



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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DISCLOSURE OF EXCHANGE FUND INFORMATION
CONSTANTLY UNDER REVIEW: FS

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THE POSSIBILITY OF DISCLOSING FURTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO THE AFFAIRS OF THE EXCHANGE FUND IS KEPT CONSTANTLY UNDER REVIEW, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

BUT GIVEN A DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY IN THE FINANCIAL MARKETS, SIR PIERS SAID THE PUBLICATION OF ADDITIONAL FIGURES AT PRESENT MIGHT WELL NOT BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE COMMUNITY.

IN REPLY TO THE QUESTION BY THE HON JAMES TIEN, SIR PIERS SAID A BALANCE HAD TO BE STRUCK BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S FUNDAMENTAL DESIRE FOR GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND THE NEED TO ENSURE ITS ABILITY TO MAINTAIN EXCHANGE RATE STABILITY WAS NOT IMPAIRED IN ANY WAY.

"OUR FIRST PRIORITY MUST BE THE MAINTENANCE OF A STABLE HONG KONG DOLLAR FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG," HE SAID.

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REDOMICILED COMPANIES REMAIN SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME

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REDOMICILING IS NOT NECESSARILY DAMAGING TO HONG KONG SINCE REDOMICILED COMPANIES REMAIN SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME AS THEY WERE BEFORE THE RELOCATION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THEIR MANAGEMENT AND THE MAJORITY OF THEIR PUBLIC SHAREHOLDERS GENERALLY REMAIN IN HONG KONG.

"THEIR HONG KONG ASSETS ARE UNAFFECTED BY THE MOVE, AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO AND INVOLVEMENT IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMY ARE BASICALLY UNCHANGED," SIR PIERS SAID.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI, SIR PIERS SAID WHETHER THE EFFECT OF SUCH A MOVE WAS POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE WAS LARGELY A MATTER OF PERCEPTION INVOLVING THE SUBJECTIVE JUDGEMENT OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES AFFECTED.

"IT MUST BE FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND SHAREHOLDERS OF ANY COMPANY TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT THEY SHOULD RELOCATE THE COMPANY'S DOMICILE TO AN OVERSEAS JURISDICTION," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID REDOMICILED COMPANIES DID NOT ENJOY ANY SPECIFIC CONCESSIONS OR PRIVILEGES GRANTED EITHER BY THE HONG KONG LAW OR BY THE GOVERNMENT.

"THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT, UPON REDOMICILING, THEY CEASE TO BE SUBJECT TO HONG KONG DOMESTIC COMPANY LAW.

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"THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SPECIFIC PROVISIONS IN THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE WHICH DO APPLY TO OVERSEAS-INCORPORATED COMPANIES WHICH HAVE A PLACE OF BUSINESS IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, THESE OVERSEAS INCORPORATED COMPANIES CONTINUED TO BE SUBJECT TO HONG KONG SECURITIES REGULATION, THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO PROTECT THE INTEREST OF INVESTORS IN THE HONG KONG MARKET, HE ADDED.

SIR PIERS SAID SO LONG AS REDOMICILED COMPANIES ABIDED BY THE SAME RULES AS COMPANIES INCORPORATED IN HONG KONG IN TERMS OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO INVESTORS, THEY SHOULD BE FREE TO OPERATE IN THE WAY THAT SUITED THEIR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES BEST.

"THUS, WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT CONSIDER IT NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE TO INTERFERE IN THE COMMERCIAL DECISIONS OF COMPANIES, IT WILL ENDEAVOUR TO ENSURE THAT THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT GAPS IN THE INVESTOR PROTECTION FRAMEWORK FOR SHAREHOLDERS IN SUCH COMPANIES AS A RESULT OF THEIR CHANGE OF DOMICILE," HE ADDED.

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BILL TO RELIEVE RATE PAYMENTS INTRODUCED

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THE RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 SEEKS TO INTRODUCE A RATE RELIEF SCHEME IN ORDER TO CUSHION THE IMPACT OF SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN RATES PAYMENTS IN ANY GIVEN YEAR, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, SIR PIERS SAID ONE EFFECT OF THE GENERAL REVALUATION WHICH WAS DUE TO TAKE EFFECT FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR WAS THAT SOME PROPERTIES WOULD EXPERIENCE GREATER INCREASES IN RATEABLE VALUES THAN OTHERS.

HE SAID THIS WAS BECAUSE RENTAL VALUES, ON WHICH THE RATEABLE VALUES WERE BASED, WOULD INCREASE BY DIFFERENT AMOUNTS DEPENDING UPON THE CLASS OF THE PROPERTY CONCERNED AND ITS LOCATION.

SIR PIERS SAID ALTHOUGH THE RATES PAYABLE AFTER THE REVALUATION MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY INCREASE TO THE SAME EXTENT AS THE GENERAL INCREASE IN RATEABLE VALUES BECAUSE OF THE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PERCENTAGE RATES CHARGE, THOSE PROPERTIES EXPERIENCING INCREASES ABOVE THE OVERALL AVERAGE MIGHT STILL BE FACED WITH SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN RATES PAYMENTS.

"TO DEAL WITH THIS SITUATION, THE BILL PROPOSES TO CREATE A MECHANISM IN THE RATING ORDINANCE BY WHICH A RATE RELIEF SCHEME MAY BE INTRODUCED IN ANY FINANCIAL YEAR," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES WERE SUCH THAT A RATE RELIEF SCHEME WAS DEEMED NECESSARY, THE NEW SECTION 19(1) COULD BE INVOKED, HE SAID.

"THIS SECTION PROVIDES THAT THE AMOUNT OF RATES PAYABLE IN ANY PRESCRIBED YEAR WILL NOT BE GREATER THAN THE AGGREGATE OF THE AMOUNT PAYABLE IN THE PRECEDING YEAR PLUS A PRESCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF THAT AMOUNT.

"BOTH THE PRESCRIBED YEAR AND THE PRESCRIBED PERCENTAGE WILL BE DETERMINED BY A RESOLUTION OF THIS COUNCIL," SIR PIERS SAID.

IN DETERMINING THE PERCENTAGE TO BE CHARGED ON THE RATEABLE VALUES IN EACH FINANCIAL YEAR, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER ALSO THE NEED FOR RATE RELIEF IN THAT YEAR, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE MAGNITUDE OF INCREASES IN RATES TO BE PAYABLE BY DIFFERENT RATEPAYERS AND THE FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION AT THE TIME.

IF THE NEED FOR RATE RELIEF COULD BE ESTABLISHED, SIR PIERS SAID HE WOULD SEEK TO BRING THE SCHEME INTO EFFECT BY AN APPROPRIATE RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"THE PROCEDURE SUGGESTED IS A BETTER SYSTEM THAN THOSE EMPLOYED IN THE PAST.

"FIRST, THE NEW ARRANGEMENT PROVIDES GREATER FLEXIBILITY BY ENABLING RATE RELIEF TO BE INTRODUCED WITHOUT THE NEED FOR LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS.

