

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

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations codenamed "Lightshadow" to combat illegal food delivery couriers for three consecutive days from July 8 to today (July 10). A total of eight suspected illegal workers and three suspected aiders and abettors were arrested.

During the anti-illegal worker operations, proof of identity checks were conducted on 93 food delivery couriers by ImmD Task Force officers. Eight suspected illegal workers and three suspected aiders and abettors were arrested. The eight arrested suspected illegal workers were non-ethnic Chinese males aged 20 to 45. All were found to be holders of recognisance forms and were non-refoulement claimants, which prohibit them from taking any employment in Hong Kong. Among them, three men were also suspected of illegally using electric mobility devices. Relevant cases will be referred to the Hong Kong Police Force for follow-up action.

Furthermore, three suspected aiders and abettors were Hong Kong residents age 19 to 45. The one man and two women were arrested for being suspected of a conspiracy to defraud delivery platforms by selling or renting their food delivery courier accounts to the illegal workers.

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 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 cluster of COVID-19 cases in Ruttonjee Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients infected with COVID-19 in a geriatric infirmary ward, the spokesperson for Ruttonjee Hospital made the following update today (July 10):

Two more patients (women aged 66 and 76) in the ward have presented with fever. Appropriate tests were arranged for the patients and their test results were positive for COVID-19. The patients concerned are currently being treated in cohort isolation and all are in stable condition.

Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

[Hong Kong Customs detects case of non-registered precious metals and stones dealer carrying out specified](#)

transaction

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 9) detected a case involving a local company that conducted a jewellery transaction with a total value exceeding HK\$120,000 without being registered under the Dealers in Precious Metals and Stones Regulatory Regime. The sole director of the company was arrested.

The investigation is ongoing. The arrested person has been released on bail pending further investigation.

According to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615), the Regime came into effect on April 1, 2023. Any person who is seeking to carry on a business of dealing in precious metals and stones in Hong Kong and engage in any transaction(s) (whether making or receiving a payment) with a total value at or above HK\$120,000 in Hong Kong is required to register with the Commissioner of Customs and Excise. Any dealer, other than a registrant, who claims to be a registrant, claims to be authorised to carry out, or carries out any cash or non-cash transaction(s) with a total value at or above HK\$120,000 is liable, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of HK\$100,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Hong Kong Customs reminds all dealers in precious metals and stones that the transitional period for registration under the Regime has ended. Any dealer who submits their applications for registration from January 1, 2024, onwards must successfully obtain the relevant registration before they can carry out any cash or non-cash transaction(s) with a total value at or above HK\$120,000.

For the forms, procedures and guidelines to submit applications for registration, please visit the website for Dealers in Precious Metals and Stones Registration System (www.drs.customs.gov.hk) or Hong Kong Customs' webpage (www.customs.gov.hk/en/service-enforcement-information/anti-money-laundering/supervision-of-dealers-in-precious-metals-and-ston/index.html).

Members of the public may report any suspected transactions involving precious metals and stones with a total value at or above HK\$120,000 conducted without the required registration to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

HAD opens temporary heat shelters

The Home Affairs Department will continue to open 19 community

halls/community centres as temporary heat shelters today (July 10).

The temporary heat shelters will remain open for people to take refuge from the heat when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force. From 10.30pm to 8am the next day, the temporary heat shelters will also provide bedding and a sleeping place for people in need. The shelters are manned by duty attendants.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Island:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –

Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –
Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building, 39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –
Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –
Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex, 38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau,
Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

In addition to the above heat shelters, a number of community halls/community centres can also be used for taking refuge from the heat during their operating hours. For their address details, please browse the following

Results of monthly survey on business situation of small and medium-sized enterprises for June 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (July 10) the results of the Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for June 2024.

The current diffusion index (DI) on business receipts amongst SMEs decreased from 43.0 in May 2024 in the contractionary zone to 41.4 in June 2024, whereas the one-month's ahead (i.e. July 2024) outlook DI on business receipts was 46.5. Analysed by sector, the current DIs on business receipts for majority of the surveyed sectors dropped in June 2024 as compared with previous month, particularly for the restaurants (from 39.1 to 33.3) and retail trade (from 42.9 to 39.9).

The current DI on new orders for the import and export trades decreased from 45.2 in May 2024 to 44.1 in June 2024, whereas the outlook DI on new orders in one month's time (i.e. July 2024) was 48.7.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that overall business sentiment among SMEs softened further in June. The overall expectations on the business situation in one month's time also turned slightly weaker, but some sectors expected relative improvement. The overall employment situation remained generally stable.

The spokesman added that while geopolitical tensions and changes in the consumption patterns of visitors and residents 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 Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises aims to provide a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for assessing the short-term business situation faced by SMEs. SMEs covered in this survey refer to establishments with fewer than 50 persons engaged. Respondents were asked to exclude seasonal fluctuations in reporting their

views. Based on the views collected from the survey, a set of diffusion indices (including current and outlook diffusion indices) is compiled. A reading above 50 indicates that the business condition is generally favourable, whereas that below 50 indicates otherwise. As for statistics on the business prospects of prominent establishments in Hong Kong, users may refer to the publication entitled "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey" released by the C&SD.

The results of the survey should be interpreted with care. The survey solicits feedback from a panel sample of about 600 SMEs each month and the survey findings are thus subject to sample size constraint. Views collected from the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in. Besides, in this type of opinion survey on expected business situation, 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 business situation accords with the underlying trends. For this survey, main bulk of the data were collected around the last week of the reference month.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey on the Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises". Users can browse and download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080015&scode=300).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact Industrial Production Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7246; email: sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk).