



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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/Fire officers



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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
CARRON ROAD, HONG KONG
HONG KONG

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Statement by the Governor on Deng's death

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Following is the statement by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, this (Thursday) morning:

I learned with regret this morning of the death of Mr Deng Xiaoping.

Deng Xiaoping has been the principal architect in recent years of China's modernisation and opening to the outside world. He will be regarded by future generations as an historic figure. His concept of "one country, two systems" helped to make possible the successful negotiation of the Joint Declaration, and thus to lay the foundation for Hong Kong's stability and prosperity after 1997.

End

Transcript of Chief Secretary's media session on Deng's death

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, at CGO this (Thursday) morning:

Chief Secretary: I'd just like to say that I learned with deep regret the passing of Mr Deng Xiaoping. Mr Deng Xiaoping is, of course, a distinguished leader of China, also the creator of the "one country, two systems" concept. This concept has, of course, led to the successful, as the Governor said, the successful conclusion of the Joint Declaration and therefore laying a very strong foundation for Hong Kong's future prosperity and stability. I would just like to represent and say on behalf of the entire Hong Kong civil service to send our deepest condolence to Mr Deng's family.

Question: Will this affect the smooth transition?

Chief Secretary: I think it won't affect the smooth transition.

End

Flags flying half-mast

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Flags on all government buildings will be flown at half-mast for one day at noon today (Thursday) as a mark of respect for Deng Xiaoping, who passed away yesterday (Wednesday).

End

Governor's statement on appointment of Principal Officials

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The following is the statement by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten today (Thursday):

"I have been most fortunate during my time as Governor to be supported by an outstanding Civil Service, and I am pleased that Mr Tung Chee Hwa will continue to be served by an excellent team of senior officials. The whole community wanted to see a through train for the Civil Service, and will welcome the reassuring news of the reappointments of all the current serving Policy Secretaries as Principal Officials in the Special Administrative Region Government."

End

Transcript of Chief Secretary's media session

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Following is the transcript of a media session given at the CGO by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, following the announcement of the appointment of SARG Principal Officials this (Thursday) evening:

Chief Secretary: I am sure the entire community is very saddened today by news of the death of Mr Deng Xiaoping but we have to continue with our work.

The Chinese Government has announced the appointment of all eligible serving officers as Principal Officials of the SARG. In other words, Mr Tung Chee Hwa's nominations have been accepted by the Chinese Government. I am personally very encouraged by this news. As you know, these officials have been my colleagues for many many years, and I have every confidence in their ability and in their loyalty to Hong Kong. The appointment as Principal Officials will ensure that there is continuity at the top of the civil service during the transition period. And I am sure that this will be welcomed both by the Civil Service and by the entire community.

I wish also like on behalf of my colleagues to congratulate Miss Elsie Leung on her appointment as Secretary of Justice (Designate) and to extend to her a very very warm welcome. This is a very responsible post as it will be responsible for upholding the rule of law impartially and fearlessly. Miss Leung has considerable experience both of the law and of public service. My colleagues and I look forward to working with her and we will cooperate and give her every possible assistance.

I would also like to congratulate Mrs Lily Yam on her appointment as Commissioner of the ICAC. As we all know, the ICAC plays a vital role in Hong Kong, and the Basic Law specifically provides that it will continue to function independently after July 1. Mrs Yam is an experienced civil servant who has previously worked in the ICAC, and I am sure she will maintain the fine tradition that previous Commissioners have established. Thank you.

Question: (on provisional legislature)

Chief Secretary: Mr Tung has made it quite clear that all the freedoms guaranteed under the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law will continue after 1997. Insofar as a certain proposals by the Legal Sub-group.. our concern.. Mr Tung has already said that he will widely consult the public and I am sure Mr Tung will soon announce how this public consultation will be conducted.