"AND SECONDLY, THE MECHANISM WILL BE INTRODUCED FOR ONE YEAR AT A TIME. THIS WILL ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW THE SITUATION ON A YEARLY BASIS," SIR PIERS SAID.

IN ADDITION TO THE MAIN PROVISION LIMITING RATES PAYMENTS, SIR PIERS SAID SOME CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS WERE ALSO REQUIRED.

"THE NEW SECTION 19(2) PROVIDES THAT THE RATE RELIEF LIMIT WILL NOT APPLY WHERE RATES FIRST BECOME PAYABLE IN THE RELEVANT YEAR DUE TO AN INTERIM VALUATION.

"THIS WILL NORMALLY APPLY WHEN A NEW BUILDING IS FIRST ASSESSED TO RATES IN THE RELEVANT YEAR.

"SECTIONS 19(3), 19(4) AND 19(5) ARE TECHNICAL PROVISIONS WHICH DEAL WITH THE COMPUTATION OF THE RATE RELIEF AMOUNT WHERE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS APPLY," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 PASSED

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THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WAS PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WITH TWO OF ITS MAIN AREAS OF CONCERN REGARDING COMPENSATION AND APPEALS SYSTEM REMAINING OPEN FOR FURTHER DELIBERATIONS, AND TO BE ADDRESSED IN A FORTHCOMING FULL REVIEW OF THE ORDINANCE LATER THIS YEAR.

IN WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT TO SEEK PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE FULL REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE, WHICH WAS VIEWED AS A MATTER OF REAL PRIORITY BY MEMBERS, WOULD BE PUBLISHED AROUND APRIL THIS YEAR.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT AIMED TO SUBMIT ITS FINAL PROPOSALS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN DECEMBER THIS YEAR AFTER ALLOWING SIX MONTHS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION, ASSURING THAT EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO COMPLETE THE REVIEW WITH EFFICIENCY AND THOROUGHNESS.

IN PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND THEIR HARD WORK ON THE PROCESSING OF THE BILL, MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THE AD HOC GROUP, UNDER THE CHARMANSHIP OF THE HON RITA FAN, HAD ACCEPTED THAT THERE WAS A PRESSING NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION NOW BEFORE WIDESPREAD ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND GROWTH OF INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES IN THE RURAL AREAS RENDERED FUTURE REMEDIAL PLANNING VERY DIFFICULT AND COSTLY.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS, NEVERTHELESS, REQUIRED BEFORE DETAILS OF THE BILL WERE DISCUSSED, TO CONVINCING THE AD HOC GROUP THAT PLANNING CONTROLS ON THE RURAL AREAS WERE REQUIRED, THAT THE GENERAL APPROACH TO CONTROL THROUGH A MODIFIED PLANNING PERMISSION SYSTEM WAS A RIGHT AND NECESSARY ONE, AND THAT SUCH CONTROLS, INCLUDING THOSE INVOLVED IN THE INTERIM DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREA SYSTEM WERE NEEDED IMMEDIATELY.

HE NOTED THAT THE AD HOC GROUP, APART FROM THE SUBMISSIONS MADE TO IT DURING THE COURSE OF ITS DELIBERATIONS, WAS ALSO MADE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENT VIEWS PUT TO THE ADMINISTRATION DURING THE COURSE OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION TO THE BILL.

ON THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION, MR BARNES SAID THE SUBJECT WAS A VERY COMPLICATED ISSUE INVOLVING A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE EXERCISE OF PROPERTY RIGHTS AND THE NEED TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY INTERESTS.

"THE ADMINISTRATION HAS EXPLAINED TO THE AD HOC GROUP THE MANY FACETS OF THIS ISSUE WHICH REQUIRE SERIOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE DEBATE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE LEGAL BASIS IN THE COMMON LAW FOR COMPENSATION, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VALUE OF LAND IS CREATED BY PUBLIC INVESTMENT, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VALUE OF LAND IS DETERMINED BY PLANS AND PLANNING DECISIONS, AND THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT PLANNING REMAINS AFFORDABLE TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, " HE NOTED.

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HE ADDED THAT THE GROUP HAD ACCEPTED THAT THERE COULD BE NO EARLY CONCLUSION TO THE DISCUSSION ON THIS ISSUE AND NOTED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO HAVE THE SUBJECT DELIBERATED IN THE FORTHCOMING FULL REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE DETAILS OF THE PROCEDURAL MEASURES ON HOW THE FULL REVIEW WOULD BE TAKEN FORWARD WOULD BE ANNOUNCED AFTER THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONSULTED THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON THE ISSUE.

REGARDING THE PRESENT APPEALS SYSTEM UNDER THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE, MR BARNES SAID THE CURRENT LEGISLATION HAD BEEN CRITICISED BECAUSE IT PROVIDED FOR THE BOARD TO HEAR OBJECTIONS TO ITS OWN PLANS AND TO CONDUCT ITS OWN REVIEWS OF ITS REFUSALS OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

"THE ADMINISTRATION ACCEPTS AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE THE NEED FOR A HEARING WHICH IS NOT JUST FAIR BUT SEEN TO BE FAIR FOR PERSONS AGGRIEVED BY THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD'S DECISIONS.

"WE RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF AN APPEALS BODY WHICH CAN SERVE AS AN ARBITER BETWEEN THE BOARD AND THOSE WHOSE INTERESTS ARE AFFECTED BY THOSE DECISIONS," HE SAID.

MR BARNES ALSO NOTED THAT CHANGES TO THE EXISTING SECTION 6 OBJECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF PLANS WOULD HOWEVER REQUIRE A RADICAL REAPPRAISAL OF THE ENTIRE PLAN-MAKING AND APPROVAL SYSTEM AND IT HAD BEEN AGREED WITH THE AD HOC GROUP THAT THIS SHOULD BEST BE ADDRESSED IN THE OVERALL REVIEW OF THE ORDINANCE.

"ON THE OTHER HAND, THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT BODY TO REPLACE THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL'S ROLE UNDER SECTION 17(7) AS THE FINAL APPEALS BODY TO DEAL WITH REFUSALS OF PLANNING PERMISSION IS PRACTICABLE.

"ACCORDINGLY THE GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO INTRODUCE IN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION, AHEAD OF THE OVERALL REVIEW, A SEPARATE AMENDMENT BILL TO PROVIDE FOR A NEW INDEPENDENT APPEALS BODY FOR SECTION 17(7) APPEALS," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE POWERS, COMPOSITION, MEMBERSHIP AND PROCEDURES OF THE APPEAL BODY WOULD BE EXAMINED FURTHER IN THE DRAFTING OF THE SEPARATE BILL.

MR BARNES ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL, LIKE ANY LEGISLATION, WOULD BE JUDGED ON ITS RESULTS -- THAT IS WHAT WOULD OR WOULD NOT HAPPEN IN CONSEQUENCE OF IT.

