

Three illegal workers jailed

Three Pakistani illegal workers holding recognisance forms were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (August 9).

During operation "Twilight" conducted on July 9, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a construction site in Tsim Sha Tsui. Three male Pakistani illegal workers, aged 22 to 36, were arrested. When intercepted, they were doing construction work. 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. In addition, two of them were also suspected of using and being in possession of identity cards relating to other persons. 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 sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. In addition, two of them were also charged with using identity cards relating to other persons and were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. All sentences are to run concurrently, making a total of 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 also warned that it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or an identity card relating 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.

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (August 10) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From July 27 to August 9, the CHP recorded four confirmed DF cases. All patients had been to Thailand during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (August 9), 55 cases had been confirmed this year, all of which were imported cases. The cases were mainly imported from Thailand (25), the Philippines (10) and Cambodia (seven).

DF remains endemic in some areas in Asia and beyond. The latest figures for 2018 reveal that 41 094 cases have been recorded in Thailand, 1 663 in Singapore (since December 31, 2017) and 73 in Japan. Thirteen local cases have been recorded to date in Taiwan in 2018. In the Americas, the latest figures indicate that 18 837 cases have been filed in Mexico in 2018.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent

- compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
 - Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
 - Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
 - Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
 - Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days (DF) or at least 21 days (Zika virus infection) upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public may refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#) for details.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, (August 10), 2018 is 104.4 (up 0.4 against yesterday's index).

SWD revokes Public Subscription Permit of Hong Kong Association of the Deaf

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (August 10) announced the revocation of the Public Subscription Permit in respect of a territory-wide flag day issued to the Hong Kong Association of the Deaf (HKAD).

An SWD spokesman said that the department had served a notice on the HKAD on July 16 notifying the HKAD of the Director of Social Welfare's intention to revoke the Public Subscription Permit in respect of the territory-wide flag day to be held on September 8, 2018. The organisation could submit written representation to the Director of Social Welfare within 14 days.

The SWD has received the HKAD's written representation. After careful consideration, the Director of Social Welfare has decided to revoke the above-mentioned Public Subscription Permit. The SWD has notified the Association today that the revocation of the Public Subscription Permit will take immediate effect.

EPD convictions in July

Thirty-nine convictions were recorded in July 2018 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

Five of the convictions were under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, six were under the Noise Control Ordinance, 27 were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance, and one was under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

The heaviest fine in July was \$25,000, assessed against a construction company for using powered mechanical equipment without a valid construction noise permit.