

12 persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operations (with photo)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations codenamed "Twilight", and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion" and "Windsand", for four consecutive days from July 15 to yesterday (June 18). A total of nine suspected illegal workers and three suspected employers were arrested.

During the anti-illegal worker operations, ImmD Task Force officers raided nine target locations including premises under renovation and restaurants. Five suspected illegal workers and one suspected employer were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprised two men and three women, aged 24 to 46. Among them, one man and one woman were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. In addition, one man and one woman were suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card respectively. One man, aged 28, who was suspected of employing the illegal workers, was also arrested.

During operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided 55 target locations in Central district, including massage parlours and restaurants. Four suspected illegal workers and two suspected employers were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprised two men and two women, aged 37 to 49. Among them, one woman was a holder of recognisance form, which prohibits her from taking any employment. In addition, one woman was suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card. Furthermore, two men, aged 47 and 63, were suspected of employing the illegal workers and were also arrested. Among them, three suspected illegal workers and one suspected employer were handled by the ImmD.

An ImmD spokesman said, "Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him or her shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties."

The spokesman warned, "As stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land is 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. Under the prevailing laws, 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 upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$100,000 and up to 10 years' imprisonment."

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. Under the Immigration Ordinance, the maximum penalty for an employer employing a person who is not lawfully employable, i.e. an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land, has been significantly increased from a fine of \$350,000 and three years' imprisonment to a fine of \$500,000 and 10 years' imprisonment to reflect the gravity of such offences. The director, manager, secretary, partner, etc, of the company concerned may also bear criminal liability. 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. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for one year. In that connection, the spokesman reminded all employers not to defy the law by employing illegal workers. The ImmD will continue to take resolute enforcement action to combat such offences.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct an 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 ImmD officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats 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 intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter or temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments immediately.



[Update on dengue fever](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 19) reported the latest number of dengue fever (DF) cases, and urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From July 12 to yesterday (July 18), the CHP recorded one imported DF case; the patient had been to Thailand during the incubation period.

As of yesterday, 37 cases of DF, including 34 imported and three local cases, had been recorded in 2024. In 2023, 62 imported cases of DF were recorded.

According to the World Health Organization, the global incidence of DF has markedly increased over the past two decades, posing a substantial public health challenge. In 2023, ongoing transmission, combined with an unexpected spike in DF cases, had resulted in close to a historic high of over 6.5 million cases and more than 7 300 dengue-related deaths reported in over 80 countries/territories. The latest surveillance data shows that there is an increase in DF cases noted in some places in Asia (such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) compared to the same period last year. Since the beginning of 2024, the Americas, including Brazil, Argentina and Peru, have recorded over 10 million cases, a record number. Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong, as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas, has been uploaded to the CHP website (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf).

"Apart from general measures, travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to a doctor," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers, and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

â€‹DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Reapply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

â€‹The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

Sport For All Day 2024 free activity coupons to be distributed July 22

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will distribute free activity coupons from next Monday (July 22) for Sport For All Day 2024 to be held on August 4 (Sunday). Members of the public with the coupons can take

part in a series of free recreation and sports programmes to be held at designated sports centres in 18 districts on the event day.

The theme of Sport For All Day (SFAD) this year is "Parent-child Exercise for Fun and Fitness". The LCSD will organise a variety of sports demonstrations and parent-child fun games, encouraging parents and children to exercise together and develop the habit of regular physical activity.

"Parent-child Group Exercises" suitable for people of different ages will be demonstrated, and an electronic virtual sports booth will be set up at the Tung Cheong Street Sports Centre, the prime venue. Experiential activities for new sports as well as urban sports, such as Kabaddi and Basketball 3×3, which are popular these years, will also be introduced. Members of the public of different age groups are encouraged to take part in these activities and explore their potential in sports.

Free recreation and sports programmes will be held from 2pm to 6pm on August 4 at designated sports centres in 18 districts. The activities will include health talks and fitness corners, as well as sports demonstrations and fun games for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Activity coupons will be available from 8.30am on July 22 (Monday) at LCSD District Leisure Services Offices and designated venues in the 18 districts. Participants are advised to bring along the activity coupons to attend the events on time. A small portion of coupons will be reserved for walk-in participants on the event day on a first-come, first-served basis.

Furthermore, various LCSD leisure facilities will also be open for free use by the public on SFAD 2024, and the sessions for free use of facilities will be allocated through balloting. Members of the public can submit a balloting application via SmartPLAY from now on until July 22. The computer balloting results will be announced by July 25. Members of the public, who have not been allocated with or applied for the balloted free sessions, can book the remaining free sessions, if any, via SmartPLAY on a first-come, first-served basis from 7am on July 29 for the free sessions on August 4. Regardless of the facility types or reservation methods, each person is limited to reserving only one free session.

Sports demonstrations will be featured in a live webcast via the event dedicated website (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/sfad) and the "LCSD Plusss" Facebook page (www.facebook.com/LCSDPlusss) on the event day from 2pm. Members of the public can experience the vigour of sports demonstrations at home through online platforms.

Moreover, the LCSD will set up an SFAD activity booth at the "Sport for All Fun Day" of Festival of Sports, which will be held by the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) at the Free Space of Kwun Tong Town Centre from 11am to 6pm on August 3 and 4, aiming to further enhance public interest in sporting activities. For the details of the event, please visit the website of the SF&OC at fos.hkolympic.org/en/programme/event-list.

Furthermore, to echo the SFAD 2024, over 10 organisations will firstly hold free land-based and aquatic recreation and sports programmes for the public to join in their venues, or open up their facilities for free use on August 4. Details are available on the dedicated webpage (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/sfad/2024/organizations.html).