"IT IS OF COURSE PARTLY ABOUT WHAT WE HOPE WILL NOT HAPPEN, - THAT IS - INCOMPATIBLE USES LUMPED NEXT DOOR TO EACH OTHER AND THE GRADUAL DESECRATION OF BOTH THE RURAL LIVING ENVIRONMENT AND OF THE MORE SCENIC RURAL AREAS.

"BUT IT IS ALSO ABOUT WHAT WE HOPE WILL HAPPEN, THE PROPER PLANNING AND SERVICING OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES," HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD FULLY UNDERSTOOD THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS REGARD AND HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT LAND OWNERS AND DEVELOPERS WOULD SPEEDILY APPRECIATE THAT THIS WAS A BETTER AND MORE DECISIVE FRAMEWORK IN WHICH TO PLAN DEVELOPMENT.

MEANWHILE, MR BARNES SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALREADY CONSIDERING HOW THE ADMINISTRATIVE INTERIM DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREA PLANS COULD BE IMPROVED AS THEY WERE TURNED INTO THE DRAFT STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREA PLANS.

HE SAID ON PRESENT PROJECTIONS, HE EXPECTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO INCLUDE UPWARDS OF 10 AREAS FOR LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT; AND IN ADDITION AROUND FIVE OR SO AREAS WHERE APPLICATIONS FOR THE ZONING OF COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AREAS, AGAIN PRIMARILY FOR LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, COULD BE CONSIDERED.

HE ALSO SAID THAT IN ADDITION, THE 30 INTERIM DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREA PLANS PUBLISHED SO FAR HAD MADE PROVISIONS FOR 240 HECTARES FOR OPEN STORAGE USE, OF WHICH ONLY 28 HECTARES WERE BEING USED FOR SUCH PURPOSE.

IN OTHER WORDS, 220 HECTARES OF LAND WITHIN THE INTERIM DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREAS WERE AVAILABLE FOR THE FUTURE USE OF OPEN STORAGE, REPRESENTING AN EXPANSION ALLOWANCE OF 60 PER CENT ON EXISTING OPEN STORAGE AREAS.

HE TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO PROCEED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO REPLACE THE DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION PLANS WITH THE FULLY DETAILED OUTLINE ZONING PLANS, SO THAT THE STATUTORY PLANNING SYSTEM COULD INDEED GIVE THEM MAXIMUM GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

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TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE UNDER FULL REVIEW IN APRIL

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A FULL REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE IS TO BE CARRIED OUT LATER THIS YEAR AND UNDER WHICH CONTENTIOUS ISSUES SUCH AS COMPENSATION WILL BE FULLY EXAMINED, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCH SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SPOKESMAN, SPEAKING AFTER THE PASSING INTO LAW AT TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, ADDED THAT THE BILL WAS AIMED AT PREVENTING FURTHER DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE RURAL AREAS PENDING THE FULL REVIEW LATER.

HE SAID: "FOR MANY YEARS AGRICULTURAL LAND HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO OPEN STORAGE AND ALLIED USES. MANY OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT IN A HAPHAZARD AND DISORDERLY MANNER, CREATING ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRAFFIC PROBLEMS.

"THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL WAS PROPOSED TO HALT THE GROWTH OF INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES BEFORE FUTURE REMEDIAL PLANNING BECAME MORE DIFFICULT PENDING AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE ORDINANCE."

THE BILL HAD ATTRACTED MUCH PUBLIC ATTENTION AND DEBATE, HE SAID. SOME 190 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS WERE MADE IN RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT PUBLISHED IN JULY 1990.

SPECIAL BRIEFINGS, MEETINGS AND SEMINARS WERE HELD BY THE ADMINISTRATION WITH MORE THAN 20 STATUTORY AND ADVISORY BODIES, PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES AND ORGANISATIONS.

AFTER DETAIL DELIBERATIONS BY THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP SET UP TO STUDY THE BILL, THE FOLLOWING MAJOR AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL WERE PROPOSED:

- (A) S.2(5) WILL BE REPLACED WITH A NEW PROVISION SETTING OUT MORE SPECIFICALLY WHICH POWERS OF THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD CAN BE DELEGATED TO COMMITTEES AND WHICH TO THE AUTHORITY, THUS ALLAYING THE FEARS IN SOME QUARTERS THAT THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING MIGHT BE GIVEN TOO MUCH AUTHORITY;
- (B) THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO S.4(3) WILL BE DELETED. THERE HAS BEEN A MISCONCEPTION IN MANY QUARTERS THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WAS A MOVE BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO TRY TO REMOVE EXISTING RIGHTS OF CITIZENS TO LITIGATE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD FOR DAMAGES. WHILE THIS HAS NEVER BEEN THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION, DELETION OF THIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO S.4(3) WOULD HELP TO CLEAR THE DOUBTS;
- (C) THE FINE FOR UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT UNDER S.20(6), 21(2) AND 23(6) IS LOWERED TO \$100,000 AND THE PROPOSAL FOR IMPRISONMENT HAS BEEN DELETED; AND
- (D) THE ADDITION UNDER S.23A THE RIGHT TO REVIEW OF ANY PERSON AGGRIEVED BY THE AUTHORITY'S DECISION ON ISSUE OF ENFORCEMENT NOTICE.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "ANOTHER AREA OF CONCERN WAS THE LACK OF AN INDEPENDENT APPEAL CHANNEL AGAINST THE DECISION OF THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD.

"HOWEVER, THE ISSUE IS A COMPLICATED ONE AND SO THAT THE BILL SHOULD NOT BE FURTHER DELAYED, THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE INTRODUCING FURTHER LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE IN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND AHEAD OF THE FULL REVIEW WITH A VIEW TO ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT APPEAL BOARD TO DEAL WITH APPEALS UNDER S.17(7) OF THE ORDINANCE.

"HOWEVER, AN INDEPENDENT APPEAL CHANNEL TO DEAL WITH OBJECTIONS TO STATUTORY PLANS UNDER S.6 OF THE ORDINANCE WILL BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FULL REVIEW."

IT IS INTENDED TO PUBLISH A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE FULL REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE IN APRIL THIS YEAR.

UNDER THE FULL REVIEW CONTENTIOUS ISSUES SUCH AS COMPENSATION WILL BE FULLY EXAMINED.

FIRE SERVICES INSTALLATIONS IN ESTATES
ARE OPERATIONALLY SOUND: S FOR S

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THERE HAS GENERALLY BEEN NO PROBLEM WITH THE OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF ALL FIRE SERVICES INSTALLATIONS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ROSANNA TAM, MR ASPREY SAID REGULATION 8 OF THE FIRE SERVICE (INSTALLATIONS AND EQUIPMENT) REGULATIONS REQUIRED THE OWNERS OF ANY FIRE SERVICES INSTALLATIONS OR EQUIPMENT TO KEEP THEM IN EFFICIENT WORKING ORDER AT ALL TIMES AND TO HAVE THEM INSPECTED BY REGISTERED CONTRACTORS AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 12 MONTHS.

