



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1993

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BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED TO EXTEND THE STATUTORY TIMETABLE FROM DECEMBER 31, 1993 TO APRIL 30, 1994 FOR THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION (BEC) TO SUBMIT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR ON CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES FOR THE 1995 MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

THE PROPOSAL IS CONTAINED IN THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE THIS FRIDAY (OCTOBER 22) AND IS SCHEDULED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 27.

THE BEC IS AN INDEPENDENT BODY CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DEMARCATING GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PUBLIC. ITS WORK IS GOVERNED BY A STRICT STATUTORY TIMETABLE.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID UNDER THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION ORDINANCE, THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS MUST BE BASED ON THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SEATS CURRENTLY PROVIDED FOR IN LAW.

HOWEVER, THE COMPOSITION OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS WAS ONE OF THE ISSUES RELATING TO THE 1994/95 ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ARE BEING DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE CHINESE GOVERNMENTS.

THE LENGTH OF TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE THE TALKS HAD ALREADY MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE BEC TO MEET ITS ORIGINAL SCHEDULE OF DECEMBER 31, 1993 IF THERE WERE TO BE CHANGES TO THE NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCIES.

IT WAS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO EXTEND THE BEC'S SUBMISSION TIMETABLE IF ABORTIVE WORK WAS TO BE AVOIDED.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "THE NEW SUBMISSION DATE OF APRIL 30, 1994 TAKES ACCOUNT OF THE NEED TO COMPLETE ALL STATUTORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR SETTING THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCIES BEFORE THE END OF THE CURRENT LEGCO SESSION IN JULY 1994.

"UNDER THE LAW, THESE CONSTITUENCIES MUST BE SHOWN IN THE FINAL VOTER REGISTER TO BE PUBLISHED BEFORE AUGUST 8, 1994."

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED: "THE NEW TIMETABLE IS VERY TIGHT. THE BEC CANNOT START WORK ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCIES UNTIL THE TALKS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND LEGISLATION HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN ENACTED SPECIFYING THE NUMBER OF ELECTED SEATS.

"ONLY THEN CAN THE BEC CARRY OUT ITS WORK WHICH INCLUDES TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT, THE FRAMING OF PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS, AND A 30-DAY PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE BEFORE PREPARING ITS FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS."

/THE SPOKESMAN

THE SPOKESMAN EMPHASISED THAT THE PROPOSED EXTENSION WOULD NOT PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TIME FOR THE SINO-BRITISH TALKS ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1994/95.

"NOTHING IN THE PRESENT PROPOSAL ALTERS THE FACT THAT THERE ARE ONLY WEEKS REMAINING IN WHICH TO CONCLUDE AN OVERALL AGREEMENT IN THE TALKS, INCLUDING A DECISION ON THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SEATS IN THE 1995 ELECTIONS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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EXTENSION NOT RELATED TO TIME LEFT FOR TALKS

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THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF TIMETABLE FOR THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION TO SUBMIT ITS RECOMMENDATION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE TIME LEFT FOR THE SINO-BRITISH TALKS ON 94/95 ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WE HAD TO EXTEND THE PERIOD DURING WHICH SUBMISSIONS ARE MADE BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN TALKING FOR SO LONG ON RELATED ISSUES. SO THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE OVERALL QUESTION OF HOW LONG WE HAVE GOT FOR THE TALKS."

RESPONDING TO PRESS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TALKS AFTER HIS VISIT TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S ABERDEEN REHABILITATION CENTRE, THE GOVERNOR SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS RIGHT IN ORDER TO TRY TO GIVE THE TALKS THE BEST POSSIBLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS, TO MAKE OFFERS CONDITIONALLY ON AN ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME TO THE TALKS.

"WE'VE DONE A GREAT DEAL. WE'VE OFFERED CONDITIONAL CONCESSIONS NOT BECAUSE WE BELIEVED OUR ORIGINAL PROPOSALS WERE OTHER THAN VERY GOOD," HE SAID.

ON A QUESTION ON THE RECENT PUBLIC OPINION POLL, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "WHAT THE OPINION POLLS HAVE SHOWN STEADILY OVER THE LAST MONTHS IS THAT PEOPLE THINK THAT THE PROPOSALS ON ELECTIONS THAT WE'VE MADE, THAT WE'VE PUT FORWARD, ARE EXTREMELY MODEST, ARE EXTREMELY MODERATE.

"THEY REPRESENT CONSIDERABLE CONCESSIONS FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. AND I THINK PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THOSE DIDN'T FORM STEPPING STONES TO A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT."

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GOVERNOR SEES REHAB SERVICES

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAW FOR HIMSELF THE REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE INFIRMED, THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED AND THE ELDERLY IN HONG KONG BY VISITING THREE HEALTH AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS ON THE HONG KONG ISLAND.

THE THREE INSTITUTIONS WERE THE TUNG WAH HOSPITAL, THE BUDDHIST LI KA SHING CARE AND ATTENTION HOME FOR THE ELDERLY AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S ABERDEEN REHABILITATION CENTRE.

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GREETED ON ARRIVAL AT THE TUNG WAH HOSPITAL BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOSPITAL'S GOVERNING COMMITTEE, MR JACKIE WONG SEE-SUM, THE GOVERNOR FIRST VISITED THE STROKE REHABILITATION UNIT WHICH NOT ONLY PROVIDES SERVICES FOR IN-PATIENTS BUT ALSO OFFERS DAY REHABILITATION PROGRAMME FOR POST-STROKE PATIENTS.

MR PATTEN THEN TOURED THE CARDIAC REHABILITATION UNIT, NEWLY SET UP FOR THE HOSPITAL'S CARDIAC REHABILITATION PROGRAMME WHICH STARTED ON OCTOBER 1.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME IS TO RESTORE A PERSON WITH HEART DISEASE TO HIS OPTIMAL PHYSIOLOGICAL, PSYCHOSOCIAL, VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS.

THE MAINTENANCE OF FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY THROUGH EXERCISE CONDITIONING TO PROMOTE INDEPENDENT LIVING OF PATIENTS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PROGRAMME.

MR PATTEN NEXT CALLED ON THE BUDDHIST LI KA SHING CARE AND ATTENTION HOME FOR THE ELDERLY WHICH HOUSES 250 ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO, FOR HEALTH OR OTHER REASONS, ARE UNABLE TO LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES AND WHO HAVE NO RELATIVES OR FRIENDS TO HELP THEM.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MRS LOUISE WONG, THE GOVERNOR WAS TAKEN ON A TOUR OF THE HOME'S PHYSIOTHERAPY AND RECREATION ROOMS AND DORMITORIES WHERE HE MET AND CHATTED WITH SOME OF THE ELDERLY RESIDENTS.

