

# Public urged to keep up anti-mosquito efforts

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (March 15) that the monthly territory-wide ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for February remained at 0.1 per cent, same as January's index, indicating that the infestation of *Aedes albopictus* in the areas surveyed was not extensive. Nevertheless, the FEHD reminded the public to carry out early effective measures against mosquitoes as Hong Kong is expecting a warmer and wetter spring this year which is favourable for large-scale mosquito breeding.

"*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever (DF) and Zika virus. Although the ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* remained at a low level in the past few months, in view of the 29 local DF cases recorded in Hong Kong last year and the high prevalence of DF in neighbouring areas, and that Hong Kong's warm and humid weather of spring is conducive to the hatching of mosquito eggs in a short period of time, resulting in a large amount of adult mosquitoes, the community must remain vigilant and take effective mosquito control measures early," an FEHD spokesman said.

Among the 57 areas surveyed last month, positive ovitrap indices were recorded in three areas, namely Happy Valley (1.8 per cent), Wo Che (1 per cent) and Ma On Shan (0.8 per cent). As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for February remained at zero.

"The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue to intensify their mosquito prevention and control work covering areas under their purview and strengthen publicity and education campaigns. The FEHD is conducting a three-phase Anti-mosquito Campaign this year. The first phase of the territory-wide campaign, lasting for four weeks, started on February 25 and will end on March 22. During the period, mosquito prevention and control work has been enhanced by the FEHD and relevant government departments. The district offices of the FEHD have targeted areas which have drawn particular concern, such as public markets, cooked food centres and hawker bazaars, single-block buildings, streets and back lanes, common parts of buildings, village houses, construction sites, vacant sites and road works sites, and stepped up publicity at those places as well as mosquito prevention and control work at relevant public places. The FEHD will, after the first and second phases of the campaign, conduct special territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control special operations so as to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign," the spokesman said.

The department's Pest Control Inspection Teams have also stepped up inspection of construction sites and enforcement action against mosquito breeding. This year (as at March 10), the FEHD has instituted 12 prosecutions for mosquito breeding found in relevant premises under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), mainly involving construction sites.

In order to keep the public abreast of the latest situation of mosquito infestation and assist them to take timely mosquito prevention and control measures, the FEHD is releasing additional results of the Area Ovitrap Index (AOI) for *Aedes albopictus* at two more stages every month, before the announcement of the monthly AOI and the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus*. The FEHD will follow the established practice of notifying relevant government departments of the aforementioned indices so that they can carry out targeted mosquito prevention and control work promptly to strengthen the anti-mosquito efforts.

The spokesman added that as *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, members of the public should carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures, including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, changing all the water in vases and scrubbing the inner surface as well as removing the water in saucers under potted plants at least once a week, properly disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drilling large holes in unused tyres. He also advised the public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and level all defective ground surfaces to prevent accumulation of water. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

In addition, rural areas and the vicinity of shrubby areas are the natural habitats for mosquitoes, other insects and animals. Members of the public living in rural areas may install mosquito screens on windows and doors if necessary. Those staying in the natural environment should follow appropriate personal protective measures against mosquitoes, such as avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time, wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying DEET-containing insect repellent. Members of the public are reminded to make reports to the government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

The spokesman reiterated that effective mosquito control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The community must work together with the Government to carry out effective mosquito control measures.

The ovitrap index is divided into four levels, reflecting the infestation level of *Aedes albopictus*. Level 1 (< 5 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is not extensive in the area surveyed. Level 2 (5 per cent – < 20 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is slightly more extensive in the area surveyed. Level 3 (20 per cent – < 40 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito exceeds one-fifth of the area surveyed. Level 4 ( $\geq$  40 per cent) indicates that almost half of the surveyed area is infested with the mosquito. The Government will step up the scale of anti-mosquito operations according to the level of infestation as well as reports from front-line staff and the public.

As *Aedes albopictus* can transmit DF and Zika virus, ovitraps are set in 57 areas in Hong Kong for monitoring the breeding of *Aedes albopictus*, which is only one of the mosquito species commonly found in Hong Kong and is active

only in the daytime. The index only indicates the extensiveness in distribution of *Aedes albopictus* within the 57 areas but does not capture its activity outside these areas and it also does not measure the prevalence of other kinds of mosquitoes.

The ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department website at [www.fehd.gov.hk](http://www.fehd.gov.hk).

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## **SCED to lead business delegation to visit Georgia and Hungary**

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, will leave Hong Kong in the early hours of March 18 to lead a delegation comprising more than 30 business people and professionals as well as representatives of start-ups to visit Georgia and Hungary from March 18 to 22 to promote Hong Kong as the prime platform for the Belt and Road Initiative and the city's strengths in professional services and doing business. The opportunity will also be taken to strengthen Hong Kong's economic ties with the two places and explore new business opportunities.

The delegation consists of representatives from various sectors such as accounting, finance, insurance, infrastructure and real estate development, legal and dispute resolution services, transport and logistics, telecommunications and start-ups. Also joining part of the visit will be a 15-person parallel Guangdong trade delegation to be led by the Deputy Director General of the Department of Commerce of Guangdong Province, Mr Li Yongyi, with delegates from nine Guangdong enterprises.

