

Fraudulent websites and phishing instant messages related to Hang Seng Bank, Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Hang Seng Bank, Limited relating to fraudulent websites and phishing instant messages, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites or instant messages concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Phishing instant messages related to The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited relating to phishing instant messages, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal

information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the instant messages concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs visits Guangzhou

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, arrived in Guangzhou this morning (August 22) to start her visit there.

Miss Mak, accompanied by the Commissioner for Youth, Mr Eric Chan, attended the 4th meeting of the Guangdong-Hong Kong task force on youth employment, entrepreneurship and internship in the morning. At the meeting, they exchanged views on promoting Guangdong and Hong Kong youth entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and strengthening collaboration with youth innovation and entrepreneurial bases with officials from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province (GDHKMAO) and the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province (GDHRSSD). Miss Mak shared the latest progress of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's work in promoting youth development and the work progress of the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area. She said that the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau will continue to work closely with the GDHKMAO and the GDHRSSD to provide comprehensive support for Hong Kong youth to seize the opportunities brought by the development of the GBA.

In the afternoon, Miss Mak, together with the Director-General of the GDHRSSD, Mr Du Mingqi, visited the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Guangdong) Innovation and Entrepreneurship Incubation Base and attended a kick-off ceremony of a youth entrepreneurship event.

Speaking at the ceremony, she said that the HKSAR Government attaches great importance to promoting Hong Kong youth entrepreneurship in the GBA. The Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area has nurtured over 200 start-up teams since its launch. The Scheme provides entrepreneurial support and start-up capital for young people to realise their entrepreneurial dreams in the GBA. Miss Mak encouraged young entrepreneurs in Hong Kong to explore the huge Mainland

market and business opportunities in the GBA.

About 50 youths from Hong Kong joined the event. They visited the innovation and entrepreneurial base and local businesses in Guangzhou, which allowed them to deepen their understanding of the policies of starting businesses and developing careers in the GBA.

Miss Alice finished the visit in the afternoon and returned to Hong Kong on the same day.

Task Force on Tackling the Issue of Subdivided Units submits report to CE (with photos)

The Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, being the Head of the Task Force on Tackling the Issue of Subdivided Units, along with the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, being the Deputy Head, and the Permanent Secretary for Housing/Director of Housing, Miss Rosanna Law, being a member of the Task Force, submitted today (August 22) the Task Force's report to the Chief Executive (CE), presenting findings of the in-depth study conducted over the past 10 months with detailed recommendations for the comprehensive and orderly handling of the issue of substandard subdivided units (SDUs).

After listening to the Task Force's presentation and reviewing the report, the CE has provided to the Task Force relevant views received from the consultation for the Policy Address and requested that the Task Force incorporate them into the study, as well as put forward new elements for the Task Force's consideration. The CE has instructed the Task Force to submit further study findings in a month's time for his comprehensive consideration, and the announcement of relevant decisions will be made in due course.

Over the past 10 months, the Task Force conducted in-depth discussions on SDU-related issues, which covered strengthening the existing enforcement actions in relation to the safety of SDUs, setting minimum standards of living conditions for SDUs (including the unit's floor area, headroom, lighting, ventilation, and facilities), and means for eradicating substandard SDUs, and formulated detailed recommendations. During the same period, the consultant commissioned by the Task Force visited different types of SDU households across the territory to collect relevant data in order to assist the Task Force in understanding the actual situation of the existing SDUs and relevant households. The Task Force also convened more than 20 stakeholder engagement sessions to gather views from political parties, academics, professional bodies, non-governmental organisations, and SDU concern groups, with a view to building a consensus among different sectors of the community.

At the same time, the Task Force received over 40 written views/submissions on tackling the SDU issue.

Mr Wong said, "The Government has long been paying attention to the housing needs of those who are inadequately housed, and striving to identify land for housing development to increase the overall supply of public and private housing. The Government has identified sufficient land to meet the supply target of 308 000 public housing units in the next 10 years, making it an opportune time to tackle the long-standing issue of SDUs."

Mr Wong added, "I am thankful for the many valuable suggestions received from different sectors of the community over the past 10 months. The Task Force will submit further study findings in a month's time in accordance with the CE's instructions."

The CE announced in the Policy Address in October 2023 the establishment of the Task Force for conducting an in-depth study on the comprehensive handling of the issue of SDUs, and making recommendations along the following directions in 10 months' time: setting minimum standards for living conditions for SDUs in terms of their building safety, fire safety and hygiene requirements, and living space; suggesting measures to eradicate substandard SDUs; preventing the resurgence of substandard SDUs; and putting forward solutions to address the problem in an orderly manner, covering necessary administrative and legislative proposals.



Two illegal workers jailed

Two Vietnamese illegal workers were jailed by the Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (August 21).

During an anti-illegal worker operation conducted on August 19, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Kowloon Bay. Two Vietnamese, a man aged 39 and a woman aged 37, were arrested while working as odd-job workers. Upon identity checking, the male Vietnamese produced a recognisance form issued by the ImmD for inspection, which

prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. The female Vietnamese was found to be an illegal immigrant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal workers was also arrested, and the investigation is ongoing.

The illegal workers were charged at the Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday with taking employment while being persons in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to 14 months and 10 days, and 17 months of imprisonment, respectively. Meanwhile, the female Vietnamese was also charged with one count of remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and one count of breaching a deportation order. She was sentenced to 14 months and 10 days, and 17 months of imprisonment, respectively, with part of the sentences to run consecutively, resulting in a total of 22 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, "As stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land is 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 spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. Under the Immigration Ordinance, the maximum penalty for an employer employing a person who is not lawfully employable, i.e. an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land, has been significantly increased from a fine of \$350,000 and three years' imprisonment to a fine of \$500,000 and 10 years' imprisonment to reflect the gravity of such offences. The director, manager, secretary, partner, etc, of the company concerned may also bear criminal liability. 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. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for one year. In that connection, the spokesman would like to remind all employers not to defy the law and employ illegal workers. The ImmD will continue to take resolute enforcement action to combat such offences.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct an 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 threats 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 intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments immediately.