

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

A 42-year-old Hong Kong male resident and a 43-year-old Hong Kong female resident were charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud and one count of conspiracy to obtain services by deception. The defendants were convicted after trial at the Sha Tin Magistrates' Courts today (October 25) and sentenced to 18 months, and 22 months and two weeks' imprisonment for the charges respectively.

The two defendants arranged for a Hong Kong male resident to marry a Mainland woman in Hong Kong so that she could successfully obtain a Confirmation Certificate on Delivery Booking from a private hospital for delivery services based on her marital relationship with the defendant. Due to doubts about the marital relationship between the Hong Kong male resident and the Mainland pregnant woman, an investigation was conducted against them.

After being arrested, the Hong Kong male resident admitted that he was paid \$15,000 as a monetary reward to contract a bogus marriage with the Mainland pregnant woman under the arrangement of the two defendants, in order to enable her to obtain a Confirmation Certificate on Delivery Booking for delivery in Hong Kong. The Mainland pregnant woman ultimately could not give birth in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong male resident had previously been charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud and one count of conspiracy to obtain services by deception. He pleaded guilty to the charge the Sha Tin Magistrates' Courts and is pending sentencing.

"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 intercept non-local pregnant women without a confinement booking at 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.