THE LAST STOP WAS THE SWD'S REHABILITATION CENTRE.

THE CENTRE HAS A TOTAL CAPACITY OF 143 DAY PLACES AND 172 RESIDENTIAL PLACES FOR THE DISABLED AGED 16 AND OVER TO HELP THEM DEVELOP THEIR PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITIES IN ORDER TO HELP THEIR INTEGRATION IN THE COMMUNITY.

MR PATTEN TOURED THE CENTRE'S SHELTERED WORKSHOP AND SAW A GROUP OF LOW MODERATE AND SEVERELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED RESIDENTS BEING TRAINED IN LOCOMOTIVE AND SIMPLE WORK SKILLS.

BEFORE CONCLUDING HIS VISIT, THE GOVERNOR JOINED A GROUP OF MILD AND MODERATE MENTALLY RETARDED RESIDENTS IN A BIRTHDAY PARTY AT THE CENTRE'S MULTI-PURPOSE ACTIVITY ROOM.

MR PATTEN WAS ACCOMPANIED THROUGHOUT THE VISIT BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELARE, MISS JACQUELINE WILLIS.

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LOCALISATION POLICY BROADLY SUCCESSFUL: CS

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL WITHIN A WEEK PUBLISH A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON HOW TO END THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "LOCAL" AND OVERSEAS OFFICERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE DOCUMENT WILL ALSO PROPOSES A COMMON SET OF TERMS FOR ALL CIVIL SERVANTS.

SIR DAVID WAS SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON HELD BY THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

THE LOCALISATION POLICY, ACCORDING TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY, IS LONG STANDING AND HAS BEEN BROADLY SUCCESSFUL.

SIR DAVID BELIEVES THAT THE PROFESSIONALISM, SKILL AND ADAPTABILITY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IS ONE OF THE VITAL ELEMENTS OF THE CONTINUITY THROUGH 1997 AND BEYOND.

HE SAID CONTINUITY OF THE HONG KONG SYSTEM WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE TERRITORY, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

"HONG KONG'S FUTURE MUST BE BASED ON ITS PAST IF IT IS TO SURVIVE, PROSPER AND CONTRIBUTE MIGHTILY TO CHINA'S OWN DEVELOPMENT," HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT THE RULE OF LAW, AN OPEN, FAIR AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT WERE JUST AS IMPORTANT TO CONTINUING BUSINESS SUCCESS AS THEY WERE TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

"AND I MUST SAY I SOMETIMES FEEL VERY SAD THAT SOME PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY CONTINUE TO PLAY DOWN THE IMPORTANCE OF THOSE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE VERY FABRIC OF OUR SUCCESS HAS BEEN BUILT.

"THEY ARE WORTH FIGHTING FOR NOW. THEY WILL BE WORTH FIGHTING FOR IN THE FUTURE," HE SAID.

ASKED BY REPORTERS TO FURTHER ELABORATE ON "CONTINUITY" AFTER THE LUNCHEON, SIR DAVID SAID THE BRITISH TEAM WAS TRYING TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THAT CONTINUITY.

"WE ARE TRYING TO SEEK AGREEMENT TO ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL CONTINUE THROUGH 1997. BUT OF COURSE IT CAN'T BE CONTINUITY AT ANY PRICE," HE SAID.

"WE DO HAVE OUR PRINCIPLES AND THOSE PRINCIPLES ARE IMPORTANT TO US AND THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG AS WELL."

SO IT'S GOT TO BE THAT BALANCE IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THAT DIFFICULT JUDGEMENT, TO BE MADE OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS, HE SAID.

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CALL TO WASH VEGETABLES THOROUGHLY

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MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED TO WASH AND BLANCH VEGETABLES AND CHINESE FLOWERING CABBAGE (CHOI SUM) THOROUGHLY BEFORE COOKING.

THE APPEAL WAS MADE BY THE ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HEALTH (HYGIENE), DR T H LEUNG, FOLLOWING CONFIRMATION OF EIGHT CASES OF FOOD POISONING RELATED TO PESTICIDE-CONTAMINATED CHOI SUM.

DR LEUNG SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD STEPPED UP CHECKING AND SAMPLING AT THE BORDER CHECKPOINTS AND RETAIL OUTLETS.

HE SAID FOOD INSPECTORS AT MAN KAM TO BORDER CHECKPOINT YESTERDAY (TUESDAY) INTERCEPTED TWO LORRIES OF VEGETABLES COMING FROM SUSPECTED FARMS.

THE VEGETABLES SEIZED, CONSISTING MAINLY OF CHOI SUM AND WHITE CABBAGE WEIGED 3,500 KILOGRAMS, WERE SUBSEQUENTLY DESTROYED.

DR LEUNG SAID THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE SITUATION FOR THEIR NECESSARY ACTION.

THE RECENT OUTBREAKS AFFECTED 21 PERSONS FROM EIGHT FAMILIES, WITH 14 OF THEM TREATED AND DISCHARGED WHILE SEVEN WERE STILL IN HOSPITAL.

TO PREVENT FOOD POISONING BY PESTICIDE-CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE ADVISED TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES:

- * DON'T BUY VEGETABLES WITH AN OBVIOUS STRANGE SMELL;
- * WASH WELL BEFORE COOKING;
- * DIP VEGETABLES INTO CLEAN WATER FOR SOME TIME TO ALLOW PESTICIDES TO LEACH OUT;
- * BLANCH IN BOILING WATER AND POUR AWAY THE WATER USED FOR BLANCHING AS IT MAY CONTAIN DISSOLVED PESTICIDES; AND
- * COOK THOROUGHLY BEFORE CONSUMPTION.

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HEALTH CARE UNDER EXAMINATION

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THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO EXAMINE A NUMBER OF AREAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM NOW THAT THE CONSULTATION PERIOD FOR THE REFORM OPTIONS IN THE DOCUMENT "TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH" IS OVER.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN SPEAKING AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON MANAGING HEALTH CARE WITH QUALITY.

MRS WONG SAID THE TASK BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT WAS IMPORTANT.

"WE PROPOSE TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT COST CONTROL," SHE SAID. "WE NEED TO HAVE A CORRECT DATABASE AND MECHANISM FOR EFFECTING COST CONTROL WHILST AT THE SAME TIME DELIVERING HIGH-TECH QUALITY CARE."