End

Warmest congratulations for appointment of Ms Elsie Leung

* * * * *

The following statement is issued by the Attorney General, Mr Jeremy Mathews today (Thursday):

"I am pleased to learn of the appointment of Ms Elsie Leung Oi Sie as the Secretary of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. She will be taking on one of the most challenging and satisfying jobs that any lawyer can have.

"The Attorney General, and the Secretary of Justice after July 1, play a crucial role in the maintenance of the rule of law and in upholding justice in Hong Kong fearlessly and without bias. These values underpin our society and are essential for our continued success. I am sure that Ms Leung will serve Hong Kong well and with distinction.

"She will have the support of a department of dedicated and professional officers. She can be assured of the fullest assistance from my colleagues and me in taking up her new responsibilities.

"I offer Ms Leung my warmest congratulations on the appointment."

End

Transcript of the Governor's media session

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The following is the transcript of the media session given by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten after attending a luncheon hosted by the Australian Chamber of Commerce this (Thursday) afternoon:

Question: ... (on Mr Deng Xiaoping's death)

Governor: Perhaps I can set my reply in context. On behalf of the Government and people of Hong Kong, I would like to offer my condolences to Mr Deng's family and to the Government and people of China. Mr Deng is one of the historic figures of this century and of course his role in opening up and modernising China's economy has helped to shape the last years of this century and will help to shape the early years of the next century as well.

We obviously have particular reasons for looking with great interest at Mr Deng's career because it was his concept of 'one country, two systems' which provided the framework for Hong Kong's future after 1997; it provided the framework for the guarantees that Hong Kong's way of life would continue the same after 1997.

So I suppose the simple answer to your question is that the world will remember Mr Deng most because of his contribution to the opening up of China's economy. And Hong Kong will remember him most not only for that reason but also because of the concept of 'one country, two systems'.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: I said in my speech to the Australian Chamber of Commerce that I thought it was unwise to speculate about the precise implications of Mr Deng's death. What I can more usefully do is to describe what Hong Kong is today - a strong and prosperous and robust city and society well able to take any events in its stride. The outlines of the strategy for Hong Kong have been set out for many years in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law and I don't think that should be changed.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: I imagine that it was part of Mr Deng's wisdom, in enunciating the concept of 'one country, two systems', to try to ensure that Hong Kong was insulated from events elsewhere and that Hong Kong was able to preserve its way of life and its system while being part, in sovereignty terms, of China. It is, I think everybody concedes, a concept both imaginative and difficult to implement, and the challenge for the years ahead will be to ensure, in the interests of the people of Hong Kong, that it is implemented successfully.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: I think the things they could do to give greater confidence in Hong Kong, not least, judging by recent polls, are not related to Mr Deng's death but are related to decisions taken recently about the protection of human rights and about the provisional legislature. I think that people are anxious, in Hong Kong, about their liberties in the future, about their way of life and the rule of law in the future. Those worries are not exaggerated. You only have to see, for example, what the leaders of the legal profession have said. So I think that the reassurance should best come by Chinese officials changing the view they have taken of those issues and by them showing that they trust Hong Kong and are prepared to stand back and let Hong Kong get on with its own life peacefully and with the success and stability that we have seen in recent years.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: No, I am not saying that. And even if I were to say it, it would be, of all the things that the Governor of Hong Kong has ever said, the one which was most widely and comprehensively ignored. What I am saying is that there are others, doubtless like you, who are paid adequate salaries to speculate about the future of the world and the future in particular of China. I am a public official. I am responsible for the good government of Hong Kong. I don't think that it helps for me to speculate, with no more success, I would judge, than you would have.

