

Two men jailed for conspiracy to obtain airline services by deception

A 24-year-old Sri Lankan man was jailed for possession of a forged travel document and conspiracy to obtain airline services by deception and a 45-year-old Canadian man was jailed for conspiracy to obtain airline services by deception after they appeared in the District Court today (January 18).

The Anti-illegal Migration Agency (AIM) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) received intelligence in May 2018 that a Canadian man suspected to be involved in illegal migration activities would travel to Hong Kong via Bangkok. Investigators of the AIM successfully identified the Canadian man in the restricted area of Hong Kong International Airport after he disembarked from a flight from Bangkok. Investigators tracked him to a toilet inside the Airport where he was found transferring a boarding pass to a foreign man through an opening of a toilet cubicle. The two men then left the toilet and approached different boarding gates.

Immigration investigators then tracked the two men and intercepted the Sri Lankan man at the boarding gate of a Paris-bound flight. He produced for inspection a French passport bearing his photo but with the name of the Canadian man and a boarding pass to Paris. The French passport was found to be forged after examination. Upon enquiry, the man took out a Sri Lankan passport from his underwear confirming that he was in fact a Sri Lankan national. The Canadian man was apprehended by Immigration investigators at the boarding gate of a Bangkok-bound flight.

The Sri Lankan man and the Canadian man were charged at the District Court today with conspiracy to obtain services by deception. They pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to 18 months' and 22 months' imprisonment respectively. In addition, the Sri Lankan man also pleaded guilty to one count of possession of a forged travel document and was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. All charges are to run concurrently, making a total of 18 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, under the Theft Ordinance, people who, by any deception, dishonestly obtain services from another shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable, upon conviction, to imprisonment for 10 years. In addition, any person who possesses a forged travel document 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.