SHE ADDED THAT THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY WAS INITIATING AN INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENSURE THE QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF HOSPITAL SERVICES.

THE SECRETARY ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT NEEDED TO LOOK AT THE MECHANISM FOR BRIDGING THE PRIMARY WITH SECONDARY AND TERTIARY CARE, AND FOR BRINGING ABOUT A CLOSER INTERFACE BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO REDUCE COST TO THE CONSUMER.

TO PROVIDE PATIENTS WITH A GREATER DEGREE OF CHOICE, THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO INTRODUCE A NEW TYPE OF SEMI-PRIVATE ROOMS IN PUBLIC HOSPITAL, INITIALLY ON A PILOT SCHEME BASIS.

THIS WILL ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO SEE HOW BEST IT CAN MANAGE COMPETITION AND GIVE PRIVACY, CONVENIENCE AND COMFORT TO PATIENTS.

"ANOTHER WAY TO PROMOTE GREATER PATIENT CHOICE IS THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL INSURANCE," MRS WONG SAID.

"WE SEE THE NEED, VIA A CO-ORDINATED VOLUNTARY INSURANCE APPROACH SO THAT MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEMES WHOSE COVERAGE INCLUDES THE PUBLIC SECTOR COULD BE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY A DESIGNATED BODY, WHICH COULD PROVIDE CONSUMER PROTECTION BY ENSURING THAT THE INSURANCE COVERAGE IS ADEQUATE FOR ITS INTENDED PURPOSE," SHE SAID.

"WE NEED TO LOOK AT HOW BEST TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY BY PROMOTING AND ENSURING QUALITY CARE BY THOSE WHO PRACTISE ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE," THE SECRETARY SAID.

BUT SHE STRESSED THAT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF PATIENTS AS INDIVIDUALS MEANT MORE THAN JUST GIVING THEM GREATER CHOICE.

"IT REQUIRES THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PATIENT-ORIENTED CULTURE OF SERVICE," SHE SAID.

"THIS MEANS CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE THAT IS FRIENDLY, CARING AND SENSITIVE TO THE FEELINGS AND NEEDS OF THE PATIENT," SHE ADDED.

"THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH AN ATTITUDE CHANGE AMONG HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND AN APPRECIATION THAT THEIRS IS A SERVICE INDUSTRY AS WELL AS ONE REQUIRING MEDICAL EXPERTISE," MRS WONG SAID.

ACCORDING TO MRS WONG, BOTH THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ARE COMMITTED TO A RANGE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO MAKE PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES MORE USER-FRIENDLY.

THESE INCLUDE THE PROMULGATION OF PATIENTS' CHARTERS BY THE TWO ORGANISATIONS AND THE PUBLICATION OF A PAMPHLET ENTITLED "PATIENTS' RIGHTS" BY THE HONG KONG MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

ON COST CONTROL, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS BEEN CONDUCTING REGULAR REVIEWS OF ITS EXISTING SERVICES AND CARRYING OUT VALUE-FOR-MONEY STUDIES WITH A VIEW TO OPTIMISING THE USE OF RESOURCES.

"THESE HAVE RESULTED IN MAKING THE SERVICES MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY," MRS WONG SAID.

CIVIL SERVICE OFFERS A CAREER FOR LIFE

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IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN HIGH CALIBRE CANDIDATES TO THE CIVIL SERVICE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AHEAD, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

THEY ARE NEEDED IN THE CIVIL SERVICE TO HELP MODERNISE ITS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, STREAMLINE OPERATIONS, PROMOTE THE USE OF AUTOMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND PROVIDE TRAINING FOR STAFF, MRS WONG ADDED.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 1993 CIVIL SERVICE CAREERS EXHIBITION AT THE HONG KONG BAPTIST COLLEGE TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS WONG EXPLAINED WHY ONE SHOULD THINK OF JOINING THE CIVIL SERVICE.

SHE SAID: "POLITICALLY, WE ARE IN A TRANSITION PERIOD TO BECOME A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF CHINA IN 1997 WITH A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH PRESERVES OUR ECONOMIC AND LEGAL SYSTEM AND OUR WAY OF LIFE AFTER 1997.

"ECONOMICALLY, WE ARE FAST BECOMING A SERVICE-ORIENTED ECONOMY AND AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF TRADE AND FINANCE.

"AND SOCIALLY, THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING TO IMPLEMENT AMBITIOUS PROGRAMMES IN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER FIELDS TO MEET THE RISING EXPECTATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.

THUS, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN HIGH CALIBRE CANDIDATES TO THE CIVIL SERVICE - PEOPLE WITH VISION AND COMMITMENT TO HONG KONG, SHE SAID.

MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT A GOOD CIVIL SERVANT MUST HAVE DRIVE AND DETERMINATION, SOUND JUDGEMENT, COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE.

GONE WERE THE DAYS WHEN A CIVIL SERVANT COULD SIT COMFORTABLY IN THE OFFICE/IVORY TOWER AND EXPECT THINGS TO BE DONE SMOOTHLY.

HE MUST BE SENSITIVE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS AND FEELINGS OF THE MAN-IN-THE-STREET, AND BE INNOVATIVE AND DYNAMIC IN PROBLEM SOLVING.

AS THE LARGEST EMPLOYER IN HONG KONG, MRS WONG SAID THE CIVIL SERVICE OFFERED ATTRACTIVE SALARY, FRINGE BENEFITS AS WELL AS SECURITY OF TENURE.

THE POSITION OF CIVIL SERVANTS IS ALSO SAFEGUARDED BY THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW UNDER WHICH CIVIL SERVANTS MAY REMAIN IN EMPLOYMENT AND CONTINUE THEIR SERVICE WITH PAY, ALLOWANCES, BENEFITS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE NO LESS FAVOURABLE THAN BEFORE.

HOWEVER, SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE OFFERED NOT JUST A JOB BUT A CAREER FOR LIFE.

"MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, PERHAPS, IS THAT A CAREER IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IS A VERY POSITIVE WAY OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY AT A VERY CRUCIAL TIME IN HONG KONG," SHE ADDED.

GOVT SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANTS ASKED TO STAY COOL
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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES ON THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION TO BE STAGED BY THE SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANT (SWA) BRANCH OF THE HONG KONG CHINESE CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATION FROM OCTOBER 25 TO 27, THE ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR ALFRED CHUI WING-MAN, ASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT SERVICES OF THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE MAINTAINED.