"AT PRESENT, ALL FIRE SERVICES INSTALLATIONS AND EQUIPMENT IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES ARE INSPECTED AND TESTED BY REGISTERED FIRE SERVICES CONTRACTORS TWICE A YEAR," HE SAID.

FOLLOWING EACH INSPECTION, MR ASPREY SAID A MAINTENANCE CERTIFICATE WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT CONFIRMING THAT THE INSTALLATIONS AND EQUIPMENT WERE IN EFFICIENT WORKING ORDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE.

IN ADDITION, FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF VISITED AND INSPECTED BUILDINGS WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE STATION AREAS ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE FOR TRAINING AND FAMILIARISATION, OR UPON RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS, THE SECRETARY ADDED.

MR ASPREY NOTED THAT AT PRESENT, A TOTAL OF 46 HOUSING ESTATES, CONTAINING 225 BUILDINGS, WERE FITTED WITH DRY RISER FIRE SERVICES INSTALLATIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN HO MAN TIN ESTATE.

FIFTY-ONE OF THESE BUILDINGS WERE DUE TO BE DEMOLISHED WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS FOR REDEVELOPMENT.

"FOR THE REMAINDER, AN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IS UNDERWAY TO CONVERT THE EXISTING DRY RISER INSTALLATIONS INTO WET RISER SYSTEMS, WHICH IS THE STANDARD IN ALL NEW PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES," HE SAID.

STATISTICS WERE NOT READILY AVAILABLE ON THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE BUILDINGS FITTED WITH DRY RISER SYSTEMS, MR ASPREY SAID.

ON THE RECENT FIRE IN HO MAN TIN ESTATE IN WHICH FOUR CHILDREN WERE BURNT TO DEATH, MR ASPREY SAID THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT WAS NOW CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSE OF THE FIRE.

THIS WAS EXPECTED TO TAKE ABOUT ONE MONTH TO COMPLETE.

"THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FIRE AND THE TRAGIC DEATHS WHICH RESULTED ARE LIKELY TO BE THE SUBJECT OF A SUBSEQUENT CORONER'S INQUIRY, AND SO I WOULD NOT WISH TO COMMENT FURTHER AT THIS STAGE," HE ADDED.

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BILLS ON ELECTION PRACTICES

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SPOKE ON THREE AMENDMENT BILLS THAT DEALT WITH ELECTION PRACTICES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, MR MATHEWS SAID THE OBJECTS OF THE BILL WERE THREE-FOLD.

FIRST, IT WAS TO AMEND THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE SO AS TO EXTEND THE PROVISIONS THAT RELATED TO THE DECLARATION OF ELECTION EXPENSES, TO COVER ALSO DECLARATIONS OF DONATIONS RECEIVED TOWARDS THOSE EXPENSES.

SECONDLY, IT WAS TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROPER DISPOSAL OF UNSPENT OR EXCESS DONATIONS.

THIRDLY, IT WAS TO ENABLE INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF THE THREE TIERS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT TO DECLARE THE DONATIONS WHICH THEY HAD RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF AN ELECTION.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE EVOLUTION OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, MARKED BY THE FIRST DIRECT ELECTION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS, SHOULD INEVITABLY CALL FOR CHANGE IN SOME OF THE ELECTION PRACTICES.

CANDIDATES WOULD INCREASINGLY BE DEPENDENT ON FUNDING, EITHER FROM INDIVIDUALS OR POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS, TO FINANCE THEIR ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

THERE WAS A NEED FOR APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, AND TO ENSURE THAT DONATIONS FOR ELECTIONS WERE FULLY AND PUBLICLY ACCOUNTED FOR, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

HE SAID THE BILL WOULD REQUIRE CANDIDATES TO BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE DONORS OF THEIR ELECTION EXPENSES AS WELL AS TO THEIR ELECTORATE AS REGARDS THE SOURCES AND DISPOSAL OF THEIR ELECTION FUNDS.

"CANDIDATES ARE PRESENTLY REQUIRED, UNDER SECTION 29 OF THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE, TO DECLARE THEIR ELECTION EXPENSES, AND FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS REQUIREMENT CONSTITUTES AN OFFENCE. UNDER SECTION 29A SUCH RETURNS ARE OPEN TO PUBLIC INSPECTION.

"FAILURE TO DECLARE THE SOURCE OF ELECTION EXPENSES WILL BE MADE AN OFFENCE WITH ATTENDANT PENALTIES AND DISQUALIFICATIONS. THESE ARE PROVIDED FOR IN CLAUSES 7(A), 7(B) AND 8 OF THE BILL," HE SAID.

ON DISPOSAL OF UNSPENT OR EXCESS DONATIONS, MR MATHEWS POINTED OUT THAT SECTION 8B OF THE ORDINANCE PROVIDED THAT NO CANDIDATE OR ELECTION AGENT, AND NO PERSON ON BEHALF OF A CANDIDATE, SHOULD USE MONEY RECEIVED FOR ELECTION EXPENSES FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.

/"QUESTIONS COULD

"QUESTIONS COULD ARISE AS TO THE DISPOSAL OF ANY UNSPENT DONATIONS. THESE MAY ARISE ON THE DEATH OF A CANDIDATE; ON HIS OR HER WITHDRAWAL FROM AN ELECTION; WHEN THE TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED IS IN EXCESS OF THE PERMISSIBLE LIMIT; OR WHEN THERE ARE DONATIONS SURPLUS TO REQUIREMENTS.

"IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE SHOULD CONTAIN A PROVISION WHICH WOULD CLEARLY SET OUT THE ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF DISPOSAL OF ANY UNSPENT OR SURPLUS DONATIONS.

"CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL PROPOSES THAT SUCH DONATIONS SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE DONOR IF THIS IS BOTH PRACTICABLE AND IS THE WISH OF THE DONOR; OTHERWISE THE DONATIONS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO CHARITY," HE SAID.

TURNING TO DECLARATION OF DONATIONS BY INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF THE THREE-TIER REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, MR MATHEWS SAID THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS WERE INCLUDED IN THE DEFINITION OF "PUBLIC BODY" IN THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE.

A MEMBER OF THOSE BODIES FELL WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "PUBLIC SERVANT" UNDER SECTION 2 OF THAT ORDINANCE.

BY REASON OF SECTION 4 OF THAT ORDINANCE, INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND DISTRICT BOARDS MIGHT NOT ACCEPT OR SOLICIT DONATIONS FOR POLITICAL OR ELECTION PURPOSES.

ANY SUCH DONATION WOULD CONSTITUTE AN ADVANTAGE AND, AS SUCH, ITS OFFER OR ACCEPTANCE MIGHT CONSTITUTE AN OFFENCE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

"IT IS CLEARLY UNSATISFACTORY THAT THE PAYMENT TO, OR RECEIPT BY, INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF ELECTION EXPENSE DONATIONS SHOULD AMOUNT TO A CRIMINAL OFFENCE," MR MATHEWS SAID.

"TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM THE BILL AMENDS THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE SO THAT AN INTENDING CANDIDATE MAY DECLARE THE SOURCE AND AMOUNT OF EACH DONATION MADE TOWARDS HIS, OR HER, ELECTION EXPENSES IN ADVANCE OF AN ELECTION.

"SUCH DECLARED DONATIONS WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE APPLICATION OF SECTION 4 OF THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE. CLAUSES 7(C), 7(D), 7(E) AND 7(F) SET OUT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH ADVANCE DECLARATIONS," HE SAID.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS AMENDMENT, MR MATHEWS SAID CLAUSE 2 OF PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 SOUGHT TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF ADVANTAGE SO AS TO EXCLUDE A DONATION WHICH WAS SOLICITED, OFFERED, OR ACCEPTED SPECIFICALLY FOR ELECTION EXPENSES, AS DEFINED IN THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE, AND WHICH WAS PROPERLY DECLARED UNDER THAT ORDINANCE.

SPEAKING ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, MR MATHEWS SAID AT PRESENT NOT ALL ELECTORAL OFFENCES WERE CONSOLIDATED IN THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE.

SECTION 12(1) OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ORDINANCE REQUIRED THE COMMISSIONER TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS WHICH, IN A GENERAL SENSE, ALLEGED CORRUPT PRACTICES, AND THIS ENABLED THE COMMISSIONER TO DEAL WITH ELECTORAL OFFENCES WHICH WERE NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED BY THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THE POWERS GIVEN BY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ORDINANCE NEEDED TO BE MORE CLEARLY SPELT OUT.

"CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL EXTENDS THE SCOPE OF SECTION 10 OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE SO AS TO INCLUDE A POWER OF ARREST FOR CERTAIN SUSPECTED ELECTORAL OFFENCES DETECTED DURING THE COURSE OF AN INVESTIGATION OF A SUSPECTED OFFENCE UNDER THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE.

"CLAUSE .3 SEEKS TO EXTEND THE SCOPE FOR INVESTIGATION IN RELATION TO ELECTORAL OFFENCES, SO THAT ANY ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT AN OFFENCE UNDER THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE MAY BE DEALT WITH BY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION.

"FOR THE SAKE OF CONSISTENCY, THE PROPOSED SECTION 12(B)(VII) IS ADDED TO ENABLE THE COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE ANY ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED CONSPIRACY INVOLVING A CROWN SERVANT TO COMMIT THE OFFENCE OF BLACKMAIL BY OR THROUGH THE MISUSE OF HIS OR HER OFFICE," HE SAID.

DEBATES ON THE THREE AMENDMENT BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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NEW LAW FOR SECURITY INDUSTRY IN THE PIPELINE
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THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE HAS ESTABLISHED AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER THE NEED FOR NEW LEGISLATION TO REGULATE THE SECURITY INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG AND TO IMPROVE STANDARDS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHUNG PUI-LAM, MR ASPREY SAID THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAD DRAWN UP PROPOSALS FOR A NEW LICENSING SYSTEM BOTH FOR SECURITY COMPANIES AND FOR SECURITY OFFICERS (INCLUDING WATCHMEN) AND PERSONS DESIGNING, INSTALLING AND MAINTAINING SECURITY DEVICES.

"THE INTENTION IS THAT, FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS NEW LEGISLATION, THE WATCHMEN ORDINANCE WILL BE REPEALED," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID DRAFTING OF THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION WAS NOW AT AN ADVANCED STAGE.

"I HOPE THAT IT WILL BE PUT BEFORE THIS COUNCIL LATER THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

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GOVT POLICY ON RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

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THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO COMMENCE TALKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME TO DISCUSS THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF AIR SERVICES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND VIETNAM.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW.

MR ASPREY SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO INDICATE WHEN SUCH SERVICES MIGHT RESUME AT THIS STAGE.

AS REGARDS VISAS, MR ASPREY SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY REVIEWED ITS POLICY.

"WE ARE NOW PREPARED TO GRANT VISAS TO ALL CATEGORIES OF VISITORS FROM VIETNAM; HITHERTO, WE HAVE GRANTED VISAS ONLY FOR BUSINESS VISITS.

"WE HAVE ALSO SIMPLIFIED THE PROCEDURES FOR THE ISSUE OF VISAS, WHICH SHOULD IN FUTURE BE GRANTED IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS, RATHER THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE MONTH," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT AT PRESENT CONSIDERING THE OPENING OF A VIETNAMESE CONSULATE IN HONG KONG.

"HOWEVER, VIETNAM DOES HAVE AN UNOFFICIAL TRADE OFFICE IN HONG KONG, AND WE HAVE INDICATED TO THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED FOR THIS OFFICE TO HAVE A VISA ISSUING FUNCTION," HE ADDED.

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PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AT ZEBRA CROSSINGS ENSURED

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VARIOUS MEASURES ARE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AT ZEBRA CROSSINGS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG.

HE SAID THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TRAFFIC CONTROL) REGULATIONS GAVE PEDESTRIANS USING ZEBRA CROSSINGS PRECEDENCE OVER ANY VEHICLE.

"MOTORISTS CONTRAVENING THIS PROVISION COMMIT AN OFFENCE WHICH CARRIES A FIXED PENALTY OF \$280 AND THREE DRIVING OFFENCE POINTS.

"MOTORISTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO OVERTAKE IN ZEBRA CONTROLLED AREAS: THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR THIS OFFENCE IS A \$10,000 FINE AND SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT," HE SAID.

/MR LEUNG

MR LEUNG SAID THE LAW ALSO REQUIRED PEDESTRIANS NOT TO CROSS A ROAD OUTSIDE THE ZEBRA CROSSING PROPER.

HE ADDED THAT THE LOCATION OF EACH ZEBRA CROSSING WAS CAREFULLY CHOSEN TO ENSURE GOOD VISIBILITY FOR BOTH DRIVERS AND PEDESTRIANS.

"FACTORS SUCH AS THE PHYSICAL ALIGNMENT OF THE ROAD, ADJACENT STRUCTURES, AND TRAFFIC FLOW CONDITIONS AT A PARTICULAR SPOT ARE ALL TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE A ZEBRA CROSSING IS INSTALLED.

"WHITE STRIPE MARKINGS AND ROAD STUDS, TOGETHER WITH BLINKING BEACONS, MAKE ZEBRA CROSSINGS CONSPICUOUS TO DRIVERS AND EASIER FOR PEDESTRIANS TO USE.

"FINALLY, RAILINGS INSTALLED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CROSSING PREVENT JAY-WALKING AND GUIDE PEDESTRIANS TO USE THE CROSSING PROPERLY," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT STRESSED THAT PUBLICITY AND EDUCATION WERE EQUALLY ESSENTIAL. HIGH PRIORITY WAS GIVEN EACH YEAR TO FUNDING ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGNS.

