention net and beach facilities after the typhoon.

Lifeguard services at Clear Water Bay Second Beach will be available from 8am to 5pm daily from tomorrow to March 31, 2019.

The LCSD calls on members of the public to observe water safety while swimming. People should swim at beaches only when lifeguard services are available. Please do not enter the water when the red flag is hoisted.