HE SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD ALREADY MET TWO OF THEIR THREE REQUESTS. THESE ARE IMPROVING THEIR PROMOTION PROSPECTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

ON THEIR REQUEST FOR A SALARY STRUCTURE REVIEW, MR CHUI SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD EARLIER PUT THE CASE TO THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CONSIDERATION.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAD EXAMINED THE CASE AND ADVISED THAT THERE WERE INSUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATIONS.

HE ADDED THAT IN THE MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SWA BRANCH TODAY (WEDNESDAY), BOTH SIDES AGREED TO FORM A TASK GROUP TO IDENTIFY NEW GROUNDS FOR A RE-SUBMISSION OF THE SWA BRANCH'S REQUEST, TO SUBSTANTIATE THE CASE.

"IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT THE SWA BRANCH SHOULD DECIDE TO STAGE A SIT-IN NEXT WEEK DESPITE WE HAVE ALREADY REACHED AN AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION THROUGH THE TASK GROUP," MR CHUI SAID.

HE APPEALED TO STAFF IN THE SWA GRADE TO ACT WITH PATIENCE AND GOOD SENSE.

HE ALSO URGED THEM, AS SOCIAL WORKERS, THAT THEY SHOULD PUT PUBLIC INTEREST FIRST, AND NOT TO TAKE ANY DISRUPTIVE ACTION, WHICH WOULD NOT BE CONDUCTIVE TO FURTHERING THEIR CAUSE.

HE URGED THEM TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE ISSUE.

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STUDY ON AMORTISATION OF NON-CONFORMING EXISTING USES
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THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, DR PETER PUN, HAS SIGNED A \$1,260,000 AGREEMENT WITH A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CARRY OUT A FIVE-MONTH STUDY ON AMORTISATION OF NON-CONFORMING EXISTING USES.

IN THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE PUBLISHED IN JULY 1991, IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THE CONCEPT OF AMORTISATION SHOULD BE USED SELECTIVELY TO ELIMINATE NON-CONFORMING EXISTING USES WHICH ARE CAUSING HEALTH, SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL OR SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

THE STUDY IS PART OF THE WORK ON THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE.

UNDER THE ORDINANCE, NON-CONFORMING EXISTING USES ARE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE UNTIL REDEVELOPMENT.

"BY AMORTISATION, WE MEAN COMPULSORY TERMINATION, WITHOUT COMPENSATION, OF A NON-CONFORMING EXISTING USE BY THE END OF A SPECIFIED PERIOD.

"THE SPECIFIED PERIOD SHOULD BE LONG ENOUGH FOR THE OWNER/OPERATOR TO RECOUP HIS INVESTMENT AND PREPARE FOR A CHANGE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CONCEPT OF AMORTISATION, IF ADOPTED IN THE NEW PLANNING LEGISLATION, WOULD EMPOWER THE GOVERNMENT TO REGULATE AND REMOVE THE PROBLEMATIC NON-CONFORMING USES.

THE STUDY WILL INVESTIGATE THE TECHNICALITIES OF APPLYING AMORTISATION IN HONG KONG AND FORMULATE PRACTICABLE METHODS FOR DETERMINING THE AMORTISATION PERIODS.

THE CONCEPT OF AMORTISATION HAS BEEN PRACTISED IN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE USA. THE STUDY TEAM WILL HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERT PANEL TO ADVISE ON HOW OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE COULD BE RELEVANT TO HONG KONG.

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GOVT DETERMINES TO CURB RHINO TRADE

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THE GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO CURB ILLEGAL RHINO TRADE IN THE TERRITORY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, MR FRANK LAU SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN SUPPORT OF THE CITES CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES, HONG KONG HAS ONE OF THE STRICTEST LEGISLATIONS IN THE ASIAN REGION BANNING THE RHINO TRADE.

"UNDER THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS (PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES) ORDINANCE, THE IMPORT, EXPORT, POSSESSION AND LOCAL SALE OF RHINO HORN AND RHINO PRODUCTS INCLUDING MEDICINE CLAIMING TO CONTAIN RHINO INGREDIENTS ARE PROHIBITED IN HONG KONG."

HE SAID THE BAN ON IMPORT WAS INTRODUCED IN 1979 AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY EXTENDED TO COVER LOCAL SALE IN 1988 AND MEDICINAL PRODUCTS CLAIMING TO CONTAIN RHINO INGREDIENTS IN 1989.

THE LEGISLATION ALSO APPLIES TO THE TRANSIT OF THESE PRODUCTS IN THE TERRITORY.

HE REMINDED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT OFFENDER WOULD BE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF \$25,000 ON FIRST CONVICTION, AND A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF \$50,000 AND IMPRISONMENT OF SIX MONTHS ON SUBSEQUENT CONVICTIONS.

"THE AFD, TOGETHER WITH THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT, ARE DETERMINED TO CRACK DOWN ANY SUCH ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES," MR LAU SAID.

APART FROM ROUTINE CHECKS CONDUCTED BY CUSTOMS OFFICERS AT POINTS OF ENTRY, THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAD ALSO CARRIED OUT SURPRISE CHECKS AT MEDICINAL SHOPS.

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OVER 1,000 SUCH CHECKS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT IN THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS OF THIS YEAR.

AS A RESULT, 34 SMALL PACKETS OF CHINESE MEDICINE CLAIMING TO CONTAIN RHINO PRODUCTS WERE SEIZED AND FOUR SMALL VIALS OF MEDICINES CLAIMING TO CONTAIN RHINO INGREDIENTS WERE SEIZED. PROSECUTION OF THE TWO CASES INVOLVED WERE IN PROGRESS.

ACTING ON INFORMATION, THE DEPARTMENT ALSO SEIZED TWO RHINO HORNS AND 76 BOXES OF CHINESE MEDICINE CLAIMING TO CONTAIN RHINO PRODUCTS FROM THREE SHOPS THIS MORNING.

IN REPOSE TO RECENT REPORTS OF ILLEGAL RHINO TRADE IN THE ASIA REGION AND IN HONG KONG, THE DEPARTMENT WILL MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY TOMORROW TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM.

"WE WILL TRY OUR BEST TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE AGENCY AND FOLLOW UP ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THEM. ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST SUCH ILLEGAL TRADE WILL BE STEPPED UP," MR LAU SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD ALSO REVIEW THE GOVERNMENT ENFORCEMENT METHODS WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING BETTER RESULTS.

