

## Hong Kong resident jailed for conspiracy to defraud and conspiracy to obtain services by deception

A Hong Kong resident was charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud and one count of conspiracy to obtain services by deception. The defendant pleaded guilty to the charges at Sha Tin Magistrates' Courts today (May 4). He was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment for each charge and the sentences are to run concurrently.

The 59-year-old defendant married a Mainland pregnant woman in Hong Kong in August 2019. Subsequently, the Mainland pregnant woman successfully obtained a Confirmation Certificate on Delivery Booking from a private hospital for delivery services by virtue of her marital relationship with the defendant. Due to doubts about the marital relationship between the defendant and the Mainland pregnant woman, an investigation against them was thus conducted.

During the investigation, the defendant admitted that under the arrangement of a middleman, he was paid \$20,000 as a monetary reward to contract a bogus marriage with the Mainland pregnant woman in order to enable her to obtain a Confirmation Certificate on Delivery Booking for delivery in Hong Kong. The Mainland pregnant woman finally could not give birth in Hong Kong.

An investigation of other suspects is continuing.

"The Immigration Department is concerned about the situation of non-local pregnant women seeking to give birth in Hong Kong by illegal means. While great efforts are made to identify doubtful cases and to intercept non-local pregnant women without a confinement booking at the control points, vigorous enforcement actions have also been taken to combat related immigration offences committed by non-local pregnant women and their abettors," an Immigration Department spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that conspiracy to defraud is a serious offence. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction, under the Crimes Ordinance, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years. Moreover, under the Theft Ordinance, a person who by any deception dishonestly obtains services from another shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable, upon conviction, to the maximum penalty of imprisonment for 10 years.