It is difficult enough for me to speculate about the future of British politics without speculating about the future of Chinese politics. We all know, of course, that in the next few weeks and months all sorts of people, expert and less expert, will speculate more or less imaginatively about the future of China and we all know that many if not most of them will be wrong. And I would just prefer not to join in that speculative endeavour, and I would prefer to go on concentrating on what I know rather than can speculate about. And what I know is that Hong Kong is a terrifically successful and very decent city and that as long as we hang on to Hong Kong's values and Hong Kong's way of doing things it will remain decent and successful.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: I think given that 'one country, two systems' - whether or not it was his intellectual invention, certainly the concept with which he was so closely associated politically - I think it is a pity that he was not able to see not just the actual transition to Chinese sovereignty but I hope in the years beyond, the successful protection of Hong Kong's system even when Hong Kong becomes in sovereignty terms part of China, just as it has been geographically part of China all along.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: I don't think you have heard me be critical of those comments. I think what you may have done, if you have had the ill-fortune to hear many of my speeches, is hear me make exactly the same points again and again and again, as I was doing today. I have spoken consistently and I hope from time to time vigorously about the defence of Hong Kong's civil liberties over the last few years. The worry is that because of decisions taken in recent weeks, our friends in other countries - our friends in other countries who wish us well - have come to share exactly the same worries and anxieties which people in Hong Kong have. They are not making these things up.

When the leaders of our legal profession write to the Chief Executive and say that proposals on the Bill of Rights and related matters would undermine the rule of law, you can't be very surprised if legislators visiting Hong Kong from other free and plural societies express their worries as well. So far from believing that those anxieties are misplaced, my view is that those anxieties can best be addressed in Hong Kong and outside Hong Kong by changing policies, not by putting gags on people.

Question: Will you go to his funeral service ?

Governor: As I understand it, the committee which is organising Mr Deng's funeral has made it clear already that it is not going to invite foreign dignitaries. I am certainly foreign. Whether I am a dignitary or not I leave to you to decide.

Question: Will you send flowers ?

Governor: I don't think that would be appropriate but I have written to Director Zhou Nan, the head of the New China News Agency, expressing my condolences. And of course if there is a condolence book opened, I will want to sign that with the senior members of my Administration.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: Yes, I had an excellent question from the young journalist in red, to my left, and I am not sure that I could do better than the reply I gave her.

End

Transcript of the Governor's question and answer session

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The following is the transcript of the question and answer session given by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten after his luncheon speech to the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong this (Thursday) afternoon:

Question (David Barton Lee - Asian Commercial Research): Sir, you have described the facts of Hong Kong's triumphant development over the last few years. You have not referred to what perhaps to many here is your failure in implementing a wider base for democratic institutions in Hong Kong which at the moment we see are being steadily dismantled by our new Chinese overlords. Does it surprise you that this is happening considering what Her Majesty's Government declared in 1984 about the Agreement being unalterable and the various clauses about 'no change' in economic and social circumstances in Hong Kong. In short, is Hong Kong in fact better-off or worse-off for your valiant attempts to widen the electoral basis?

Governor: I try, I try so hard to be uncontroversial, but people do lead me on. We had, in the past, interesting exchanges about market research and opinion poll evidence but I think it would be injudicious of me today to talk about opinion polls, save to say that I don't think we could have managed to get through our agenda in the last four and a half years without the steady support of the great majority of people here in Hong Kong. And it is a matter of surprise but gratification that that support has remained as constant as it has.

I think I only want to say one thing in response to your question and it is this. I think it is rather offensive to the people of Hong Kong and perhaps a good deal too complimentary to this Governor or to the Hong Kong Government or the British Government for anybody to give the impression that the democratic institutions that we enjoy today - the Legislative Council, the Municipal Council, the District Boards - are somehow an imposition by the departing colonial power on Hong Kong. Those who have campaigned and argued for democratic institutions in Hong Kong, representing the majority of public opinion in doing so, those who have represented the growing aspirations of civic consciousness in Hong Kong should get the credit.

I was aware when I came to Hong Kong in 1992 that I had to find some acceptable middle-ground between the aspirations of Hong Kong and its political representatives - some of whom, admittedly, have since then changed their minds - I had to find some middle-ground between those representatives' aspirations and what was set out in the sacred texts - in the Joint Declaration to which you referred, sir, and the Basic Law - which prescribed a modest, moderate, cautious process of democratic development.