"TWO ANNOUNCEMENTS OF PUBLIC INTEREST HAVE BEEN PRODUCED FOR TELEVISION TO PROMOTE THE PROPER USE OF ZEBRA CROSSINGS.

"ROAD SAFETY OFFICERS FROM THE POLICE VISIT SCHOOLS REGULARLY TO PROMOTE ROAD SAFETY," HE SAID.

"THESE EFFORTS SUPPLEMENT THOSE ALREADY PROVIDED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN PROMOTING PEDESTRIAN AND ROAD SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE CURRICULUM AND IN MANY EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES," HE ADDED.

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SHA EXPLAINS RATIONALE ON PUBLIC HOUSING APPLICATIONS

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THE AVAILABLE SUPPLY OF FLATS IN URBAN DISTRICTS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS WOULD BE BARELY ADEQUATE TO PROVIDE LOCAL REHOUSING FAMILIES, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR TSAO SAID THESE FAMILIES WERE PREVIOUSLY ACCOMMODATED IN OLDER URBAN ESTATES WHICH HAD BEEN REDEVELOPED, RESIDENTS IN KOWLOON WALLED CITY, SQUATTER AREAS AND TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS SCHEDULED FOR CLEARANCE.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MISS LEUNG WAI-TUNG, MR TSAO SAID THE DECISION TO EXCLUDE URBAN DISTRICTS FOR SELECTION BY NEW PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING WAITING LIST APPLICANTS WAS TAKEN BY THE AUTHORITY'S MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 13, 1990.

"THE BALANCE BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND IS SUCH, AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO REMAIN SO, THAT THERE IS NO HOPE OF PROVIDING FAMILIES REHOUSED THROUGH THE WAITING LIST WITH FLATS ON HONG KONG ISLAND OR URBAN KOWLOON.

"IF AND WHEN A SMALL NUMBER OF FLATS SHOULD BECOME AVAILABLE TO WAITING LIST APPLICANTS, THESE WILL FIRST BE OFFERED TO THOSE ON THE LIST FOR NEARLY 10 YEARS AND CERTAINLY NOT TO NEW APPLICANTS," HE SAID.

MR TSAO STRESSED THAT IN ORDER NOT TO RAISE FALSE HOPES, THE COMMITTEE DECIDED THAT NEW APPLICANTS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO MAKE THEIR CHOICE FROM AMONG THE SIX OTHER DISTRICTS WHERE THERE WAS A REASONABLE PROSPECT OF FLATS BECOMING AVAILABLE.

THIS DECISION WOULD ALSO AVOID A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF ABORTIVE WORK IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FROM FAMILIES WHO WERE, AT THE TIME OF THE OFFER, UNWILLING TO ACCEPT REHOUSING IN THE DISTRICTS WHERE FLATS WERE IN FACT AVAILABLE, HE SAID.

"THE COMMITTEE IS WELL AWARE OF AN APPARENT 'INEQUITY' IN NOT GIVING NEW APPLICANTS THE FULL RANGE OF CHOICES, BUT FEELS NONETHELESS THAT A PROVISION FOR THE APPLICANT TO STATE A PREFERENCE WITHOUT ANY PROSPECT OF SUCCESS HAS NO PRACTICAL MEANING TO THE APPLICANT.

"INDEED, IT MIGHT EVEN MISLEAD HIM INTO REMAINING INTO LONGER THAN WOULD BE NECESSARY IN INADEQUATE PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION," HE SAID.

MR TSAO ADDED THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD REVIEW THIS DECISION IN THREE YEARS' TIME IN THE LIGHT OF THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND SITUATION PREVAILING THEN.

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PROCESSING TIME OF CNCC REASONABLE: S FOR S
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THE PRESENT PROCESSING TIME FOR A CERTIFICATE OF NO CRIMINAL CONVICTION (CNCC) IS NOT UNREASONABLE, AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR FURTHER MEASURES TO REDUCE IT, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, MR ASPREY SAID THE AVERAGE WAITING TIME FROM REGISTERING AN APPLICATION FOR A CNCC TO BEING INTERVIEWED WAS ABOUT SEVEN WEEKS.

HE SAID A CERTIFICATE COULD NORMALLY BE ISSUED 21 WORKING DAYS AFTER AN INTERVIEW.

MR ASPREY SAID ADDITIONAL PART-TIME STAFF HAD BEEN RECRUITED TO THE CNCC OFFICE TO COPE WITH THE WORKLOAD.

/ALL APPLICANTS

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ALL APPLICANTS FOR A CNCC WERE REQUIRED TO PAY A FEE OF \$110.

HE SAID THIS COVERED PRESENT ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO RAISE THE FEE IN FUTURE.

THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE, MR ASPREY SAID, HAD COMPLETED A REVIEW OF THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ORDINANCE, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF ISSUING CNCC'S IN RELATION TO CONVICTIONS SPENT UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

"THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED NO CHANGE IN THE PRESENT PRACTICE," HE SAID.

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BASIC PROFICIENCY TESTS PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT
QUALIFICATION FOR STUDENTS

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BASIC PROFICIENCY TESTS (BPTS), WHICH ARE DEvised AND ADMINISTERED BY THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY (HKEA), AIM TO PROVIDE AN EMPLOYMENT QUALIFICATION FOR STUDENTS WHO DO NOT INTEND TO CONTINUE WITH FULL TIME ACADEMIC STUDIES AFTER SECONDARY 5.

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ROSANNA TAM.

MR YEUNG SAID BPTS HOLDERS MIGHT BE APPOINTED TO CIVIL SERVICE GRADES WHICH DID NOT REQUIRE A FULL SCHOOL CERTIFICATE, SUCH AS THE RANK AND FILE OF THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES, AND POSTMEN AND CLERICAL ASSISTANTS IN THE CIVILIAN SERVICE.

HE SAID THE HKEA, WHICH RAN THE BPTS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NOVEMBER 1990, HAD YET TO SEEK RECOGNITION OF THEIR RESULTS FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

"IT INTENDS TO DO SO, HOWEVER, AFTER PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS IN FEBRUARY 1991.

"IT WILL WRITE TO MAJOR EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS TO SEEK THE NECESSARY RECOGNITION," HE SAID.

"THE HKEA WILL CARRY OUT A REVIEW OF THE BPTS, AND OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE CONDUCT OF THE TESTS, ONCE THE PRESENT SERIES HAS BEEN CONCLUDED," HE ADDED.

/MR YEUNG

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MR YEUNG SAID BPTS WERE INTENDED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR PROFICIENCY IN THE CHINESE LANGUAGE, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS, AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THEIR SECONDARY EDUCATION.

THE MATERIAL TESTED WAS DRAWN FROM THE CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION SYLLABUSES, BUT THE EMPHASIS WAS ON TESTING PRACTICAL SKILLS AND PERFORMING TASKS THAT RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND A WIDE RANGE OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS, HE SAID.

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FOUR BILLS PASSED

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FOUR BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY WERE THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1990 AND TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991.

