

Two illegal workers jailed

Two Vietnamese illegal workers were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts on September 22.

During operation "Twilight" on September 20, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Hung Hom. Two female Vietnamese illegal workers, aged 50 and 47, were arrested. When intercepted they were performing kitchen work and dish washing duty respectively. Upon identity checking, one of them produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was non-refoulement claimant. The other woman was an illegal immigrant. She was also suspected of using and being in possession of a forged identity card. Two employers suspected of employing the illegal workers were arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The two illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on September 22 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. They pleaded guilty to the charges and they were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. In addition, one of them was also charged with one count of using a forged Hong Kong identity card and one count of possessing a forged Hong Kong identity card. She was sentenced to 15 months and 12 months' imprisonment respectively. All sentences are to run concurrently, making a total of 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 also warned that it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or an identity card relating 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.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, September 24, 2018 is 104.8 (up 0.2 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, September 22, 2018 was 104.6 (up 0.2 against last Friday's index).

Task Force on Land Supply submits preliminary observations to Chief Executive

The Task Force on Land Supply (Task Force) submitted its preliminary observations drawn from the Public Engagement Exercise of the Task Force today (September 24).

The relevant letter from the Chairman of the Task Force, Mr Stanley

Wong, to the Chief Executive is at Appendix.

First local cross-sector pilot partnership programme for cyber security information sharing officially launched

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) officially launched a two-year Pilot Partnership Programme for Cyber Security Information Sharing named Cybersec Infohub and the first cross-sector cyber security information sharing and collaborative platform in Hong Kong today (September 24). The Cybersec Infohub aims to promote cyber security information exchange among public organisations, the private sector and the community and enhance the city's overall defensive capability and resilience against cyber attacks.

All companies and organisations with a business address in Hong Kong which manage electronic communications networks and have operational needs for cyber security information, irrespective of size, are eligible to become members of the Cybersec Infohub for free.

Through the collaborative platform (Cybersechub.hk) established under the Cybersec Infohub, members can share cyber security information, advice and expert insights on topics such as mitigation measures and best practices with cyber security experts from different industries, while the public can obtain such professional information via the Public Zone, making information sharing multi-directional. The collaborative platform is also meant to promote collaboration among members. By sharing the latest intelligence of cyber threats and attacks at the earliest time, members will be alerted and able to join forces in guarding against cyber attacks more effectively.

On the security front, apart from strict compliance with the Government's security policies and guidelines, the collaborative platform adopts two-step verification for login and industry standards for cyber security information sharing. All these measures will ensure a trusted environment for members to share information and intelligence as well as discuss or collaborate with other experts in the Members Zone securely. Members may also gather and export indicators of compromise from the collaborative platform for their own systems for application or further security analysis.

Addressing the launch ceremony today, the Government Chief Information Officer, Mr Victor Lam, said, "Cyber attacks are happening anytime and cyber threats are in various guises. It is hard for enterprises or organisations to

deal with the ever-changing cyber threats alone. Close collaboration based on mutual trust to share cyber security information is therefore essential."

Mr Lam said that many cyber security information sharing organisations have been set up around the world, enabling their members to respond in a timely manner at the early stage of cyber threats or attacks through sharing of intelligence, knowledge and experience. He expressed the hope that via the Cybersec Infohub, a collaborative culture and closer partnership could also be built up among members of the local industry to facilitate more effective and prompt reaction to cyber attacks.

At present, 229 representatives from 81 companies and organisations have registered as members of the Cybersec Infohub. Many of them have taken the lead to share information on the platform, including the latest trends of cyber threats, research reports on ransomware and security advisories on vulnerabilities. The participating companies and organisations include cyber security companies, tertiary institutions, critical infrastructure operators, information technology professional associations, telecommunications or Internet service providers, financial and insurance institutions, and two local Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centres.

Mr Lam said that artificial intelligence elements will be introduced to the collaborative platform by making use of machine learning to build and operate the text analytics model in the first half of next year. The move will assist members in the integration and analysis of cyber security information, facilitating easier and faster acquisition of required information by experts and timely dissemination of the information to the public.

The Cybersec Infohub is managed by the OGCI0 with funding support from TechConnect (Block Vote) under the Innovation and Technology Bureau. The OGCI0 also held today the first Members Professional Workshop, in which information security experts enlightened members on the contemporary cyber threat trends, a case study and cyber security benchmarking. In future, the OGCI0 will continue to organise different seminars and workshops to promote mutual trust and collaboration among members and the cyber security information sharing culture.

Government responds to Airport Authority's acquisition of private interest in AsiaWorld-Expo

Regarding the announcement by the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA) today (September 24) on its acquisition of a private interest in AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE), a Government spokesman said that the Government welcomes the

acquisition, believing that it would facilitate the further development of Hong Kong's convention and exhibition (C&E) industry and create greater synergy with the SkyCity development of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA).

The C&E industry is crucial to Hong Kong as an international commerce and trading centre. It promotes the export trade of Hong Kong, facilitates the development of products and services industries and attracts high-spending overnight business visitors to Hong Kong. The findings of a consultancy study commissioned by the Government in 2014 revealed that by 2028, there will be a shortfall of about 130 000 square metres of space at C&E peak periods in Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "In order to consolidate and enhance the competitiveness of the C&E industry of Hong Kong, the Government is proactively taking forward measures to increase the supply of C&E space, while at the same time seeking to better utilise existing C&E space. AWE is one of the important dedicated C&E venues in Hong Kong. The AA's acquisition of a private interest in AWE helps better capitalise on the strengths of the existing AWE space in hosting C&E events."

He said, "AWE's future development will also organically connect with the business elements of the SkyCity project of HKIA, such as hotel, retail, catering and entertainment services, thereby creating greater synergy. This will help grasp the opportunities of the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, contributing to developing HKIA as an aeropolis connecting the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the world."