I think we did that. I think we did that with arrangements which were genuine and which were fair. And I suspect that history will record that that was the problem - that they were genuine, that they were fair, and that they did therefore give people in Hong Kong the opportunity to see that their own political ambitions were properly and faithfully represented in the Legislative Council.

Now, I think all that argument, all that debate over institutions, has been accompanied by something else. I think Hong Kong has become, over the last four and a half years, a far more open, a far more plural society. So even if I deplore what may or may not be done with some of Hong Kong's institutions, I don't believe that the increased openness and pluralism of Hong Kong which has been accompanied as I said in my remarks, by greater economic success and by greater social stability, are things that can be simply rolled-up and put back in the cupboard. Were that to be attempted, I think the consequences would be extremely damaging for social harmony in this community.

I suspect that when the historians open their account on the story of these years they may well conclude that the Governor of Hong Kong far from having gone too far, hadn't perhaps been sufficiently robust in what he did. But I will leave that for the historians, of whom I was once one but my expertise was in the 12th century.

Any more? That will give the ladies and gentlemen of the Fourth State more opportunity afterwards to invite me to answer questions on subjects which I didn't discuss in my speech and have no intention of discussing with them.

I just throw that in so that I won't disappoint them too much when I go outside and repeat what I said in my speech, that there will be a great deal of speculation in the next days and weeks and months, wall to wall speculation, speculation which will often be imaginative and frequently fictitious, speculation which is I think less fruitful and less helpful for Hong Kong than just pointing out what a spectacularly successful and decent place this is and how this city has managed to take great events in its stride over the last few years because of its natural resilience and because of its value system. I think it is perhaps more useful for the Governor of Hong Kong to talk about those things than to join the speculation of the professional and amateur Sinologists, most of whom have this at least in common - that they have usually been wrong.

End

Transcript of remarks by Financial Secretary

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Following is a transcript of the remarks by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, after attending the First Landing at the Chek Lap Kok Airport this afternoon (Thursday):

FS: Good morning. It was indeed a very exciting and moving day for us. We manage to fly, although for a very short while, slightly over fifteen minutes. But it was a very historical event. We took off from one commercial airport in Hong Kong and landed on another commercial airport also in Hong Kong. I think this is the first time we had ever done it. I found it exceedingly moving, and the occasion, of course marked another milestone in the construction of our Airport Core Programme, we are well ahead. And from tomorrow onwards, I understand that the Airport Authority and the Civil Aviation Department which had done enormously for this project would start a series of test including the Instrument Landing System and then there would be other tests as well. We are now on schedule. I am pretty confident that the Airport Authority together with all the government departments concerned would be going to deliver this Airport to the people of Hong Kong on time, in Easter next year, and within costs. Thank you very much for coming. Well, it is a very bright and sunny day which is very appropriate for this occasion. Thank you.

Q: Did you expect there would be some turbulence here?

FS: No, I do not think that would happen at all although the community has enormous respect for Mr Deng and feel very sorrowful about his passing away. But I think the community is equally psychologically prepared for the event and the markets, in particular, had already been discounted any turbulence effect resulting from his passage. Another thing that you know is we have very strong economic fundamentals, our markets are robust, our reserves are also equally resourceful. And I am quite sure that whatever minor disruption might occasion by his passage would not be enduring. I am sure we would overcome this very shortly.

Q: What are the (inaudible) for the airport?

FS: Very good indeed. Very good indeed. I think we are going to have the airport, I think we are going to have the first commercial take off in Easter next year. Thank you very much indeed.

End

CS to open Year of Heritage

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A ceremony marking the opening of the Year of Heritage will take place at the Chater Garden, Central, at 4 pm tomorrow (Friday).

It will be officiated by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan. Other guests include the Chairman of the Antiquities Advisory Board, Professor David Lung; Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, Mr Alexander Au; and Chairman of the Council of the Trust, Mr Edward Ho.