SIXTEEN MEMBERS SPOKE DURING THE SECOND READING DEBATE OF THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

MEANWHILE, FOUR OTHER BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THEY WERE THE RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991.

DEBATES ON THESE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

TWO REPORTS WERE TABLED IN THE MEETING. THEY WERE THE HONG KONG ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS ANNUAL REPORT JULY 1989 TO JUNE 1990; AND THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 1989/90.

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NO PLAN AT PRESENT TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO AIRPORT BUILDING

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IN RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES CONCERNING PRESS REPORTS THAT ACCESS TO THE AIRPORT BUILDING WOULD BE RESTRICTED AS A SECURITY MEASURE, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

"ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY SECURITY MEASURES AT THE AIRPORT HAVE BEEN TIGHTENED IN THE LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GULF, THERE IS NO PLAN AT PRESENT TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO THE AIRPORT BUILDING TO ONLY THOSE HOLDING VALID AIR TICKETS OR PERMITS.

"AS HAD BEEN POINTED OUT, ALL THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS WHICH NEEDED TO BE TAKEN IN THE AIRPORT HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN.

"IF AND WHEN ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES ARE CONSIDERED NECESSARY IN FUTURE WHICH MIGHT AFFECT THE PUBLIC, OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO GIVE THE PUBLIC ADEQUATE NOTICE."

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TAX RELIEF FOR UNIT TRUSTS AND MUTUAL FUND PROPOSED

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THE GOVERNMENT IS INTRODUCING A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO PROVIDE FURTHER TAX RELIEF FOR AUTHORISED UNIT TRUSTS AND SIMILAR TAX RELIEF FOR AUTHORISED MUTUAL FUND, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1991, IF PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, WILL FURTHER EXEMPT AUTHORISED UNIT TRUSTS FROM PROFITS TAX ON THOSE PROFITS FROM BILLS OF EXCHANGE, FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTRACTS AND FUTURES CONTRACTS, AND EXEMPT AUTHORISED MUTUAL FUND CORPORATIONS ON THE SAME BASIS AS AUTHORISED UNIT TRUSTS.

UNDER EXISTING LEGISLATION, PROFITS ON THE DISPOSAL OF SECURITIES AND INTEREST RECEIVED BY TRUSTEES OF A UNIT TRUST ARE EXCLUDED FROM PROFITS TAX.

IN THE 1990/91 BUDGET SPEECH THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN RESPONSE TO THE SECURITIES INDUSTRY AGREED TO WIDEN THE DEFINITION OF "SECURITIES" IN THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE, AND TO EXEMPT AUTHORISED MUTUAL FUND CORPORATIONS IN A SIMILAR MANNER TO AUTHORISED UNIT TRUSTS.

"AUTHORISED MUTUAL FUND CORPORATIONS SHOULD BE ACCORDED THE SAME TREATMENT AS AUTHORISED UNIT TRUSTS BECAUSE BOTH ARE IDENTICAL IN SUBSTANCE, ALTHOUGH DIFFERING IN LEGAL FORM," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT UNTIL RECENTLY, MUTUAL FUND CORPORATIONS WERE NOT WIDELY USED AS INVESTMENT VEHICLES AND THUS THEIR PROFITS TAX POSITION WAS NOT CONSIDERED.

/"THERE SHOULD

"THERE SHOULD BE NO DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN NEGOTIABLE RECEIPTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS EVIDENCING DEPOSITS OF MONEY BOTH OF WHICH ARE INCLUDED IN THE EXISTING DEFINITION OF SECURITIES, AND BILLS OF EXCHANGE BECAUSE THEY ARE SIMILAR," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTRACTS AND FUTURES CONTRACTS, HE EXPLAINED THAT THEY WERE USED TO HEDGE AGAINST ACTUAL PURCHASES OF FOREIGN CURRENCIES AND SHARES AND IF A PROFIT WAS MADE ON SUCH A CONTRACT, A CORRESPONDING LOSS WOULD GENERALLY HAVE BEEN SUFFERED ON THE ACTUAL CURRENCIES OR STOCKS HELD.

"HEDGING IS REGARDED AS AN ESSENTIAL AND INSEPARABLE PART OF MANAGING THESE TYPES OF INVESTMENT," HE ADDED.

THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL WILL BE GAZETTTED NEXT FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 1) AND IS DUE TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 27.

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MARINE LITTERING AN OFFENCE

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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REMINDED OWNERS AND MASTERS OF VESSELS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT MARINE LITTERING IS AN OFFENCE.

THE REMINDER WAS ISSUED AFTER THE HONG KONG FERRY (HOLDINGS) COMPANY LIMITED WAS FINED \$25,000 BY WESTERN MAGISTRATE MR HUGH SINCLAIR YESTERDAY (TUESDAY) FOR DUMPING RUBBISH IN THE WATERS OF HONG KONG.

THE MARINE OFFICER (PROSECUTIONS) OF THE MARINE DEPARTMENT, MR JIM HAYMAN, SAID: "THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR MARINE LITTERING IN THE WATERS OF HONG KONG BY A COMPANY IS A FINE OF \$50,000 AND 12 MONTHS" IMPRISONMENT FOR THE OWNER OR MASTER OF A VESSEL.

"FOR ANY PERSON CONVICTED OF THE OFFENCE, THE MAXIMUM PENALTY IS A FINE OF \$10,000 AND SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT."

THE CASE OCCURRED ON AUGUST 27, 1989. SAILORS OF THE HONG KONG FERRY "MAN SANG" DUMPED SOFT DRINK CONTAINERS, PLASTIC BAGS AND ASSORTED TRASH INTO THE WATER, WHEN THE FERRY WAS APPROACHING PENG CHAU.

THE DUMPING WAS WITNESSED BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE ON BOARD A YACHT INCLUDING AN OFFICER FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND REPORTS WERE MADE TO THE MARINE DEPARTMENT.

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DTC REGISTRATION REVOKED

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THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE REGISTRATION OF GOLDEN GATE FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED AS A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY HAS BEEN REVOKED AS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS TODAY AT ITS OWN REQUEST UNDER SECTION 31(2) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE.

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OPEN DAYS ARE SIGNIFICANT TO STUDENTS

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OPEN DAYS, IN EDUCATIONAL TERMS, PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THEY HAVE ACQUIRED INTO PRACTICE.

THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR LI YUET-TING, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN OPENING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF CHONG GENE HANG COLLEGE.

MR LI SAID IT WAS MOST FITTING THAT THE COLLEGE HAD CHOSEN TO INCLUDE AN OPEN DAY IN THE CELEBRATION EVENTS.

OPEN DAYS, HE SAID, HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF SIGNIFICANCE IN EDUCATION TERMS AND, IN PUTTING INTO PRACTICE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, THE STUDENTS WOULD BE CARRYING OUT SUCH TASKS AS CHOOSING MEANINGFUL THEMES FOR THEIR EXHIBITION PROJECTS, SELECTING RELEVANT DATA AND MATERIAL AND MAKING INTERESTING PRESENTATIONS.

