

## **SCED visits Wong Tai Sin District**

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, visited Wong Tai Sin District today (August 10) to better understand the district's latest developments. He visited an elderly centre and a social enterprise, and met with members of the Wong Tai Sin District Council (WTSDC).

Mr Yau first visited Rhythm Garden Lutheran Centre for the Elderly, where he was briefed about the Centre's services and facilities. He chatted with the elderly there to learn about their daily lives. The Centre provides various support and outreach services for the elderly in the community. For instance, different types of cognitive training are provided to the elderly to help prevent them from suffering from dementia. The Centre also organises various community activities and senior volunteer programmes, and encourages the elderly to take part in them actively to contribute to society.

Mr Yau then visited Splendid Fashion, a social enterprise operated by Lok Kwan Social Service. He toured the garment studio and learned about its operation. The enterprise provides garment manufacturing services for local designers, design students and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It also organises garment manufacturing courses for young designers and design students to enhance their relevant skills. He said he was pleased to know that the enterprise has been providing strong support to young designers and SMEs to launch their own brands, with a view to promoting the development of locally designed and manufactured fashion.

During his visit, Mr Yau chatted with the service users to learn about the opportunities and challenges faced by the local fashion trade. He said the Government is committed to promoting the development of the fashion industry through various measures, including the launch of the Fashion Incubation Programme in 2017 with CreateSmart Initiative funding to nurture budding fashion talents and brands. Moreover, the Government has started the preparatory work for the design and fashion project in Sham Shui Po, with the aim of turning the area into a local as well as territory-wide design and fashion landmark.

Before concluding his visit, Mr Yau met with WTSDC members to exchange views on district matters relating to tourism, consumer protection and local economic development.

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## **Youth Development Commission visits**

## Hong Kong interns in Shenzhen (with photos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Chairman of the Youth Development Commission (YDC), Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung; the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah; and members of the YDC went to Shenzhen today (August 10) to visit Hong Kong interns there.

They visited enterprises and organisations providing internship places for Hong Kong youths under the Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland launched by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.

Mr Cheung and a group of YDC members visited Qianhai and toured a company engaging in digital media service and an innovation and technology service company. Meanwhile, Mr Lau visited Nanshan with another group of YDC members and toured an organisation offering entrepreneurship services to small and medium-sized enterprises and a major enterprise providing integrated logistics services. They met with the management, visited the workplaces of the interns and received a briefing by Hong Kong interns on their work.

After the visit, Mr Cheung, Mr Lau and YDC members had lunch with a number of Hong Kong interns and chatted with them to learn more about their internship experience on the Mainland.

Mr Cheung said he was pleased to note that Hong Kong youths joined the internship programmes for different provinces on the Mainland through the funding scheme, enabling them to gain hands-on experience of the working environment there, and deepening their understanding of the job market, work culture and career development opportunities on the Mainland.

Since its inception in 2014-15, the funding scheme has subsidised 466 projects, providing internship places for about 14 000 Hong Kong youths. In 2018-19, the funding scheme is subsidising 135 projects in the Mainland, benefiting about 3600 youths.

Mr Cheung, Mr Lau and YDC members returned to Hong Kong this afternoon.





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## Thirty-two immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations, including operations codenamed "Twilight", and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department on August 6, 8 and 9. A total of 24 illegal workers and eight suspected employers were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 27 target locations including garbage collection depots, industrial buildings, offices, residential buildings, restaurants, retail shops, shopping malls and village houses. Nine illegal workers and six employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised eight men and one woman, aged 20 to 63. Among them, a man was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment. In addition, a woman was suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card. Meanwhile, five men and a woman, aged 36 to 68, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

Furthermore, during operations with other law enforcement agents, officers raided 82 target locations in Wan Chai, Eastern District, Western

district and Mong Kok including bakery shops, factories, massage parlours, residential buildings, restaurants, salons and warehouses. Fifteen illegal workers and two employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised three men and 12 women, aged 25 to 52. Among them, a man and a woman were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Meanwhile, a man and a woman, aged 51 and 40, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

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 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, as a standard procedure, will 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.

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## **Meetings of Legislative Council Committees**

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

No open or closed meetings of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Committees will be held in the LegCo Complex during the week from August 13 to 17.

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## **Grant approved for Gansu flood victims in Mainland**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has accepted the advice of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee and approved from the Disaster Relief Fund a grant of \$655,000 to Oxfam Hong Kong for providing relief to flood victims in Gansu Province in the Mainland.

Announcing the grant today (August 10), a spokesman for the Government said that the grant will be used to provide flour and cooking oil to the victims. The Committee hopes the grant would facilitate the provision of timely relief to the victims and help them restore their normal living.

"To ensure that the money is used for the designated purposes, Oxfam Hong Kong will be asked to submit an evaluation report and an audited account on the use of the grant after the relief project has been completed," the spokesman said.