MR LAU APPEALED TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NOT TO USE OR PURCHASE MEDICINE CLAIMED TO CONTAIN RHINO PRODUCT SO AS TO PROTECT THESE ENDANGERED SPECIES.

THERE MIGHT ALSO BE A CHANCE THAT THESE PRODUCTS DID NOT CONTAIN RHINO INGREDIENTS.

HE ALSO URGED ANYONE WHO HAD ANY INFORMATION ON ILLEGAL RHINO TRADE TO PROVIDE SUCH INFORMATION TO THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT OR THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT SO THAT APPROPRIATE ACTION COULD BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY TO CURB THESE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.

ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS (PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES) ORDINANCE IN GENERAL, MR LAU SAID 181 SEIZURES HAD BEEN MADE AND 100 PROSECUTIONS HAD BEEN CONDUCTED IN THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS OF THIS YEAR.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1993

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	\$ MILLION -----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,935
REVERSAL OF LAF	+1,065
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	3,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	+960
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	3,960
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 112.8 *+0.0* 20.10.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.59 PCT	13 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.63	3.09
1 MONTH	2.55 PCT	16 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.94	3.26
3 MONTHS	2.63 PCT	19 MONTHS	2505	3.75	100.42	3.50
6 MONTHS	2.76 PCT	22 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.81	3.62
12 MONTHS	3.06 PCT					
TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 13,858MN						
CLOSED 20 OCTOBER 1993						

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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUPPLEMENT

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CONSOLIDATED EFFORT ON LOCALISATION AND ADAPTATION OF LAWS

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THE UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP (JLG), THE CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS BRANCH AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS HAVE ALL BEEN WORKING TO FACILITATE LOCALISATION AND ADAPTATION OF HONG KONG LAWS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MR MATHEWS SAID IN HIS CHAMBERS A LOCALISATION AND ADAPTATION OF LAWS UNIT HAD BEEN FORMED IN THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION.

THE UNIT IS TO CARRY OUT LEGAL RESEARCH ON THE LOCALISATION AND ADAPTATION OF HONG KONG LAWS, TO PROVIDE POLICY BRANCHES WITH LEGAL ADVICE ON BOTH PROGRAMMES, TO PREPARE RELATED CONSULTATION PAPERS AND TO HELP IN THE DRAFTING OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION.

ON SPECIALISED ASPECTS OF THE WORK, OTHER DIVISIONS OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS ALSO PROVIDE LEGAL ADVICE WHEN REQUIRED.

"THE ACTUAL DRAFTING OF LOCALISATION AND ADAPTATION BILLS IS DONE BY COUNSEL IN THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION, IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE.

"A STEERING GROUP CONSISTING OF ALL THE LAW OFFICERS SUPERVISES THE WORK," MR MATHEWS EXPLAINED.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OVERALL PLANNING OF BOTH THE LOCALISATION AND ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES AND LIAISON WITH POLICY BRANCHES FALL ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS BRANCH.

THE CONSULTATION WORK WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON BOTH PROGRAMMES IS CARRIED OUT IN THE JLG HEADED ON THE BRITISH SIDE BY THE JLG UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE WITH LEGAL ADVICE FROM THE LAW OFFICER (INTERNATIONAL LAW) AS REQUIRED.

MR MATHEWS ALSO SAID OF THE 300 OR SO UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS CURRENTLY APPLY IN HONG KONG, 30 HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOCALISED.

"WE HAVE IDENTIFIED 80 AS NOT REQUIRING LOCALISATION AND IT IS PROPOSED THAT THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LAPSE. PROPOSALS FOR DEALING WITH 80 MORE ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP.

"WE ARE CONTINUING OUR STUDY OF THE REMAINING ENACTMENTS," HE SAID.

ON THE ADAPTATION OF LAWS EXERCISE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALMOST COMPLETED THE INITIAL REVIEW OF ALL HONG KONG ORDINANCES AND HAS STARTED THE PROCESS OF MAKING DETAILED PROPOSALS TO THE CHINESE SIDE.

PROPOSALS FOR THE ADAPTATION OF 10 ORDINANCES HAVE BEEN HANDED OVER, MR MATHEWS SAID.

THE WORK ON BOTH PROGRAMMES MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE JULY 1, 1997, BUT WE WOULD LIKE IF POSSIBLE TO HAVE IT COMPLETED WELL BEFORE THEN SO AS TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION, HE ADDED.

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NO FORMAL PROPOSAL FROM CHINESE ON NINGDINGYANG BRIDGE

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR RECEIVED NO FORMAL PROPOSAL FROM THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES REGARDING THE NINGDINGYANG BRIDGE PROJECT, ALTHOUGH SOME LIMITED INFORMATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED THROUGH A NUMBER OF INFORMAL CHANNELS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SIU-TONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID UNTIL THE STATUS OF THE PROJECT WAS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED AND MORE DETAILS WERE AVAILABLE, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO INITIATE STUDIES IN HONG KONG TO EXAMINE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT IN STRATEGIC AND LOCAL PLANNING TERMS.

"IT IS NOT AT PRESENT POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, TO SAY WHETHER OR HOW THE PROJECT MIGHT TIE IN WITH OTHER MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS ALREADY UNDER PLANNING OR CONSTRUCTION.

"AS THE PROJECTS WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON HONG KONG'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT, COMPREHENSIVE STUDIES, APPLICATION OF THE NORMAL STATUTORY PLANNING PROCESSES AND FULL CONSULTATION WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE ANY FIRM DECISIONS COULD BE MADE," HE SAID.

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CLARIFICATION SOUGHT ON REPORTER'S CASE

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THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN PEKING HAS, AT THE REQUEST OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, ASKED THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES TO CLARIFY THE OFFENCES WITH WHICH THE MING PAO REPORTER, MR XI YANG, IS BEING CHARGED.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING, MR SUEN SAID THE EMBASSY AND THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO URGED THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES TO ALLOW MR XI TO RECEIVE VISITS FROM HIS MING PAO COLLEAGUES AT MING PAO, FROM ANY LAWYER HE APPOINTS TO REPRESENT HIM, AND FROM HIS FAMILY MEMBER.

"IN ADDITION, WE HAVE DRAWN THE ATTENTION OF THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES TO THE WIDER CONCERNS RAISED IN HONG KONG BY THIS CASE, IN PARTICULAR THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY HONG KONG JOURNALISTS OPERATING IN CHINA IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS LEGAL AND WHAT IS NOT."

