

## Import of poultry meat and products from Long An Province in Vietnam suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 11) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Long An Province in Vietnam, the CFS has suspended the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the province with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that at present, Hong Kong has an established protocol with Vietnam for the import of poultry eggs but not for poultry meat. Hong Kong imported 650 000 poultry eggs from the country in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Vietnamese authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE on avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

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## Illegal worker jailed

A Pakistani illegal worker holding a recognisance form was jailed at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on today (January 11).

Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators received a referral from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate an illegal employment case in September 2018. Enforcement officers arrested one male Pakistani worker, aged 25, who was conveying goods in San Po Kong. Upon identity checking, he was found to be a holder of a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment, and further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

The illegal worker was charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts today 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 the trial, he was sentenced to 22 months and two weeks' 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 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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**[Latest test results of opening-up investigation in second stage of holistic assessment strategy for Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to](#)**

# Central Link Project

The latest test results of the opening-up investigation in the second stage of the holistic assessment strategy for the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project (as at January 11) are now available at the Highways Department's website for the SCL project ([www.hyd.gov.hk/en/road\\_and\\_railway/railway\\_projects/scl/index.html](http://www.hyd.gov.hk/en/road_and_railway/railway_projects/scl/index.html)) for reference by the public.

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## Progress in the handling of banking complaints by HKMA

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (January 11) the progress made in its handling of banking complaints received as at end-December 2018. Banking complaints include cases concerning general banking services and conduct-related issues.

In December 2018, 161 cases were received and the handling of 232 cases was completed. As at end-December, the handling of 414 cases was in progress.

A table summarising the progress made in the handling of banking complaints by the HKMA is attached.

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## Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 11) 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 January 4 to 10, the CHP confirmed two imported DF cases. The patients had been to the Philippines (one case) and Sri Lanka (one case) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (January 10), six cases had been confirmed this year, all of which were imported cases. The cases were imported from Malaysia

(two), Maldives (one), the Philippines (one), Sri Lanka (one) and Vietnam (one).

DF remains endemic in some areas of Asia and beyond. The latest figures revealed that 365 cases have been recorded in Singapore since December 30, 2018, and 201 cases in Japan last year. In Taiwan, no local cases have been recorded to date in 2019. In the Americas, the latest figures indicated that 247 393 and 78 621 cases were filed in Brazil and Mexico respectively 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 loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved tops and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or exposed parts of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF and Zika virus infection should apply insect repellent for 14 days or at least 21 days respectively 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.