An exhibition featuring excavations dated back to the Neolithic Period, the Bronze Period, the Qin-Tang Dynasty and the Song-Qing Dynasty, will be put on display. The Television Broadcasts Ltd. will also stage a variety show to put across the message of heritage conservation to the public.

End

Fire officers display high standard of professionalism

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Fire Services personnel had displayed high standards of professionalism, perseverance and efficient co-ordination with other disciplined services in tackling the Garley Building fire and the No. 3 alarm karaoke fire, the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai said today (Thursday).

Speaking at a passing-out parade, Mr Lai said the hard work and dedication Fire Services personnel displayed were much appreciated.

Mr Lai called on recruit officers on parade to display a great sense of commitment, determination and courage in serving Hong Kong and its community.

He said: "You have been taught the professional skills for saving life and extinguishing fire. Equally important are the need for discipline and team work."

Mr Lai said he was confident that the recruit officers would perform their duties with courage and determination and live up to the high standards and reputation of the Hong Kong Fire Services Department.

On the new Chek Lap Kok airport, Mr Lai said the Fire Services Department had undertaken a well-planned strategy to provide fire fighting and rescue services.

"The new fire stations will be equipped with the most modern equipment and appliances to cover rescue both on land and at sea," he said.

Mr Lai said more challenges and changes were anticipated to come in the "Year of the Ox" and the community would continue to rely on Fire Services personnel's professionalism and high standard of performance.

On parade were eight Probation Station Officers and 42 Firemen who had completed their respective basic training courses and who would soon be posted out to various fire stations to gain more field experience.

End

First aircraft landing at Chek Lap Kok

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A fixed wing Super King Air aircraft of the Government Flying Service (GFS) carrying the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, made a historical landing at the new airport at Chek Lap Kok this (Thursday) afternoon.

This landing is the first ever landing by a fixed wing aircraft at the new airport, and it marks a significant milestone in the progress of its construction.

The Financial Secretary was accompanied by the Chairman of the Airport Authority, Mr Wong Po-yan; Secretary for Economic Services, Mr Stephen Ip; Director of the New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office, Mr Billy Lam; and Director of Civil Aviation, Mr Richard Siegel.

After disembarking from the aircraft, Mr Tsang unveiled a plaque commemorating the first aircraft landing at the new airport in front of guests from various government departments, the Airport Authority, airport committees and aviation industries.

The first landing was made in preparation of the commencement of calibration flight checks for the newly installed Instrument Landing System (ILS) to be conducted by the Civil Aviation Department.

On the calibration flight checks, a Civil Aviation Department spokesman said that a specially equipped aircraft of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the United States would calibrate the ILS for the first runway of the new airport.

"As FAA aircraft will have to make a number of approaches and landings on the runway during the process of calibration which will last for six to eight weeks, we have arranged for the GFS aircraft to perform the first landing, prior to the commencement of calibration flight checks," the spokesman said.

The spokesman pointed out that the ILS was now ready for calibration flight checks.

The ILS is a navigational aid which provides accurate azimuth and descend guidance information to pilots to ensure a safe landing on the runway under all weather conditions.

"Compared with the one installed at Kai Tak, the ILS at Chek Lap Kok can allow aircraft to land on the runway even under poorer visibility condition," the spokesman noted.

The purpose of calibration is to ensure that the guidance signals generated by the ILS were within the stringent tolerance limits specified by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

"To meet the airport opening in April 1998, there is a need to commission the new ILS for the southern runway in May this year so as to allow sufficient time for evaluation and validation of the air traffic control procedures developed for the new airport.

"During the calibration procedures, the FAA aircraft will fly on the nominal flight path and compare the ILS signals against the ICAO limits. Should there be any deviation detected, the ground equipment will be adjusted accordingly until its radiation is within the acceptable tolerance," the spokesman added.