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TYPHOON SURCHARGE FOR TAXI BEING CONSIDERED

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THE GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT OVERCHARGING BY TAXI DRIVERS, IN PARTICULAR DURING TYPHOONS, AND IS EXAMINING VARIOUS OPTIONS TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK, MR BARMA SAID OPTIONS UNDER EXAMINATION INCLUDED THE PROPOSAL PUT FORWARD BY SOME TAXI ASSOCIATIONS FOR A SURCHARGE TO BE IMPOSED WHEN TYPHOON SIGNAL NUMBER EIGHT OR HIGHER IS HOISTED.

THE LEVEL AND FORM OF THE PROPOSED SURCHARGE, FOR EXAMPLE, A FLAT OR DISTANCE-RELATED CHARGE, ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SURCHARGE, THE QUESTION OF ENFORCEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AS WELL AS PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY ARE ALL ASPECTS THAT HAVE TO BE EXAMINED.

THE ADVICE OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL THEN HAVE TO BE SOUGHT ON THE RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION, MR BARMA ADDED.

THERE WERE 494 ACTIONABLE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE TRANSPORT COMPLAINTS UNIT AND THE POLICE AGAINST OVERCHARGING BY TAXI DRIVERS AND 52 PROSECUTIONS IN THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS THIS YEAR.

MR BARMA SAID THE POLICE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING ACTION AGAINST TAXI MALPRACTICES UNDER ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE AND ENFORCEMENT ACTION HAD BEEN INTENSIFIED OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS FOLLOWING RECENT REPORTS OF INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF MALPRACTICES BY TAXI DRIVERS.

/"SINCE SEPTEMBER

"SINCE SEPTEMBER 1 THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 38 OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN MOUNTED, RESULTING IN 275 PROSECUTIONS. SUCH INTENSIFIED ENFORCEMENT WILL CONTINUE."

IN ADDITION, MR BARMA SAID A BILL FOR THE COMPULSORY DISPLAY OF TAXI DRIVER IDENTITY PLATES HAD BEEN UNDER EXAMINATION SINCE JANUARY THIS YEAR BY A BILLS COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"SHOULD APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION BE ENACTED, THERE SHOULD BE MORE DISCIPLINE IN THE TAXI TRADE AND RESULT IN LESS MALPRACTICES.

"MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE NEW REQUIREMENTS WILL ASSIST IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND, HENCE, PROSECUTION OF OFFENDING TAXI DRIVERS," HE SAID.

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MEASURES TO REMOVE MISCONCEPTIONS TOWARDS EX-MENTALLY ILL
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THE DAY ACTIVITIES CENTRE FOR DISCHARGED MENTAL PATIENTS IN LAGUNA CITY IS EXPECTED TO BE OPEN FOR USE EARLY NEXT YEAR.

PHASED ADMISSION IS BEING PLANNED SO THAT STAFF CAN PROVIDE ADEQUATE TIME AND GUIDANCE TO TRAINEES TO FACILITATE THEIR ADJUSTMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE TRAINING PROGRAMMES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LI WAH-MING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS WONG SAID SHE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ATTENDEES WOULD CAUSE NUISANCE TO THE RESIDENTS.

NEVERTHELESS, SHE SAID, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE OPERATING AGENCY TO IDENTIFY MEASURES TO MINIMISE RESIDENTS' WORRIES AND ACHIEVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CLIENTS OF THE CENTRE.

"THE CENTRE WILL BE STAFFED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING TO ITS CLIENTS."

THE DESIGN AND THE FACILITIES OF THE CENTRE INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE, THE INSTALLATION OF AN ALARM SYSTEM AT FIRE EXITS, WILL FACILITATE THE MONITORING OF MOVEMENTS IN AND OUT OF THE CENTRE, SHE ADDED.

THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND DISTRICT ORGANISATIONS HAVE STRENGTHENED, AND WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN, PUBLIC EDUCATION ON REHABILITATION IN KWUN TONG DISTRICT.

TO REMOVE RESIDENTS' MISCONCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CENTRE AND ITS CLIENTS, COPIES OF THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CONTAINING INFORMATION ON REHABILITATION POLICY AND SERVICES FOR EX-MENTALLY ILL PERSONS, ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD OF LAGUNA CITY.

"WE HIGHLIGHT THE FACT THAT THE CENTRE WILL ONLY ADMIT CLIENTS WHO HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY RECOVERED FROM THEIR ILLNESS AND WHO HAVE NO RECORD OF VIOLENCE," MRS WONG SAID.

VISITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE AREA COMMITTEES AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES IN KWUN TONG TO REHABILITATION INSTITUTIONS FOR EX-MENTALLY ILL PERSONS WILL ALSO BE ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT BOARD IN THE COMING MONTHS.

TO STRENGTHEN THE EXISTING CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND RESIDENTS IN LAGUNA CITY, THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT A FLAT OWNER OF THE LAGUNA CITY WOULD BE INVITED TO JOIN THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE IN WHICH THE ACTIVITY CENTRE IS HOUSED.

"OUR DOOR FOR FURTHER DIALOGUE WITH RESIDENTS CONTINUES TO REMAIN OPEN," MRS WONG SAID.

"WE ARE KEEN TO MEET WITH THEM IN A SINCERE AND CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER AND WORK OUT WAYS TO REMOVE THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE REHABILITATION FACILITY."

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FAIR COMPETITION NOT AFFECTED BY NATIONALITY REQUIREMENT
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THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC BODIES TO BE COMMONWEALTH CITIZENS DOES NOT AFFECT FAIR COMPETITION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON PHILIP WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT PRESENT SUCH REQUIREMENT STANDS IN THREE ORDINANCES RELATING TO PUBLIC BODIES: THE PUBLIC BUS SERVICES ORDINANCE (CAP 230), THE FERRY SERVICES ORDINANCE (CAP 104) AND THE CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL ORDINANCE (CAP 203).

"THIS REQUIREMENT WILL NO LONGER BE APPROPRIATE AFTER 30 JUNE 1997 AND ITS REMOVAL FROM THESE THREE ORDINANCES HAS THEREFORE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE ADAPTATION OF LAWS EXERCISE," HE SAID.

BOTH THE PUBLIC BUS SERVICES ORDINANCE AND THE FERRY SERVICES ORDINANCE EMPOWER THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO WAIVE THIS REQUIREMENT.

