

# Hong Kong and Chongqing sign MOU on investment promotion co-operation

Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Chongqing Municipal Commission of Commerce signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) today (September 3) at the Chongqing Hong Kong Symposium pledging mutual co-operation on investment promotion exchange and support.

The MOU was signed by the Acting Director-General of Investment Promotion at InvestHK, Mr Vincent Tang, and the Deputy Director of Chongqing Municipal Commission of Commerce, Mr Song Gang, providing a framework to enhance co-operation of the two places in investment promotion and the business opportunities, especially in the areas of financial services, exhibition, trading, commerce and retail, and logistics, arising from the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, delivered opening remarks at the Symposium, which aims to explore mutual business opportunities between Hong Kong and Chongqing. The Chongqing Municipal Commission of Commerce also announced at the event that it will open its China (Chongqing) Pilot Free Trade Zone Hong Kong representative office, leveraging the city's international status to assist Chongqing companies to "go global" and attract overseas companies to Chongqing.

The Hong Kong representative office is tasked with the mission to promote Chongqing's business environment globally, extend its overseas connections and strengthen its economic and trade co-operation with Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao. It will also use Hong Kong as the international platform from which to explore business opportunities overseas and assist Chongqing companies to engage in fundraising activities through listing and issuing bonds.

Mr Tang said, "Hong Kong and Chongqing have very close trade and economic ties, and Hong Kong is also the largest source of foreign direct investment in Chongqing, engaged mainly in real estate, finance, leasing and business services industries. The MOU signed today between InvestHK and the Chongqing Municipal Commission of Commerce and the representative office being set up will reinforce our collaboration amid the Belt and Road Initiative."

## About InvestHK

InvestHK is the department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government responsible for attracting foreign direct investment and supporting overseas and Mainland businesses to set up or expand in Hong Kong. It provides free advice and customised services for overseas and Mainland companies enrolled as its clients. For more information, please visit [www.investhk.gov.hk](http://www.investhk.gov.hk).

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## Three illegal workers jailed

Three illegal workers comprising an Indian, a Vietnamese and an Indonesian were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts on August 31.

During operation "Twilight" on July 3, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Yuen Long. A female Indonesian illegal worker, aged 34, was arrested. When intercepted she was washing dishes. Upon identity checking she produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

In addition, ImmD investigators received referrals from the Police to further investigate two illegal employment cases in July and August respectively. A male Indian illegal worker and a male Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 28 and 36, were arrested at Ngau Tau Kok and San Po Kong respectively. When intercepted they were conveying goods. Upon identity checking, they produced for inspection recognisance forms issued by the ImmD, which prohibits them from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that they were non-refoulement claimants. Two employers suspected of employing the illegal workers were arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The three illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on August 31 with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They pleaded guilty to the charges and they were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 15 months to 18 months.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are 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 Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. 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. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening on 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 officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat 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 interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

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## [Update on latest MERS situation in United Kingdom](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 3) closely monitoring an additional imported case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by the United Kingdom (UK) in August 2018, and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, the case involves a male patient aged between 80 and 89 years with underlying illness, who is a resident of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) visiting the UK.

The patient was symptomatic while travelling from the KSA to the UK on August 16. Before the onset of symptoms, he had no history of recent travel or contact with sick patients in the KSA, but had history of direct contact with camels. The patient is now receiving treatment under isolation in the UK. According to the WHO, this is the fifth MERS case diagnosed in the UK, with the four previous cases diagnosed in 2012 and 2013.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus," the spokesman said.

The Hajj pilgrimage ended in late August. If pilgrims feel unwell during the two weeks after returning to Hong Kong, they should wear a surgical mask and seek medical attention immediately and inform a doctor of their recent travel history, including transit.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

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## [Effective Exchange Rate Index](#)

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, September 3, 2018 is 104.1 (down 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, September 1, 2018 was 104.2 (up 0.2 against last Friday's index).