End

Gazettal of Copyright Bill

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A copyright Bill, which establishes a comprehensive and independent copyright regime in Hong Kong for the protection of intellectual property rights in line with prevailing international standards, will be gazetted tomorrow (Friday).

A spokesman for the Trade and Industry Branch said : "The Copyright Bill is in line with prevailing international standards on intellectual property rights protection, such as the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) under the World Trade Organisation, and the relevant international intellectual property conventions.

"The Bill largely follows the recommendations made by the Law Reform Commission in its Report on Reform of the Law relating to Copyright, which was published in January 1994 after extensive consultations. The Bill also reflects the agreement reached in the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group in November 1995 on localisation of law proposals.

"Copyright protects original literary works (such as books, magazines, newspapers and computer software), musical works, dramatic works and artistic works (including technical drawings and photographs). Copyright also protects sound recordings (such as compact discs and cassette tapes), films (including videos, video compact discs (VCDs), published editions, wireless broadcasts and cable programmes).

"With an effective copyright regime, the achievements and the lawful rights and interests of the authors will be protected. Creativity and international trade, which are crucial to the prosperity of Hong Kong, will be encouraged.

"The Government issued a draft Copyright Bill to about 100 organisations, including copyright owners and users in the relevant sectors as well as those in the professional and academic fields during a consultation exercise in November 1996. We have as far as possible incorporated the comments received into this Bill.

"We are aware of the need to ensure that copyright owners and exclusive licensees are adequately protected so that they can enjoy the full benefits of their copyright products in Hong Kong. At the same time we need to ensure that consumers of copyright products continue to enjoy access to a wide range of genuine, legal products at reasonable prices.

"The Basic Law provides that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government shall formulate its own policies on and protect by law intellectual property rights. This Copyright Bill will provide a modern, local and independent copyright regime in Hong Kong which caters for technological advances and suits local circumstances," the spokesman added.

Some of the main legislative proposals are -

- * A level playing-field for copyright protection worldwide - any copyright works created or published by any person anywhere in the world would qualify for protection in Hong Kong.
- * Additional legal tools to facilitate Hong Kong Customs' enforcement and co-operation with copyright owners and enforcement authorities in other jurisdictions.
- * The maintenance of customs measures at the border and a further increase in maximum penalties against pirated copyright works.

- * Decriminalisation of parallel importation; maintenance of civil remedies against parallel import. Exclusive licensees may take civil action against those who arrange for parallel importation in breach of exclusive licence agreements.
- * Protection of rental right for sound recordings and computer programs, but not for films, through civil remedies.
- * The provision for permitted acts, including those for fair dealing, educational purposes, copies kept by or provided by libraries and archives, public administration, limited re-transmission of broadcasts and transient copying for viewing or listening, on the INTERNET.
- * Protection of the legitimate interests of copyright owners for copyright works on the INTERNET, as well as the interests of those who provide physical facilities.
- * Registration on a voluntary basis for collective copyright administration societies to ensure essential information such as scales of royalty charges will be available to public.
- * Clarified and expanded jurisdiction for the Copyright Tribunal to encourage aggrieved parties to seek redress.

"The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on 26 February 1997. The Government has accorded priority to the Bill in the legislative programme as it is necessary to have the new copyright legislation put in place before 1 July 1997," the spokesman said.

End

Bill to tidy up habeas corpus laws proposed

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The Supreme Court (Amendment) Bill 1997, which seeks to provide for applications for and the issue of writs of habeas corpus, will be gazetted tomorrow (Friday).

A Government spokesman said today that the legislative amendments were basically an exercise to tidy up existing laws on habeas corpus.

The UK Habeas Corpus Acts 1679 and 1816, on which the modern rules on habeas corpus are based, are currently applied in Hong Kong by virtue of being listed in the Schedule to the Application of English Law Ordinance, it is likely that this Ordinance will cease to apply to Hong Kong after the transfer of sovereignty.

"The two UK Acts are important in giving statutory recognition to the writ of habeas corpus and in extending certain procedural protections in relation to it.

