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Airport contractors lose labour quotas

By Dominic Lau

TWO contractors in the airport core program have had their labour-import quotas cancelled after being found guilty of breaching the Importation of Labour Scheme, a government official says.

Local workers and trade unions have called on the government to scrap the scheme, saying contractors in the 10 core projects are discriminating against them in favour of cheap foreign labour.

Under the scheme, 27,000 guest workers have been allowed to work on the projects.

Labour Department assistant commissioner Angela Ho said her department had cancelled the labour quotas of two other firms — a clothing manufacturer and an electronics company.

Mrs Ho said the government would help the 210 guest workers already in the territory find work in Hong Kong until their visas expired.

She said since the government's recruitment drive to find jobs for local workers on core projects began on 20 March, 17 out of more than 700 local workers had been hired.

Another 381 workers were being interviewed with the help of her department.

However, dissatisfied legislators are pressing the government to introduce legislation giving priority to local workers.

Pro-China legislator Tam Yiu-chung said the government should have a law allowing locals to get jobs instead of permitting more imported workers to come to Hong Kong.

He said unemployment in the territory had risen to 2.5 per cent.