Mr Yau said that the mission would facilitate formation of strategic partnerships between Hong Kong and Guangdong enterprises in exploring the Belt and Road markets, and would help bring about mutual collaboration. It would also demonstrate Hong Kong's unique strengths in being the springboard for enterprises in going global.

The delegation will first visit Tbilisi in Georgia from March 18 to 20, to be followed by a visit to Budapest, Hungary, on March 21 and 22. Apart from meeting relevant government officials, local business leaders and chambers of commerce, the delegates will pay visits to local development projects for business exchanges and to receive updates on the current economic and investment environments of the two countries.

The delegation will also attend the "Hong Kong IN: Exploring New Business Opportunities" Seminar cum Networking Dinner jointly organised by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council in Tbilisi, where Mr Yau will deliver a keynote

speech. In Budapest, Mr Yau will address a luncheon with the Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

During the visit, Mr Yau will take the opportunity to call on the Chinese Ambassadors to Georgia and Hungary to keep them abreast of the latest developments in Hong Kong.

Mr Yau will return to Hong Kong in the afternoon of March 23. The Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, will be the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development during Mr Yau's absence.

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## **HKSAR Government strongly condemns** **DemosistAØ for intrusion into CGO** **Lobby causing blockage**

A Government spokesman strongly condemned members of DemosistAØ for intruding into the East Wing of Central Government Offices (CGO) today (March 15) and causing a blockage in the lobby, despite advice and warnings issued by security personnel at the scene. A female security guard was injured and admitted into hospital as a result.

"The Government respects the rights of the public to express their views, but the effective, secure and smooth operation of the CGO should be safeguarded at the same time. As the headquarters of the Government and working place of government officials, the CGO has never been part of the area designated for public meetings or processions," the spokesman said.

Regrettably, some members from DemosistAØ forcibly intruded into the CGO East Wing causing a blockage despite the advice and warnings issued by security personnel at the scene, resulting in a female security guard being injured.

Administration Wing staff reported the above case to the Police, who took action to remove a total of nine protestors.

The Administration Wing also expressed regards to the security guard who was injured and wished her a speedy recovery.

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## Thirty-two immigration offenders arrested (with photo)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a territory-wide anti-illegal worker operation codenamed "Twilight" from March 11 to 14. A total of 25 illegal workers and seven suspected employers were arrested.

During the operation, ImmD Task Force officers raided 41 target locations including offices, a construction site, an elderly home, a factory, a garbage collect point, an industrial building, a massage parlour, restaurants, a shopping mall and a warehouse. Twenty-five illegal workers and seven employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised 16 men and nine women, aged 24 to 57. Among them, five men were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards. Meanwhile, six men and a woman, aged 28 to 59, 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 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 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.



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## [Speech by CE at 3rd Asian Youth Athletics Championships opening ceremony \(English only\) \(with photo\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the opening ceremony for the 3rd Asian Youth Athletics Championships today (March 15):

Mr Kondrat (Vice President of Asian Athletics Association, Mr Alexey Kondrat), Mr Moh (President of Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association (HKAAA), Mr Alex Moh), Mr Kwan (Chairman of HKAAA, Mr Kwan Kee), athletes, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to join you today for the opening ceremony of the third Asian Youth Athletics Championships. This year's event features over 400 young athletes – 16 and 17 years of age – from 29 Asian countries and regions competing in 40 events. I'm delighted to



welcome you all to Hong Kong for this prestigious, three-day international Championships.

In terms of the number of athletes participating, this year's event is the biggest ever; but what excites me the most is the growing size of the Hong Kong team. At the first and the second Championships in 2015 and 2017, Hong Kong sent 13 and 26 young athletes to compete. This year, I am glad to note, we have a team of 62. It shows that we have many good young athletes in the city and our younger generations are passionate about sports, which can only be very good news.

The benefits of sports are well documented. Being involved in sports helps develop our physical and mental strengths as well as our character. It teaches us the importance of teamwork, leadership and discipline. It increases our confidence and reduces our stress. And, above all, it brings us a lot of joy. That's why my Government has worked hard to develop sports in Hong Kong. We have injected resources to boost support for our athletes and our national sports associations. We are also investing substantially in sports venues and sports grounds. That includes the 28-hectare Kai Tak Sports Park, the construction of which has just begun. It will include a 50 000-seat main stadium and an athletics stadium with a seating capacity of 5 000, allowing Hong Kong to host more regional and international athletics events in the future.

But for now, Hong Kong is proud to host this year's Asian Youth Athletics Championships. I'm grateful to the Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association for its vision in making this international tournament possible and successful. My thanks, as well, to the enormous support the Championships has received from its many supporting organisations and sponsors.

For the young athletes here, I wish each and every one of you good luck and record results at the Championships. More importantly, as you are about to hit your physical peak in the coming years, I wish you all the best in your continued pursuit of athletic excellence and a very happy stay in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.

