

Red flag lowered at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department said today (April 26) that the red flag at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District has been lowered.

The red flag was hoisted earlier due to inclement weather.

15 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 April 22 to yesterday (April 25). A total of 13 suspected illegal workers and two suspected employers were arrested.

During the anti-illegal worker operations, ImmD Task Force officers raided nine target locations including premises under renovation, residential buildings and restaurants. Twelve suspected illegal workers and two suspected employers were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprised seven men and five women, aged 27 to 54. Among them, two men and one woman were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. In addition, one woman was also suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card. Two men, aged 38 and 53, were suspected of employing the illegal workers and were also arrested.

During operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided three target locations in the New Territories North Region and one male suspected illegal worker, aged 30, was arrested. Also, the man was a holder of recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment.

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 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.



Special traffic arrangements in the New Territories

Police will implement special traffic arrangements on April 28 (Sunday) to facilitate a public order event to be held in Tai Po.

The following roads will be closed from 1pm to 5pm:

1. Southbound Ting Kok Road between Ting Tai Road and On Chee Road;
2. Eastbound On Chee Road between Ting Kok Road and On Cheung Road;
3. Northbound On Cheung Road between On Chee Road and Tai Po Tai Wo Road;
4. Northbound Po Heung Street between Po Yick Street and Tai Po Tai Wo Road will be intermittently closed;
5. Po Heung Street between Plover Cove Road and Nam Shing Street, except for (4);
6. Kwong Fuk Road between On Fu Road and Wan Tau Street;
7. Westbound Plover Cove Road between Po Heung Street and northbound Tung Mau Square; and
8. Wai Yan Street between On Fu Road and Po Heung Street.

Appropriate traffic aids will be erected on site. Actual implementation of the traffic arrangements will be made depending on traffic and crowd conditions in the area. Motorists are advised to exercise tolerance and patience and take heed of instructions of the Police on site.

Postal services to Moldova return to

normal

Hongkong Post announced today (April 26) that, as advised by the postal administration of Moldova, mail delivery services previously impacted by a cyber incident have returned to normal.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on April 25 to noon today (April 26), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 190 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 52 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 46 052 samples of food imported from Japan (including 30 095 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 12 184 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.