

Three-runway system project construction contractor convicted for illegally carrying out works at night

A contractor for the three-runway system project (3RS project), Langfang Huayuan Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Company Limited, violated the requirements of the construction noise permit (CNP) by conducting drilling work at night. It was fined \$90,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (May 21) for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO).

An Environmental Protection Department spokesman said that the department received a complaint in December 2016 that work at the construction site of the 3RS project at Sheung Sha Chau Island, Tuen Mun, was conducted at night and caused noise nuisance. Upon investigation, EPD staff confirmed that the contractor used powered mechanical equipment to conduct drilling work and generated noise during restricted hours (between 7pm and 7am the next day) on six nights in December 2016, thus violating the CNP requirements. The EPD subsequently initiated prosecution against the contractor involved after evidence gathering.

According to the NCO, anyone who violates the CNP requirements and uses powered mechanical equipment for construction works during restricted hours commits an offence. 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.

The EPD has followed up with the project supervisory staff of the Airport Authority Hong Kong and the contractor to ensure that the contractor will properly arrange its works and strictly comply with all CNP requirements.

Four illegal workers jailed

Four illegal workers comprising one Pakistani and three Vietnamese were jailed at Shatin and Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 18 and 19 respectively.

During a joint operation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion" on May 14, enforcement officers raided a stall in Yau Ma Tei. A male Pakistani illegal worker aged 37, was arrested. When intercepted he was setting up the stall. 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.

Furthermore, during anti-illegal worker operations mounted on May 16, ImmD investigators raided a warehouse in Yuen Long and a construction site in Siu Sai Wan. Three male Vietnamese illegal workers, aged 30 to 41, were arrested. When intercepted, they were performing loading work and construction work respectively. Upon identity checking, one of them was found to be an illegal immigrant. In addition, he was also suspected of using and being in possession of a forged identity card. Furthermore, the other two produced for inspection recognisance forms issued by the ImmD, which prohibit them from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that they were non-refoulement claimants. Two employers suspected of employing the illegal workers were arrested and the investigations are ongoing.

The four illegal workers were charged at Shatin and Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 18 and 19 respectively 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 and they 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 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.

Temporary suspension of Mobile Library 2, 3, 7, 9 and 12 services

Mobile Libraries 2, 3, 7, 9 and 12 will suspend services during designated periods in May and June for routine maintenance, a Leisure and Cultural Services Department spokesman announced today (May 21).

Mobile Library 2 will suspend services from May 28 to June 9. The affected service points are Hau Tak Estate, Po Lam Estate and Sheung Tak Estate in Tseung Kwan O; Tsui Ping Estate in Kwun Tong; Mei Lam Estate, Saddle Ridge Garden, Lee On Estate, Sui Wo Court and Yiu On Estate in Sha Tin; Ta Kwu Ling in North District; Shuen Wan in Tai Po; and Maple Street and Fortune Estate in Sham Shui Po. For enquiries about Mobile Library 2 services, please call 2605 1071.

Mobile Library 9 will suspend services from May 28 to June 9. The affected service points are South Horizons in Ap Lei Chau, Sheung Wan Cultural Square, Tin Wan Estate in Aberdeen, Oi Tung Estate in Aldrich Bay, Tai Hong Street in Lei King Wan and Kut Shing Street and Heng Fa Chuen in Chai Wan. For enquiries about Mobile Library 9 services, please call 2505 4690.

Mobile Library 12 will suspend services from June 11 to 16. The affected service points are Cheong Shing Court in Fanling; Kwong Fuk Estate in Tai Po; Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen King Circuit Playground and Cheung Shan Estate in Tsuen Wan; Kwai Luen Estate in Kwai Chung; and Fu Cheong Estate in Sham Shui Po. For enquiries about Mobile Library 12 services, please call 2479 1055.

Mobile Library 7 will suspend services from June 15 to 21. The affected

service points are Fung Tak Estate and Chuk Yuen (South) Estate in Wong Tai Sin, Hoi Fu Court in Mong Kok West and Sceneway Garden in Lam Tin. For enquiries about Mobile Library 7 services, please call 2926 3056.

Mobile Library 3 will suspend services from June 19 to 23. The affected service points are Siu Hong Court and Leung King Estate in Tuen Mun; Kingswood Country Club in Tin Shui Wai; and Sheung Tsuen Park, Wang Chau and San Tin in Yuen Long. For enquiries about Mobile Library 3 services, please call 2450 1857.

Readers are welcome to use other public libraries during the service suspension periods. They may also renew library materials by telephoning 2698 0002 or 2827 2833, or via www.hkpl.gov.hk.

Consumer Price Indices for April 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (May 21) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for April 2018. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 1.9% in April 2018 over the same month a year earlier, smaller than the corresponding increase (2.6%) in March 2018. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rate of increase in the Composite CPI (i.e. the underlying inflation rate) in April 2018 was 2.2%. This increase was smaller than that in March 2018 (2.6%), mainly due to the smaller increases in the charges for package tours and the prices of fresh vegetables.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of increase in the Composite CPI for the three-month period from February to April 2018 was 0.2%, and that for the three-month period from January to March 2018 was 0.3%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the average monthly rate of increase in the Composite CPI for the three-month period from February to April 2018 was 0.3%, the same as that for the three-month period from January to March 2018.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.2%, 1.8% and 1.7% respectively in April 2018, as compared to 2.8%, 2.5% and 2.5% respectively in March 2018. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.5%, 2.2% and 2.0% respectively in April 2018, as compared to 2.7%, 2.5% and 2.5% respectively in March 2018.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the three-month period from February to April 2018, the average monthly rates of increase in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 0.3%, 0.2% and 0.2% respectively. The corresponding rates of increase for the three-month period from January to March 2018 were 0.4%, 0.3% and 0.3%. Netting out the effects of all

Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding average monthly rates of increase in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) for the three-month period from February to April 2018 were 0.4%, 0.4% and 0.3% respectively, and the corresponding rates of increase for the three-month period from January to March 2018 were 0.4%, 0.3% and 0.3% respectively.