"Since there are considerable benefits in retaining the remedy of habeas corpus in a statutory form that is familiar, well-tried, procedurally clear and expeditious, the Government proposes to re-enact in an updated form those provisions of the two UK Acts which are relevant to Hong Kong," he added.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on March 5.

End

Voters urged to support Tai Po DB by-election

* * * * *

The Tai Po District Officer, Mr Frankie Lui, today (Thursday) urged registered voters of Shuen Wan Constituency, Tai Po to cast their ballots in the Tai Po District Board by-election for the Constituency on Sunday (February 23).

Mr Lui said district boards had played an essential advisory role on district matters and had made important contributions towards matters affecting the well-being of local residents.

"In particular, the Tai Po District Board has made substantial efforts towards improving the living environment and the provision of services and facilities in the district," he added.

The balloting will be held from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm on February 23.

Three polling stations will be set up, namely, Kai Chi School, Ta Po Tau; Tai Wo Neighbourhood Community Centre, Tai Wo Estate; and a temporary office at the open space outside 2B, San Tau Kok Village, Ting Kok Road, Tai Po.

Three candidates - Mr Chan Mei-tak, Mr Roger Li Kwok-keung and Mr Man Chen-fai - will be competing for the seat.

The Shuen Wan constituency, covering all villages along Ting Kok Road, Hong Lok Yuen and its nearby villages, has an electorate of 4,857.

Registered voters are reminded to bring along their identity cards and poll cards to the polling stations.

Enquiries can be made to the Tai Po District Office on 2654 1237.

End

Latest study and careers information for Expo visitors

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Tens of thousands of students, young people and working adults visited the 7th Education and Careers Expo today (Thursday) to acquire the latest information on opportunities for further study and career choices.

The Expo, featuring over 180 exhibitors from a wide range of trades, government departments, professional bodies, local and overseas educational and training institutes, is open today until Sunday (February 23) at Level 5 of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai. Admission is free.

The opening hours are as follows:

February 20 (Thursday):	10.30 am to 7.30 pm;
February 21 (Friday):	10 am to 7.30 pm;
February 22 (Saturday):	10 am to 7.30 pm; and
February 23 (Sunday):	10 am to 6 pm.

The Expo, jointly organised by the Labour Department and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), was officially opened today by the Chairperson of Equal Opportunities Commission, Dr Fanny Cheung; the Executive Director of HKTDC, Mr Michael Sze; and the Commissioner for Labour, Miss Jacqueline Willis.

A series of careers video shows and seminars introducing a wide range of careers and the work of professional bodies and public utilities, will be presented to further enhance visitors' understanding of the world of work.

To encourage secondary school students to visit the Expo and collect careers information, the Labour Department's Careers Advisory Service has arranged group visits for about 12,000 students from over 120 schools.

"To introduce its employment services, the Labour Department has set up a booth at the Expo. An integrated approach is adopted in the presentation of the multi-dimensional employment services provided by the department for different client groups such as young people, people with a disability and the unemployed," Senior Labour Officer (Careers and Employment Agencies), Mrs Louisa Poon said.

"Colourful displays in the booth carry information on the Job Matching Programme, Job Matching Centre, careers advisory, employment and selective placement services," she added.

Moreover, there are computer games to test participants' knowledge of career options and services provided by the Labour Department as well as video shows on principles in choosing suitable career, summer job traps and support services to the employers employing people with a disability.

End

Unemployment and underemployment statistics

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period October - December 1996 was revised marginally downwards to 2.6%, 0.1 of a percentage point lower than the provisional figure released last month. No revision was made to the underemployment rate, at 1.6%. These latest labour force statistics are released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

For the period November 1996 - January 1997, both the provisional seasonally adjusted unemployment rate and the provisional underemployment rate edged lower, to 2.5% and 1.4% respectively.

