

Call for adequate public transport services on first school day

The Transport Department (TD) today (August 27) said that major public transport operators have been reminded to provide adequate public transport services to cater for transport demand on the first school day (September 3).

"The TD's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) will closely monitor the traffic situation and public transport services on September 3. The department will also maintain close liaison with major public transport operators and relevant government departments. Staff will be deployed at various major locations throughout the territory to observe the traffic conditions and provide on-site information to the ETCC for arranging public transport service enhancement or informing the Police for traffic regulation when necessary," a department spokesman said.

Students, especially those attending a new school, are reminded to familiarise themselves with the public transport services to schools and allow more travelling time on the first school day. Students living on the outlying islands or attending schools on the outlying islands should check the ferry schedules, the vessel types to be used and journey times of their intended ferry trips beforehand. Students are also reminded to pay attention to road safety when attending school.

More information may be obtained through the following hotlines and websites of major public transport operators:

Operator	Hotline	Website
New World First Bus	2136 8888	www.nwstbus.com.hk
Citybus	2873 0818	www.nwstbus.com.hk
Kowloon Motor Bus	2745 4466	www.kmb.hk
Long Win Bus	2261 2791	www.lwb.hk
New Lantao Bus	2984 9848	www.newlantaobus.com
New World First Ferry	2131 8181	www.nwff.com.hk
Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry	2815 6063	www.hkkf.com.hk
MTR Corporation Limited	2881 8888	www.mtr.com.hk

Motorists are advised not to drive to the school areas if possible. Drivers of nanny vans and school buses should not carry excess passengers or leave schoolchildren in vehicles unattended. An escort should be provided on board when serving kindergarten or primary school students. Parents should agree well in advance with schools, operators of nanny vans or school buses on the locations of picking up and dropping off their children.

Members of the public are advised to pay attention to the latest transport and traffic news on radio and television before leaving home. For enquiries, please call the department hotline on 2804 2600 or the 1823 Call Centre.

[The Real Group to delight music lovers with unique musical expression \(with photo\)](#)

Swedish a cappella troupe the Real Group will give a concert in September as part of the highlights of the Music Delight Series.

The Real Group is famed for its superlative creativity, delighting with jazz originals and reworkings of popular favourites. One of the leading forces in the world of vocal music today, the group gives performances that display unbeatable vocal artistry and perfection, and has created a unique musical expression that ranges from jazz and pop to Nordic European choral music.

Formed in 1984 with original members coming from Stockholm's Royal Academy of Music, the group has enjoyed an international touring career spanning more than 30 years. The members' versatility and creativity makes it possible for the group to collaborate with symphony orchestras, jazz groups and other musicians, including contemporary artists like George Martin and Bobby McFerrin, renowned soprano Barbara Hendricks and jazz maestro Toots Thielemans.

For the coming performance, the Real Group will sing many original classics such as "Words" and "Pass Me the Jazz", as well as songs from its latest album "Elements", such as "Water", in which the performers blow on bottles as they sing, and "Catch Up, Ketchup!", which tells the story of what happens to some plants that are on their way to a concert by the Real Group.

Presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the concert will be staged at 4pm on September 25 (Tuesday, a public holiday) at the Auditorium of the Yuen Long Theatre. Tickets are priced at \$120, \$180 and \$220.

Tickets are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7321 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/music/programs_587.html.



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Two illegal workers jailed

Two illegal workers, comprising a Vietnamese and a Bangladeshi, were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts on August 24.

During operation "Twilight" conducted on August 22, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Tuen Mun. A male Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 55, was arrested. When intercepted he was washing dishes. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. In addition, he was also suspected of using and being in possession of a forged identity card. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

In addition, ImmD investigators received a referral from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate an illegal employment case in July. Enforcement officers arrested a male Bangladeshi worker, aged 38, found conveying vegetables in Tai Po. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

The two illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on August 24 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 were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. In addition, one of them was also charged with using a forged Hong Kong identity card and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. 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 other 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.

SFH to visit Conghua in Guangdong

At the invitation of the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC), the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, will attend the opening ceremony of the Conghua Training Centre (CTC) in Conghua, Guangdong, tomorrow (August 28).

Professor Chan said, "With the support and assistance of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Mainland authorities, the HKJC has successfully developed the CTC. The two places have been working closely on optimising the procedures of customs clearance, inspection and quarantine of horses, and ensuring the long-term high health status of horses moving into and out of the Conghua Equine Disease Free Zone. The CTC will become an important support base for Hong Kong racehorses, and in the long run will help promote the development of equine sports and related industries in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food), Mr Philip Yung, and the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, Dr Leung Siu-fai, will accompany Professor Chan.

Professor Chan will depart for Conghua this afternoon (August 27) and return to Hong Kong tomorrow evening. During her absence, the Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi, will be the Acting Secretary for Food and Health.