Amongst the various CPI components, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in April 2018 for food (excluding meals bought away from home) (4.6% in the Composite CPI and 4.4% in the CPI(A)); electricity, gas and water (3.7% in both the Composite CPI and CPI(A)); meals bought away from home (2.9% in the Composite CPI and 3.1% in the CPI(A)); housing (1.8% in the Composite CPI and 2.1% in the CPI(A)); miscellaneous goods (1.3% in the Composite CPI and 1.7% in the CPI(A)); miscellaneous services (1.1% in the Composite CPI and 0.6% in the CPI(A)); clothing and footwear (0.9% in the Composite CPI and 1.1% in the CPI(A)); transport (0.5% in the Composite CPI and 0.2% in the CPI(A)) as well as alcoholic drinks and tobacco (0.2% in the Composite CPI and 0.4% in the CPI(A)).

On the other hand, year-on-year decrease in prices was recorded in April 2018 for durable goods (-2.1% in the Composite CPI and -2.2% in the CPI(A)).

Taking the first four months of 2018 together, the Composite CPI rose by 2.3% over a year earlier. The corresponding increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.5%, 2.2% and 2.2%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the Composite CPI, CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.4%, 2.5%, 2.3% and 2.3% respectively in the first four months of 2018 over a year earlier.

For the three months ended April 2018, the Composite CPI rose by 2.5% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.7%, 2.5% and 2.5% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.6%, 2.8%, 2.6% and 2.6% respectively.

For the 12 months ended April 2018, the Composite CPI was on average 1.9% higher than that in the preceding 12-month period. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.2%, 1.8% and 1.9%. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.9%, 2.1%, 1.8% and 1.9% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that inflationary pressures remained largely moderate in April. The underlying inflation rate went down, mainly due to the smaller year-on-year increase in the charges for package tour in April as the Easter holidays began earlier in late March this year. The headline inflation rate was lower than the underlying rate in April, mainly due to the upward adjustment in the ceiling of the Government's rates concession effective from the second quarter of this year.

The spokesman commented further that, looking ahead, inflationary pressures will likely go up over the course of 2018 if the robust economic

conditions continue. The feed-through of the rise in fresh-letting residential rentals over the past year or so will also likely become more visible in the period ahead. Nonetheless, the inflation rate should remain within a moderate range in the near term. The Government will continue to monitor the inflation developments closely, particularly the impact on the lower-income people.

Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for April 2018 are shown in Table 1. The time series on the year-on-year rates of change in the CPIs before and after removing the effects of Government's one-off relief measures are shown in Table 2. For discerning the latest trend in consumer prices, it is also useful to look at the changes in the seasonally adjusted CPIs. The corresponding time series on the average monthly rates of change during the latest three months for the seasonally adjusted CPIs are shown in Table 3. The rates of change in the original and the seasonally adjusted Composite CPI and the underlying inflation rate are presented graphically in Chart 1.

More detailed CPI data (including year-on-year comparison, month-to-month comparison, seasonally adjusted data series and the CPIs by the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)) are available in the monthly reports. Users can download the April 2018 issue of the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index" (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=B1060001), the time series of CPIs at detailed level (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600001), the time series of CPIs at COICOP division level (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600002) and the time series of CPIs after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600003) free of charge at the website of the C&SD.

For enquiries about the CPIs, please contact the Consumer Price Index Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7374 or email: cpi@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Construction Safety Week calls on industry to enhance site safety \(with photos\)](#)

Construction Safety Week (CSW) 2018 will be held from today (May 21) to May 29. Under the theme "Partnering for Safety Enhancement", a series of events will be held which includes the Construction Safety Week Conference,

visits to construction sites with an exemplary safety performance, the Considerate Contractors Site Award Scheme Award Presentation Ceremony and Construction Safety Week Carnival.

The Construction Safety Week launch ceremony and conference were held today. It was the first time that young practitioners of the industry were invited to take part in a panel discussion to exchange views on issues regarding site safety.

Officiating at the launch ceremony, the Permanent Secretary for Development (Works), Mr Hon Chi-keung, said that all members of the construction team must perform their own duties and make concerted efforts in implementing safety management and measures at the sites in order to ensure work safety. Mr Hon encouraged the project teams of all construction sites in the city to enhance the site safety of the construction industry and create a healthy working environment.

The Chairman of the Construction Industry Council, Mr Chan Ka-kui, said he hoped that public knowledge and awareness of construction safety could be further enhanced through the carnival, to be held coming Sunday, under the Construction Safety Week.

First launched in 2012, Construction Safety Week aims to promote a zero-accident site environment and a caring environment in the construction industry. The campaign has received tremendous support from various sectors of the community including from various professional groups, organisations, trade associations and labour unions. Details of Construction Safety Week are available at www.safetyweek.hk.