/"AFTER OBTAINING

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"AFTER OBTAINING SUCH A WAIVER, WE HAVE WRITTEN INTO THE NEW FRANCHISES OF CHINA MOTOR BUS AND CITYBUS LIMITED WHICH TOOK EFFECT ON 1 SEPTEMBER 1993 A CLAUSE TO THE EFFECT THAT A MAJORITY OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE FRANCHISEE SHALL BE ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR NATIONALITY."

THE NEW FRANCHISE OF NEW LANTAO BUS WHICH WILL TAKE EFFECT ON 1 APRIL 1995 ALSO CONTAINS A SIMILAR CLAUSE, HE ADDED.

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GOVT DOES NOT REGULATE NEWSPAPERS' PRICE

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT REGULATE THE PRICE OF NEWSPAPERS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK, HE AFFIRMED THAT EXCEPT WHERE SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE OVER-RIDING, THE PRICES OF COMMODITIES WERE BEST LEFT TO MARKET FORCES WITH MINIMAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION.

ACCORDINGLY, HE SAID THERE WERE NO PLANS TO DEVELOP A MECHANISM TO MONITOR OR CONTROL NEWSPAPER PRICE INCREASES.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ALLOWED NEWS ORGANISATIONS THE GREATEST POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITY IN CONDUCTING THEIR ACTIVITIES.

"THE ONLY ORDINANCE THAT IS DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THIS MEDIUM IS THE REGISTRATION OF LOCAL NEWSPAPER ORDINANCE, THE PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO ENSURE THAT EVERY NEWSPAPER IS PROPERLY REGISTERED, WITH THEIR PROPRIETOR, PRINTER, PUBLISHER, AND EDITOR CLEARLY IDENTIFIED."

HE ADVISED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO APPROACH THE CONSUMER COUNCIL IF THEY HAD ANY COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE PRICES OF NEWSPAPERS.

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REVIEW OF GOVT SERVICES' FEES AND CHARGES UNDERWAY

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THE REVIEW BY A WORKING GROUP OF THE CRITERIA FOR SETTING FEES AND CHARGES AND PROFIT LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES WILL BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR KWONG KI-CHI, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HIS WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON KWOK-LIM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (LEGCO), MR KWONG SAID THE LEGCO WOULD BE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY CHANGES TO THE PRESENT CHARGING POLICY IN RELATION TO GOVERNMENT UTILITIES ARE TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

THE WORKING PARTY WAS SET UP EARLIER THIS YEAR. IT IS CHAIRED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY AND COMPRISED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM FIVE GOVERNMENT UTILITIES: THE MARINE FERRY TERMINALS, THE HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, POST OFFICE, THE WATERWORKS AND THE GOVERNMENT TUNNELS.

FOLLOWING SOME PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS, THE WORKING PARTY HAS IDENTIFIED THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE REVIEW. IT IS NOW EXAMINING THESE ISSUES IN RELATION TO THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO EACH GOVERNMENT UTILITY.

A CRUCIAL PART OF THE REVIEW IS TO CONSIDER THE RELATIVE MERITS OF DIFFERENT METHODS COMMONLY USED FOR CALCULATING RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS AND THE TARGET RATES OF RETURN NORMALLY ADOPTED, BE IT IN THE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SECTOR, MR KWONG SAID.

HE SAID THE DIVERSE NATURE OF THE FIVE GOVERNMENT UTILITIES HAD MADE THIS PART OF THE REVIEW A HIGHLY COMPLEX TASK.

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MONITORING POLICY OF BANKS AND DEPOSIT TAKING COMPANIES

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THE BANKS AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES WILL CONTINUE TO ADHERE TO A 25 PER-CENT UNIFORM MINIMUM LIQUIDITY RATIO.

AND HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY (HKMA) WILL NOT IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON THE MATURITY MISMATCHING OF INSTITUTIONS' ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE REGULATORY AUTHORITY - HKMA - WILL ASSESS THE INTERNAL GUIDELINES OF THESE INSTITUTIONS AND ACTUAL MISMATCHES OF INSTITUTIONS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.

IT WILL CONSIDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS, INCLUDING:

- * THE INSTITUTION'S STOCK OF LIQUID ASSETS AND THEIR QUALITY,
- * THE VOLATILITY AND DIVERSITY OF DEPOSITS,
- * THE AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY OF UNDRAWN STANDBY FACILITIES AND;
- * THE ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS OF THE PARENT OR HEAD OFFICE TO PROVIDE LIQUIDITY.

THE HKMA WILL USE PEER GROUP COMPARISONS IN ITS ASSESSMENT TO ENSURE FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT AND IDENTIFY INSTITUTIONS WHOSE POLICIES ARE OUT OF LINE WITH THEIR PEERS CARRYING ON A SIMILAR LINE OF BUSINESS.

HE NOTED THAT THE HKMA WOULD TAKE MATURITY MISMATCH ANALYSIS TO ASSESS THE ADEQUACY OF LIQUIDITY OF INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS.

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DEVELOPERS DECIDE WHEN TO SELL NEW FLATS

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IT IS AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF THE NORMAL OPERATION OF A MARKET THAT DEVELOPERS ARE FREE TO DECIDE WHEN TO SELL UNITS IN COMPLETED BUILDINGS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON SAMUEL WONG, MR EASON SAID DEVELOPERS MIGHT WISH TO RENT COMPLETED UNITS INSTEAD OF SELLING THEM, FOR INSTANCE, DEPENDING ON THE MARKET CONDITION.

HE SAID A DEVELOPER WHO KEPT COMPLETED UNITS UNSOLD OR EMPTY WOULD LOSE POTENTIAL INCOME FROM THE SALE OR RENTAL OF SUCH UNITS.

"GIVEN THE COSTS INVOLVED IN FINANCIAL CHARGES, SITE MANAGEMENT, PROFESSIONAL FEE ETC, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT A DEVELOPER WOULD DELAY THE COMPLETION OF A PROJECT SIMPLY TO AVOID RATE PAYMENTS."

IT ALSO SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT A DEVELOPER WOULD DEFER THE COMPLETION OF A BUILDING PROJECT TO SPECULATE ON THE PROPERTY MARKET GIVEN THE COSTS INVOLVED IN SUCH DEFERRAL, HE SAID.

