

CE meets Consul-General of Japan in HK to reiterate great concern on discharge plan of Fukushima nuclear power station

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met the Consul-General of Japan in Hong Kong, Mr Kenichi Okada, today (July 21) upon request and expressed the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's great concern on the discharge plan of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station (FNPS) of Japan. Mr Lee also stated that the principal consideration of the HKSAR Government is to protect food safety and safeguard public health in Hong Kong. The Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, also attended the meeting.

At the meeting, Mr Lee pointed out to Mr Okada that the discharge, which will dump large volumes of wastewater into the ocean continuously for 30 years, is unprecedented and will cause unavoidable risks to food safety and the environment. Should the Japanese side insist on proceeding with the discharge, the HKSAR Government must put in place measures with the view to protect food safety and safeguard the health of citizens in Hong Kong. Such measures, which are essential and necessary, have been earlier announced by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology. The HKSAR Government will closely monitor developments and is willing to maintain communication with the Japanese side.

As announced by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology on July 12, based on the principle of effective precaution in advance, the HKSAR Government has planned that, once the Japanese side commences the discharge of wastewater, the import of aquatic products, including all live, frozen, chilled, dried, or otherwise preserved aquatic products, sea salt and unprocessed or processed seaweed, originating from 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Chiba, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Gunma, Miyagi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama would be prohibited immediately.

Apart from prohibiting aquatic products of relevant metropolis/prefectures from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will perform its gatekeeping role at the import and retail levels, continue enhancing the testing on imported Japanese food, and adjust in a timely manner the corresponding monitoring work having regard to risk assessment. In fact, the CFS has since mid-June expanded the scope of testing to cover all Japanese aquatic products and stepped up tests on related processed food imported from Japan.

There are currently around 1.3 million cubic metres of radioactive wastewater, which involves at least 30 radionuclides, stored in some 1 000

tanks at the FNPS. The Japanese Government plans to discharge the wastewater into the Pacific Ocean for a period of 30 years, with an annual discharge volume of up to 15 million cubic metres after treatment and dilution.

[18 persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operations \(with photos\)](#)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations codenamed "Lightshadow" and "Twilight", and a joint operation with the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Windsand", for three consecutive days from July 18 to yesterday (July 20). A total of 15 suspected illegal workers and three suspected employers were arrested.

During the anti-illegal worker operations, ImmD Task Force officers raided 58 target locations including a car park, a garage, industrial buildings, premises under renovation, a residential building and restaurants. Fifteen suspected illegal workers and three suspected employers were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprised eight men and seven women, aged 25 to 61. Among them, one man and two women were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Two men and one woman, aged 43 to 64, were suspected of employing the illegal workers and were also arrested.

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."

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 would like to remind 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.



HKMA issues alert regarding specific website

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public in Hong Kong that Hocomban International Finance Limited as referred to on the website (<https://hifinltd.com/>) does not have the authorization of the Monetary Authority (MA) under the Banking Ordinance (the Ordinance) to carry on banking business, or the business of taking deposits, in Hong Kong; and Hocomban International Finance Limited does not have the approval of the MA to establish a local representative office in Hong Kong under the Ordinance.

Given the global nature of the Internet, members of the public are reminded to verify the status of any organisation making use of the Internet to offer bank accounts to, or to solicit deposits from, the public in Hong Kong prior to transferring any funds to, or providing any personal information to, any such organisation.

A list of authorized institutions is available on the HKMA's website (www.hkma.gov.hk). Members of the public may also check the status of any entity which appears to be soliciting deposits from the public in Hong Kong, or holding itself out as a bank or deposit-taking company in Hong Kong, by emailing the HKMA's public enquiry service (publicenquiry@hkma.gov.hk).

Anyone who has transferred monies or conducted any financial transaction, or who has provided personal information, in response to, or via, the above Website should contact the Police at any local Police Station or by calling the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Extension of term of Inspector appointed by Financial Secretary to investigate affairs of Next Digital Limited

The Government announced today (July 21) the further extension of the appointment of Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing as the Inspector to investigate the affairs of Next Digital Limited (NDL) by six months up to January 27, 2024.

The Financial Secretary, pursuant to the power conferred on him by sections 841(2) and (3) of the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622), had appointed Mr Chan as the Inspector to investigate the affairs of NDL. As the Inspector has indicated to the Financial Secretary that the above investigation was still ongoing, the Financial Secretary has decided to further extend the Inspector's appointment by six months.

[Update on dengue fever](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 21) 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 14 to yesterday (July 20), the CHP recorded two imported DF cases. The patients had been to Thailand during the incubation periods.

As of yesterday, 19 imported cases of DF had been recorded in 2023. In 2022, 26 imported cases of DF were recorded.

The latest surveillance data shows that there is an increase in DF cases noted in some places in Asia (such as Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand) and South America compared to the same period last year, and the trend is rising. Members of the public, while travelling abroad, should stay vigilant and carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures. 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's 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 the 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.

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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
- Re-apply 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](#).