

Illegal worker jailed

A Pakistani illegal worker holding a recognisance form was jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (March 18).

During a joint operation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion" on November 27, 2018, enforcement officers raided a car park of an industrial building at Kwai Chung. A male Pakistani illegal worker, aged 32, was arrested. When intercepted he was working as an odd-job worker. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was also arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The illegal worker was 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. After trial, he was sentenced to 22 months and 14 days' 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 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.

Suspected red tide sighted at Stanley Main Beach

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 announced today (March 19) that due to a suspected red tide sighting, the red flag has been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach until further notice.

Labour Department to launch online occupational safety complaint platform

The Labour Department (LD) today (March 19) launched an online occupational safety and health (OSH) complaint platform so that employees and members of the public can report to the department unsafe operations and environments at workplaces by using online forms accessible to mobile electronic devices or computers.

"The new online platform launched today enables employees and members of the public to lodge complaints against OSH malpractices more expeditiously and conveniently, so that the LD can take prompt action to prevent accidents. The interface of the new online platform is simple and easy to use.

Complainants can lodge complaints by filling out an online form on the LD's website (www.labour.gov.hk) and uploading photos, videos or voice records

through the use of mobile devices like smart phones and tablets," a spokesman for the LD said.

Upon the receipt of complaints, the LD will, having regard to their nature and content, arrange inspections of the workplaces concerned as soon as practicable for targeted investigations and follow-up actions. The LD has arranged to deploy the necessary manpower to meet the needs of the investigation and follow-up work.

In addition to this new online platform, members of the public can still lodge complaints through existing channels including email (enquiry@labour.gov.hk), the LD's OSH complaint hotline (2542 2172) or 1823.

"Enhancement of OSH at the workplace calls for concerted efforts of both employers and employees. The LD reminds workers to follow and comply with the safety requirements set out by their employers. Employees are also urged to stay vigilant to their surroundings while at work, and report any unsafe operations and work environment immediately to the LD. As employees are most familiar with the potential hazards in their daily workplace, the information they provide is crucial to the improvement of workplace safety. It not only protects their own safety and that of other workers, but also puts the minds of their family members at ease," the spokesman added.

All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. "Except in conditions prescribed by the law, the LD will not disclose the complainants' identity nor the fact that a workplace inspection is complaint-related," the LD spokesman emphasised.

To further promote the new online complaint platform, the LD has produced a new Announcement in the Public Interest (API) for broadcast on TV and radio stations. The department will continue to conduct surprise inspections and special enforcement operations to stem work safety malpractices.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley tomorrow

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley tomorrow (March 20). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Vehicles from eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East;
- and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic arrangements will be implemented from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;

- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic on southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.

[Apply for travel documents early to avoid Easter rush](#)

Hong Kong residents intending to travel abroad during Easter holidays are reminded to apply early for travel documents.

An Immigration Department spokesperson said the processing time for Hong

Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport applications is normally 10 working days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and general holidays) after receipt of all necessary documents, the application fee and a photograph. Applications in respect of children under 11 years old not holding a Hong Kong permanent identity card normally take 14 working days. As regards applications submitted by post, via drop-in-box or online, processing might take two to three more working days. Applications for a replacement passport due to loss, damage or change of personal data should be made in person, and the processing time may be longer.

Eligible applicants aged 11 or over may submit HKSAR passport applications at the self-service kiosks at Immigration Headquarters and at all six Immigration branch offices during office hours.

The spokesperson emphasised that a request for urgent issue of an HKSAR passport will only be entertained in justifiable circumstances. Normally, no priority will be granted to pleasure trippers.

Applicants who wish to apply for or collect travel documents in person are encouraged to make prior appointments through the Internet (www.gov.hk/tdbooking) or the 24-hour hotline (2598 0888).

HKSAR passport application forms and information leaflets on application procedures and the requisite documents are available at Immigration Headquarters and Immigration branch offices. For details and application forms, please visit the website (www.gov.hk/passport). Further application details for an HKSAR passport are also available at the Easy Access of the Immigration Department YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/immdgovhkchannel). Enquiries can also be made by telephone (2824 6111), fax (2877 7711) or email (enquiry@immd.gov.hk).

At present, 165 countries and territories have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to HKSAR passport holders. Some places require visitors to have a passport with validity of at least six months.

Moreover, in order to allow greater travel convenience for HKSAR passport holders, the Immigration Department has co-operated with Korea, Singapore, Germany, Australia and Thailand where eligible HKSAR passport holders may use the automated immigration clearance services there. For detailed information, please visit (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/automated_clearance.html).

Before travelling abroad, Hong Kong residents can use the Registration of Outbound Travel Information (ROTI) service to register their contact details and itinerary. The information they provide allows the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department to contact and assist them in an emergency outside Hong Kong. For more information on ROTI, please visit (www.gov.hk/roti) or call (852) 183 5500. Residents who need assistance while outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour hotline of the AHU at (852) 1868.