Commenting on these figures, a Government spokesman said that labour market conditions showed further improvement in the most recent months. Reflecting this, the unemployment rate fell back to the 2.5% level, which was also that for the three-month period ending October 1996. Such level was the lowest since the three-month period ending February 1995. Concurrently, the underemployment rate also fell back to the low level in early 1995.

Comparing the latest period November 1996 - January 1997 with the period October - December 1996, declines in the unemployment rate were observed in the manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, import/export trade, restaurants and hotels, and financing and business services sectors. As to the underemployment rate, the decrease was across-the-board.

Total employment continued to show robust growth, at a faster pace than total labour force. In the three months ending December 1996, total employment increased by 4.2% over a year earlier, while total labour supply increased by 3.2%.

During the period October - December 1996, the number of unemployed persons was estimated at 81,200, and the number of underemployed persons at 49,500.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous General Household Survey. The survey for October - December 1996 covered a quarterly sample of some 23,100 households or 77,600 persons, selected scientifically to represent the land-based civilian non-institutional population in Hong Kong. Data were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the households sampled.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

'Seasonally adjusted' refers to adjustment for seasonal variations in the proportion of first-time job-seekers in the labour force.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the report on the General Household Survey which is published four times a year.

The next report covering the quarter ending December 1996 will be on sale at the Government Publications Centre at ground floor, Low Block, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, by the end of March 1997.

End

Estimated population as at end of 1996

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The estimated population of Hong Kong at the end of December 1996 was 6,421,300, according to figures released by the Census and Statistics Department today (Thursday).

This represents an increase of 151,300 persons or 2.4 per cent as compared with end-1995 when the estimated population was 6,270,000.

During 1996, there were 63,500 births and 30,700 deaths in Hong Kong. The balance of births and deaths thus amounted to 32,800 and accounted for 22 per cent of the population growth.

During the same period, the balance of total arrivals and departures showed a net inflow of some 118,500 persons.

End

BOE members visit the HKTA Ching Chung Secondary School

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Two members of the Board of Education (BOE), Mr Michael Hong Man-hoi, and Mr Isaac Tse Pak-hoi today (Thursday) visited the HKTA Ching Chung Secondary School in Sau Mau Ping, Kwun Tong.

On arrival, they were greeted by the school head, Mr Hong Yit-kiu.

During the visit, they toured the school and were briefed on how Chinese was introduced gradually as the medium of instruction in the school.

The school, founded in 1985, is operated by the Hong Kong Taoist Association.

In the 1996/97 school year, it has appointed 55 teachers and enrolled over a thousand students.

With the increasing common use of Chinese, the school has started adopting Chinese as the medium of instruction for most of the subjects in its junior forms since the 1992/93 school year.

To take a step forward, Chinese is used as the medium of instruction for all subjects in Secondary Four with effect from the 1996/97 school year.

Students have made marked improvements in the overall examination results since Chinese is used as the medium of instruction.

The school aims at giving an all-round education to students. A wide range of extra-curricular activities ranging from academic and interest groups to sports and services are provided for the students.

Civic and moral education is promoted through various means such as talks, discussions and reading reference books.

Sex education is also introduced to students with the support of social workers and nursing personnel.

Under the leadership of the principal, Mr Hong Yit-kiu, the school is keen on promoting staff development.

End

Customs' intellectual property unit to open new office

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The Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau (IPIB) of the Customs and Excise Department will open a new Kowloon office tomorrow (Friday).

Situated on the ground floor of the Middle Road Multi-Storey Carpark Building, Tsim Sha Tsui, the new office is the first branch office of the IPIB, signifying its commitment to vigorous enforcement operations against piracy and counterfeiting activities in Hong Kong.

The new office will accommodate the operational arm of the IPIB and the Copyright Seizure Identification Team.

The telephone and facsimile numbers of the new office are 2731 4602 and 2739 9826.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender to be held on 27 February 1997:

Tender date : 27 February 1997
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q072
Issue date : 28 February 1997
Maturity date : 1 April 1997
Tenor : 32 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$5,000 MN

End