

Labour Department to hold occupational health public talks

The Labour Department (LD) will hold a public talk entitled "Occupational health in wholesale and retail industry" on June 21 (Thursday). Designed for workers in the wholesale and retail industry, the talk will cover occupational hazards and their preventive measures to enhance workers' awareness of occupational health.

The talk will be held at 3pm in the Health Education Room of the LD's Occupational Safety and Health Centre, which is located at G/F, Kwun Tong Community Health Centre Building, 60 Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong. An occupational health nurse from the LD will lead the demonstration and practice of workplace exercise.

The LD will hold another talk entitled "Occupational safety and health (OSH) for confined space workers" on June 27 (Wednesday). To enhance workers' OSH awareness in confined spaces, the talk will explain the related OSH hazards as well as their preventive measures.

The talk, to be given by the LD's occupational hygienist, occupational safety officer and occupational health nurse, will be held at 3pm in Activity Room 1, Hong Kong Central Library, 66 Causeway Road, Causeway Bay.

Both talks will be conducted in Cantonese. Admission is free. For enquiries or registration, please call 2852 4040.

Illegal worker jailed

An Indonesian illegal worker holding a recognisance form was jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (June 13).

During operation "Twilight" conducted on June 11, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Tuen Mun. A female Indonesian illegal worker, aged 46, 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. Meanwhile, two employers suspected of employing the illegal worker were arrested and the investigations are ongoing.

The illegal worker was charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday 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. She pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment.

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.

Red flags hoisted at several beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (June 14) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Hung Shing Yeh Beach, Pui O Beach and Lower Cheung Sha Beach in Islands District; and Clear Water Bay First Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Hongkong Post to hold exhibition for 17th Inter-School Stamp Exhibits Competition (with photo)

Hongkong Post announced today (June 14) that an exhibition displaying the winning entries and other entries of the 17th Inter-School Stamp Exhibits Competition will be held at Sha Tin Town Hall from June 29 to July 1. The competition is co-organised by Hongkong Post and the Education Bureau to promote philately among students. The exhibition will be open to the public and admission is free.

Hongkong Post will issue a souvenir cover, together with a special postmark and a cachet, to mark the event. Souvenir covers will be put on sale at \$2 each at all philatelic offices from tomorrow (June 15) to July 1. A hand-back date-stamping service will be provided at the exhibition venue and all philatelic offices on June 29.

Information about the exhibition and the souvenir covers is available on Hongkong Post's website at www.hongkongpost.hk and the Hongkong Post mobile app.



Served Souvenir Cover affixed with a \$2 definitive stamp.
Date-stamped with the special postmark and cachet.

Adjustment of the Base Rate

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced today (June 14) that the Base Rate was adjusted upward by 25 basis points to 2.25% with immediate effect according to a pre-set formula. The increase in the Base Rate follows the 25-basis point upward shift in the target range for the US federal funds rate on June 13 (US time).

The Base Rate is the interest rate forming the foundation upon which the Discount Rates for repurchase transactions through the Discount Window are computed. The Base Rate is currently set at either 50 basis points above the lower end of the prevailing target range for the US federal funds rate or the average of the five-day moving averages of the overnight and one-month Hong Kong Interbank Offered Rates, whichever is the higher.