

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected smuggled goods \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized a batch of suspected smuggled goods, including about 176 kilograms of frozen beef, about 38kg of bird nest, about 3kg of fish maw and five cartons of cosmetics with an estimated market value of about \$1.8 million at Man Kam To Control Point on October 13.

Customs officers intercepted an outgoing private car at Man Kam To Control Point on October 13 and found the batch of suspected smuggled goods on board the vehicle. The 47-year-old male driver and the 18-year-old female passenger were arrested.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers further arrested a 41-year-old woman suspected to be involved in the case on the same day.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Auction of personalised vehicle registration marks on November 11](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (October 15) announced that the next auction of personalised vehicle registration marks (PVRMs) will be held on November 11 (Sunday), at Meeting Room S221, L2, Hong Kong Convention and

Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 235 approved PVRMs will be put up for public auction. A list of the marks was posted on the department's website, www.td.gov.hk, today," a department spokesman said.

The reserve price of all these marks is \$5,000. Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$5,000 should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price). Otherwise, the PVRM concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

- (i) Paddle bidding will be used at this auction;
- (ii) The display of a PVRM on a motor vehicle should be in compliance with the requirements stipulated in Schedule 4 of the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations;
- (iii) Any change to the arrangement of letters, numerals and blank spaces of a PVRM, i.e. single and two rows as auctioned, will not be allowed;
- (iv) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through the Easy Pay System (EPS) or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM immediately after the bidding for the PVRM concerned. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted. For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed; and
- (v) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the PVRM to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the PVRM within 12 months, allocation of the PVRM will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

"Upon completion of the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM, the purchaser will be issued a receipt and a Certificate of Allocation of Personalised Registration Mark. The Certificate of Allocation will serve to prove the holdership of the PVRM. Potential buyers of vehicles bearing a PVRM should check the Certificate of Allocation with the sellers and pay attention to the details therein. For transfer of vehicle ownership, this certificate together with other required documents should be sent to the TD for processing," the spokesman said.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of PVRM, which is available at the department's licensing offices or can be downloaded from its website, www.td.gov.hk.

Illegal worker jailed

A Vietnamese illegal worker holding a recognisance form was jailed by Fanling Magistrates' Courts on October 13.

During a joint operation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Sahara" on October 10, enforcement officers raided a salon in Sham Shui Po. One female Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 47, was arrested. When intercepted, she was working as a cleaner. Upon identity checking, she produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was also arrested and investigation is ongoing.

The illegal worker was charged at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on October 13 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.

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.

Works contractor of Lee Theatre Plaza in Causeway Bay convicted for illegally carrying out work at night and causing noise nuisance

The air-conditioning maintenance works contractor of Lee Theatre Plaza in Causeway Bay, Luen Shing Air-Conditioning Company Limited, used unauthorised powered mechanical equipment to carry out maintenance works at night and failed to comply with the requirements of the construction noise permit (CNP). The contractor was fined \$10,000 by Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (October 15) for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO).

An Environmental Protection Department spokesman said that the department received a complaint in March this year that the Lee Theatre Plaza was carrying out works at night and causing a noise nuisance. Upon investigation, EPD staff found that the contractor concerned had carried out night-time works using unauthorised powered mechanical equipment (derricking jib) during restricted hours (from 7pm to 7am on the next day), which violated the CNP requirements. The EPD then prosecuted the contractor after evidence gathering.

The spokesman reminded members of the construction sector that they should properly manage and arrange construction work. They must abide by the requirements of the CNP, otherwise it is an offence. Under the NCO, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000. A maximum fine of \$200,000 may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions.

Final guidelines for Rural Representative Election released today

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

The Electoral Affairs Commission today (October 15) released the final Guidelines on Election-related Activities in respect of the Rural Representative Election.

"The 30-day public consultation on the proposed guidelines ended on July 11. The Commission has updated the guidelines after taking into consideration all the views received during the public consultation period," a Commission spokesman said.

"Those who intend to stand for the election are urged to read carefully the guidelines and the relevant electoral legislation, and should strictly abide by them," he said.

The final guidelines can be downloaded from the Commission's website (www.eac.gov.hk). They are also available at the Registration and Electoral Office and the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of District Offices.