"THIS PROCESS OF PREPARATION CALLS FOR NOT JUST INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS BUT ALSO TEAM WORK AND CLOSE CO-OPERATION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF WHICH IS A VERY IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL GOAL," MR LI SAID.

HE SAID HE CHOSE TO SPEAK ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN DAYS BECAUSE THEY HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOLS BEING ALWAYS MINDFUL OF THEIR NEED TO CONTINUE TO EVALUATE THEIR PAST PERFORMANCE, THEIR NEED TO LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE AND THEIR NEED TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS, STAFF AND PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE FULLY.

"WE IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ARE VERY MINDFUL OF SIMILAR NEEDS IN OUR WORK OF DEVELOPING EDUCATION IN HONG KONG. WE TRY NEVER TO BE COMPLACENT AND ARE CONSTANTLY REVIEWING OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, REGULARLY PLANNING IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE AND ALWAYS ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE FORMULATION OF POLICIES AND PLANS," HE SAID.

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ASD PROPERTY SERVICES BRANCH HEADQUARTERS OPENS

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THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S PROPERTY SERVICES BRANCH NOW HAS ITS PERMANENT HOME WITH THE OPENING TODAY (WEDNESDAY) OF ITS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING IN TO KWA WAN.

LOCATED ON A 5,950 SQUARE METRE SITE AT HOK YUEN STREET, THE BUILDING WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED BY THE DIRECTOR OF ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES, MR JOSE LEI.

FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE MAINTENANCE BRANCH, THE PROPERTY SERVICES BRANCH PROVIDES PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO MAJOR GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND DOMESTIC COMPLEXES, IT ALSO UNDERTAKES ALTERATION, ADDITION, REFURBISHMENT AND FITTING-OUT WORKS FOR ALL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

IT HAS A PORTFOLIO OF 6,000 PUBLIC BUILDINGS WITH A FLOOR AREA OF 14 MILLION SQUARE METRES, RANGING FROM PUBLIC PLAYGROUND TO HOSPITALS OWNED OR CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS.

LAST YEAR, NINE CENTRES WERE CONSTRUCTED AND FITTED-OUT TO HOUSE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE OR REFUGEES.

THE BRANCH HAS ALSO COMPLETED 197 FITTING-OUT PROJECTS FOR 41,500 SQUARE METRES OF FLOOR AREA AND REFURBISHED 85 OLD BUILDINGS.

IN ADDITION TO MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES, THE BRANCH HAS MADE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL FIELDS.

IT HAS PROVIDED TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE IN FORMING THE ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT GROUP AND THE FORMULATION OF ITS STRATEGIES FOR ASBESTOS REMOVAL, WHICH HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

THE USE OF INFRARED THERMOGRAPHY AS A TOOL FOR ROOFING WORKS IS THE LATEST TECHNICAL STEP FORWARD IN PINPOINTING FAILURE IN COVERINGS.

ON PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, THE ANTIQUITIES UNIT OF THE BRANCH HAS CARRIED OUT MAINTENANCE WORK FOR A TOTAL OF 28 DIFFERENT HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

THESE RANGED FROM REBUILDING A SECTION OF A WALL OF THE CHING DYNASTY TUNG CHUNG FORT TO REINSTATING WORLD WAR II BOMB DAMAGES TO THE GRANITE FACADE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN CENTRAL.

A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE BRANCH WILL BE THE COMMISSIONING OF AN EXTENSIVE COMPUTER SYSTEM NEXT YEAR.

THE SYSTEM WILL BOOST EFFICIENCY BY PROVIDING UP-TO-THE-MINUTE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION ON ALL CURRENT AND PLANNED WORKS.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1991

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TSUEN WAN ARTS FESTIVAL TO OPEN ON FRIDAY

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THE 13TH TSUEN WAN ARTS FESTIVAL WILL OPEN ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 25) EVENING WITH A PERFORMANCE BY THE ORIENTAL SONG AND DANCE ENSEMBLE FROM CHINA.

THE ENSEMBLE IS A WORLD-RENOWNED NATIONAL ART TROUPE FOUNDED ABOUT 30 YEARS AGO.

OVER THE YEARS, IT HAS EITHER CREATED OR REVISED HUNDREDS OF SONGS FROM ASIAN, AFRICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND ITS UNIQUE ARTISTIC STYLE CAN BE REFLECTED IN ITS EXOTIC AND SPECTACULAR PERFORMANCES.

THE DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL SERVICES, MR HAIDER BARMA, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE FESTIVAL'S OPENING CEREMONY AT 8 PM ON FRIDAY IN THE AUDITORIUM OF TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL.

THE FESTIVAL IS ORGANISED BY THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD, DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE DISTRICT'S CULTURE AND RECREATION CO-ORDINATING ASSOCIATION.

IT WILL RUN FOR 37 DAYS AT ALL ESTIMATED COST OF ABOUT \$2.5 MILLION. THE PROGRAMME OF OVER 50 PERFORMANCES WILL INCLUDE CANTONESE OPERA, DRAMA, MIME AND A HAKKA FOLK SONG CONCERT.

TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT AN URBTIX OUTLETS. TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS CAN BE MADE ON 734 9009 AND ENQUIRIES ON 414 0144 OR 414 9662.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE TSUEN WAN ARTS FESTIVAL WILL BEGIN AT 8 PM ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 25) AT THE TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL.

A PREVIEW GIVEN BY THE ORIENTAL SONG AND DANCE ENSEMBLE FROM CHINA WILL BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY), BEGINNING AT 3 PM AT THE AUDITORIUM OF THE TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL.

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER BOTH EVENTS.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1991

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TENDERS INVITED FOR SHORT-TERM TENANCY

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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCY OF A SITE AT MEI LAI ROAD, LAI CHI KOK, KOWLOON.

THE SITE, MEASURING ABOUT 2,110 SQUARE METRES, IS FOR FEE-PAYING PUBLIC PARKING AREA FOR VEHICLES LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE BUT EXCLUDING LORRIES, TRUCKS AND CONTAINER VEHICLES.

HOWEVER, 10 PER CENT OF THE PARKING SPACES MUST BE RESERVED FOR LIGHT GOODS VEHICLES.

THE TENANCY IS FOR THREE YEARS AND QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS 12 NOON ON FEBRUARY 8 THIS YEAR.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON WEST, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

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UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS TO BE CLOSED

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SEEKING TO CLOSE AN UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURE ON THE ROOF OVER THE FIFTH FLOOR OF 326 PORTLAND STREET IN MONG KOK SO THAT IT CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS AND TO THE PUBLIC.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A CLOSURE ORDER FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON MARCH 8 WAS POSTED ON THE STRUCTURE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

UNDER THE BUILDING ORDINANCE, A CLOSURE ORDER IS REQUIRED BEFORE THE DEMOLITION COULD BE CARRIED OUT.

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