For details of SFAD 2024, please visit the dedicated website at www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/sfad.

[LegCo Panel on Housing to conduct duty visit to Zhuhai and Shenzhen](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Housing will depart for Zhuhai and Shenzhen on Sunday (July 21) to conduct a two-day duty visit.

The objectives of the duty visit are for LegCo members to learn about the manufacturing process of concrete Modular Integrated Construction modules in Mainland, and to gain an understanding on how Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area create public housing projects and community facilities through green technology, modular construction techniques, etc.

The delegation will visit the following places and organisations from July 21 to 22:

Zhuhai

- Guangdong Hailong Construction Technology Company Limited
- Fushan Industrial City

Shenzhen

- Guangqiao Yayuan
- Phoenix Yinghui Town
- Housing and Construction Bureau of Shenzhen Municipality
- Double-line Park (Coastal Bridge) in Bao'an Central District

The delegation is led by the Chairman of the LegCo Panel on Housing, Mr Stanley Ng. The deputy delegation leader is the Deputy Chairman of the Panel, Mr Vincent Cheng. Other participating Panel members include Mr Paul Tse, Dr Lo Wai-kwok, Mr Lau Kwok-fan, Mr Tony Tse, Mr Andrew Lam, Mr Leung Man-kwong,

Mr Chan Hok-fung, Mr Gary Zhang, Ms Carmen Kan and Dr So Cheung-wing; as well as non-Panel members Ms Lam So-wai, Ms Judy Chan, Mr Chan Siu-hung and Dr Ngan Man-yu.

The Housing Bureau's delegation led by the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, will also join the duty visit.

Business expectations for the third quarter of 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (July 19) the results of the Quarterly Business Tendency Survey for the third quarter (Q3) of 2024.

Business situation

For all surveyed sectors taken together, the proportion of respondents expecting their business situation to be better (11%) in Q3 2024 over the preceding quarter is slightly lower than that expecting it to be worse (12%).

When compared with the results of the Q2 2024 survey round, the proportion of respondents expecting a better business situation in Q3 2024 is 11%, lower than the corresponding proportion of 14% in Q2 2024, while the proportion of respondents expecting a worse business situation in Q3 2024 is broadly the same as the corresponding proportion in Q2 2024 (12%).

Analysed by sector, respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their business situation to decrease on balance or remain broadly unchanged in Q3 2024 as compared with Q2 2024. In particular, more respondents in the construction and retail sectors expect their business situation to be worse in Q3 2024 as compared with Q2 2024.

The results of the survey should be interpreted with care. In this type of survey on expectations, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the future accords with the underlying trends. The enumeration period for this survey round was from June 1, 2024 to July 8, 2024.

Volume of business/output

Respondents in quite a number of the surveyed sectors expect their volume of business/output to remain broadly unchanged in Q3 2024 as compared with Q2 2024. In the manufacturing and accommodation and food services

sectors, however, more respondents expect their volume of production/business to increase in Q3 2024 over Q2 2024. On the contrary, more respondents in the retail sector expect their volume of sales to decrease, as compared to those expecting it to increase.

Employment

Respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their employment to remain broadly unchanged in Q3 2024 as compared with Q2 2024. Nevertheless, more respondents in the manufacturing sector expect their employment to increase, as compared to those expecting it to decrease.

Selling price/service charge

Respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their selling prices/service charges to remain broadly unchanged in Q3 2024 as compared with Q2 2024. In the construction sector, however, more respondents expect their tender prices to go down in Q3 2024 over Q2 2024.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that large enterprises' overall business sentiment softened slightly as compared to three months ago. Meanwhile, large enterprises' appetite for hiring stayed largely positive.

Looking forward, the spokesman said that while geopolitical tensions will affect business sentiment in the near term, the Central Government's various measures that benefit Hong Kong and continued growth of the local economy should provide support. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

Further information

The survey gathers views on short-term business performance from the senior management of about 560 prominent establishments in various sectors in Hong Kong with a view to providing a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for predicting the short-term future economic performance of the local economy.

The survey covers 10 major sectors in Hong Kong, namely manufacturing; construction; import/export trade and wholesale; retail; accommodation and food services (mainly covering services rendered by hotels and restaurants); transportation, storage and courier services; information and communications; financing and insurance; real estate; and professional and business services sectors.

Views collected in the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in, and are limited to the expected direction of quarter-to-quarter change (e.g. "up", "same" or "down") but not the magnitude of change. In collecting views on the quarter-to-quarter changes, if the variable in

question is subject to seasonal variations, respondents are asked to provide the expected changes after excluding the normal seasonal variations.

Survey results are generally presented as "net balance", i.e. the difference between the percentage of respondents choosing "up" and that choosing "down". The percentage distribution of respondents among various response categories (e.g. "up", "same" and "down") reflects how varied their business expectations are. The "net balance", with its appropriate sign, indicates the direction of expected change in the variable concerned. A positive sign indicates a likely upward trend while a negative sign indicates a likely downward trend. However, the magnitude of the "net balance" reflects only the prevalence of optimism or pessimism, but not the magnitude of expected change, since information relating to such magnitude is not collected in the survey.

Furthermore, owing to sample size constraint, care should be taken in interpreting survey results involving a small percentage (e.g. less than 10%) of respondents in individual sectors.

Chart 1 shows the views on expected changes in business situation for the period Q3 2023 to Q3 2024.

Table 1 shows the net balances of views on expectations in respect of different variables for Q3 2024.

The survey results are published in greater detail in the "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey, Q3 2024". Users can browse and download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1110008&scode=300).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Business Expectation Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7263; e-mail: business-prospects@censtatd.gov.hk).