

Public reminded to keep venues clean during festive season

Attention radio/TV announcers:

Please broadcast the following at suitable intervals:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department reminds people to keep places clean tonight (December 31) while celebrating the New Year. Rubbish should be put in rubbish bins. Anyone not disposing of rubbish properly is liable to a fixed penalty of \$1,500.

The Hong Kong Cultural Centre piazza area, Salisbury Garden and the Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade will be crowded. People who intend to go there should also mind their safety.

Caring and Sharing Scheme to receive applications from February 1, 2019

The Government announced today (December 31) that the Caring and Sharing Scheme will receive applications from February 1 to April 30, 2019.

"Application forms will be available from January 21, 2019 on the dedicated website (css.gov.hk); or at the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department and the Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) or Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency," a government spokesman said.

A person who meets the following eligibility criteria as at today may apply for receiving \$4,000 under the Scheme:

- (a) is aged 18 or above;
- (b) holds a Hong Kong Identity Card (including new arrivals, but excluding Hong Kong non-permanent residents who have been admitted to Hong Kong to work, study, or receive training and their dependants, and excluding individuals who have entered Hong Kong as visitors);
- (c) ordinarily resides in Hong Kong (including those who are temporarily away from Hong Kong but would reasonably be expected to return to live in Hong Kong, for example, those on duty trips, overseas studies, medical treatment, but excluding those who have emigrated);

(d) is not benefiting from the two-month extra allowance of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, Old Age Living Allowance, Old Age Allowance, or Disability Allowance announced in the 2018-19 Budget;

(e) need not pay salaries tax for the Year of Assessment (YA) 2017/18; and

(f) does not own any property in Hong Kong.

If a person meets criteria (a) to (e) above but owns only one property in Hong Kong which is used as his/her principal place of residence, and with an amount of rates concession for 2018-19 of less than \$4,000, he/she may apply for the difference between \$4,000 and the amount of rates concession. Any person who owns a property in Hong Kong which is not used as his/her principal place of residence, or who owns more than one property in Hong Kong, will not be eligible for the Scheme.

For a person who meets criteria (a) to (d) above but needs to pay salaries tax for YA 2017/18:

(a) if he/she does not own any property in Hong Kong and the salaries tax concession he/she receives for YA 2017/18 is less than \$4,000, he/she may apply for the difference between \$4,000 and the amount of salaries tax concession; or

(b) if he/she owns only one property in Hong Kong which is used as his/her principal place of residence, and the salaries tax concession for YA 2017/18 and rates concession for 2018-19 that he/she receives is less than \$4,000 in aggregate, he/she may apply for the difference between \$4,000 and the aggregate tax and rates concessions.

The WFAO will publicise the eligibility criteria for the Scheme and the application arrangements through various channels. Apart from broadcasting Announcement in the Public Interest on television and radio, posters will be displayed and leaflets distributed at various government offices. Briefings will also be organised for stakeholders and interested groups.

Details of the Scheme are available on the dedicated website. For enquiries, please call the 24-hour hotline (3897 1088).

[**CE receives Report of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service \(with photo\)**](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, received the Report of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service today

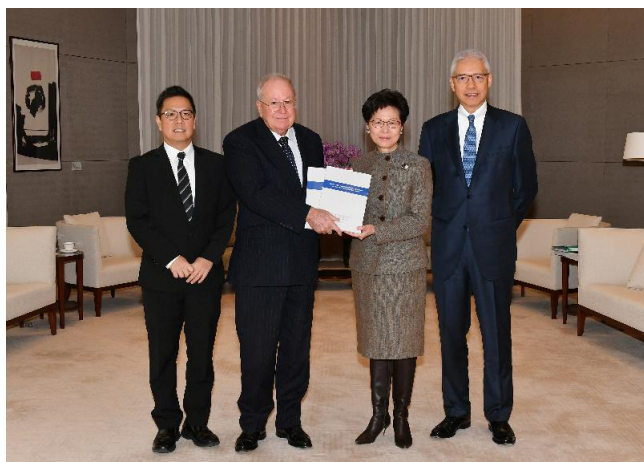
(December 31).

The Chairman of the Independent Review Committee, the Honourable Mr Justice Michael Victor Lunn, accompanied by members of the Committee Mr Rex Auyeung Pak-kuen and Professor Lo Hong-kam, submitted the Report to the Chief Executive today. The Chief Executive expressed appreciation for the Committee's dedicated efforts in completing the review and submitting the Report within nine months.

"The Government attaches importance to safeguarding the safety of franchised bus operation. We are grateful for the Committee's recommendations, which aim to sustain a safe and reliable franchised bus service in Hong Kong," Mrs Lam said.

As the Report may contain sensitive commercial information of the franchised bus operators and as charges for manslaughter have been laid against the bus captain involved in the incident, the Government will carefully study the Report and consult the Department of Justice on the manner of the publication of the Report and other relevant matters. The Government will publish the Report in an appropriate manner once a decision is made.

Following the occurrence of a fatal franchised bus incident on Tai Po Road in February this year, the Government set up the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service in March 2018. The Committee commenced work in late March 2018.



[Independent Review Committee submits report to Chief Executive](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service:

Having received oral evidence over a total of 21 days, on and between May 7, 2018, and October 16, 2018, from the representatives of 19 specifically identified interested parties, and that of two expert witnesses, together with a total of over 22,000 pages of their written submissions/reports and those of other parties and the closing submissions of counsel assisting the Committee, the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service submitted its report to the Chief Executive today (December 31).

Illegal worker jailed

A Vietnamese illegal worker was jailed by Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 29.

During operation "Twilight" on December 27, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Causeway Bay. A female Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 37, was arrested. When intercepted, she was working as a dish washer. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The illegal worker was charged at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 29 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. She pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. In addition, the female Vietnamese illegal worker was also charged with one count of using a forged Hong Kong identity card, one count of possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card and one count of landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration and was sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 15 to 16 months. All sentences are to run concurrently, making a total of 16 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. 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 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.