

# Immigration Department combats Mainland visitors abusing transit arrangement for holders of PRC passports

Seven Mainland visitors were convicted of making false representation to Immigration Officers at Shatin Magistrates' Courts earlier and today (May 24).

To tackle abuse by Mainland visitors of the existing transit arrangement for holders of People's Republic of China (PRC) passports, the Immigration Department (ImmD) conducted an operation codenamed "Breakshadow" at Lo Wu Control Point, Lok Ma Chau Control Point, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point and Shenzhen Bay Control Point on April 17. During the operation, seven Mainland visitors, comprising three men and four women aged 24 to 54, were arrested. A total of six invalid onward flight tickets were also found in the operation. Upon arrival for immigration clearance, the Mainland visitors concerned falsely told Immigration Officers that they were transiting through Hong Kong to other countries. Upon further investigation by the ImmD, they admitted that their actual purpose of visit was not to transit via Hong Kong to other countries but sightseeing in Hong Kong.

All the arrestees were charged with making false representation to Immigration Officers. They all pleaded guilty and among them five were sentenced to five to six months' imprisonment. The other two arrestees were sentenced to four to six months' imprisonment suspended for 18 months to two years.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, under the laws of Hong Kong, any person who makes false representation to an Immigration Officer commits an offence. Offenders are liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty will be a fine of \$150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years. In addition, if Mainland visitors abuse the existing transit arrangement for holders of PRC passports by not departing for other countries or territories according to their original itinerary, relevant information will be recorded by the ImmD. Upon their next arrival, Immigration Officers at control points will conduct detailed examination before a decision to grant or refuse permission to land is made.