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PRESENT SYSTEM TO ENHANCE HA TRANSPARENCY WORKS WELL

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THE PRESENT SYSTEM PROVIDING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY WHILE MAINTAINING EFFICIENCY OF THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY'S EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES WORKS WELL AND SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS WONG SAID SINCE 1990, THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY HAD SET UP THREE REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO PROVIDE FORUMS FOR DISCUSSION ON THE REGIONAL PLANNING AND PROVISION OF HOSPITAL SERVICES.

IT HAS ALSO SET UP 31 HOSPITAL GOVERNING COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING THE MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL HOSPITALS.

"ALL THESE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES ARE SERVED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, IN PARTICULAR THOSE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY AND DISTRICT ORGANISATIONS, TO PROVIDE A DIRECT VENUE FOR PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP," MRS WONG SAID.

IN ADDITION, THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT MAY CONDUCT EXAMINATIONS ON THE ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH THE AUTHORITY HAS EXPENDED RESOURCES IN DISCHARGING ITS STATUTORY FUNCTIONS.

THE SECRETARY ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT SHE WOULD EXPLORE WITH THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY FURTHER WAYS TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY.

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PROCEDURE FOR BNO RENEWAL REMAINS UNCHANGED

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THE PROCEDURE FOR THE RENEWAL OF BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) (BN(O)) PASSPORTS AFTER 1997, WILL BE THE SAME AS AT PRESENT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID BN(O) PASSPORTS MAY BE RENEWED AFTER THE CHANGE OF FLAG BY THE BRITISH CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONG KONG, OR BY ANY BRITISH PASSPORT ISSUING OFFICE OVERSEAS.

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NO PLAN TO ADD MORE MARRIAGE REGISTRIES

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLAN TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MARRIAGE REGISTRIES AND TO PRIVATISE THE SERVICE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIMOTHY HA WING-HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR ASPREY SAID THE EXISTING FACILITIES COULD COPE WITH DEMAND.

"THE PROBLEM OF INSUFFICIENT TIME SLOTS EXISTS FOR LESS THAN 10 DAYS IN THE YEAR."

HE SAID EXTENDING REGISTRIES' OFFICE HOURS WAS A VIABLE WAY TO MEET EXCESS DEMAND ON PARTICULAR DAYS, BUT PEOPLE DID NOT LIKE EARLY MORNINGS OR LATE AFTERNOONS FOR THE CEREMONY.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT PROLONGED QUEUING WAS UNNECESSARY AS THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT COULD COPE WITH THE NUMBER OF COUPLES WISHING TO BE MARRIED.

HE SAID THE 11 CIVIL MARRIAGE REGISTRIES PROVIDED AN EFFICIENT SERVICE AT REASONABLE COST, ADDING THAT THERE WERE SOME 220 PLACES OF WORSHIP OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS LICENSED FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE.

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MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE AIRPORT CONGESTION

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE THE CONGESTION OF TRANSFER PASSENGERS AT THE RESTRICTED AREA OF KAI TAK AIRPORT, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR SIU SAID THE CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT HAD STARTED A PROGRAMME TO EXPAND THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE IN THE RESTRICTED AREA.

THE PROGRAMME INCLUDES THE WIDENING OF DEPARTURE PIERS TOWARDS THE LANDSIDE AND THE RE-LOCATION OF SOME AIRLINE ACCOMMODATION. AN ADDITIONAL 2,200 SQUARE METRES OF SPACE WILL BE AVAILABLE BY NOVEMBER NEXT YEAR.

HE ADDED THAT THE IMMIGRATION SERVICE AT THE AIRPORT ALSO ALLOWED TRANSFER PASSENGERS UNABLE TO MAKE AN IMMEDIATE ONWARD CONNECTION TO LEAVE THE AIRPORT TEMPORARILY UNDER A GUARANTEE FROM THE AIRLINES WHICH BROUGHT THEM TO HONG KONG.

/MR SIU

MR SIU SAID CONGESTION AT THE RESTRICTED AREA OF KAI TAK AIRPORT WAS MAINLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE INCREASE IN PASSENGER THROUGHPUT AT THE AIRPORT, PARTICULARLY THE GROWTH IN TRANSFER PASSENGER TRAFFIC.

FROM 1987 TO AUGUST 31 THIS YEAR, THE TOTAL PASSENGER TRAFFIC HAD INCREASED FROM 12 MILLION TO ALMOST 24 MILLION, AND FROM 1.5 MILLION TO 5.5 MILLION IN THE NUMBER OF TRANSFER PASSENGERS.

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DISCUSSION UNDERWAY FOR HK TO HOST 1997 MEETINGS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS DISCUSSING WITH THE WORLD BANK AND THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND THE ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING THE ISSUE OF FORMAL INVITATION LETTERS TO INVITE THE TWO ORGANISATIONS TO HOLD THEIR 1997 ANNUAL MEETINGS IN HONG KONG.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON DAVID K P LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT IS HOPED THAT THE MATTER WILL BE RESOLVED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, MR CARTLAND SAID.

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MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN MORALE OF HOSPITAL STAFF

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THE RATE OF APPLICATIONS FOR TRANSFER BY NURSING STAFF OF THE CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL IS COMPARABLE WITH THOSE OF OTHER PUBLIC HOSPITALS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

A MAJORITY OF THESE APPLICATIONS ARE RELATED TO PERSONAL REASONS SUCH AS TRAVELLING DISTANCE TO WORK, INTENTION TO SEEK FURTHER EDUCATION AND ASPIRATIONS FOR GREATER CAREER EXPOSURE, SHE NOTED.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS WONG OUTLINED A NUMBER OF MEASURES BEING TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN THE MORALE OF THE STAFF WORKING IN CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL.

THESE INCLUDE:

* CONDUCT REGULAR OPINION SURVEYS TO GAUGE THE SENTIMENTS OF STAFF AND TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON POSSIBLE AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT;

* DOUBLE THE BUDGET FOR STAFF TRAINING FROM \$280,000 IN 1992/93 TO \$500,000 IN 1993/94;

/* REDUCE OVERCROWDING

* REDUCE OVERCROWDING SIGNIFICANTLY THROUGH THE COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF CAMP BEDS AND THE PHASED DECONTAMINATION OF 487 PATIENTS TO OTHER HOSPITALS; AND

* ORGANISE WELFARE OR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES BY THE STAFF SOCIAL CLUB.

MRS WONG ALSO NOTED THAT A TOTAL OF 13 MINOR PROJECTS WERE IN PROGRESS TO IMPROVE THE HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT FOR PATIENTS AND STAFF.

IN THE LONGER TERM, THE HOSPITAL WILL BE REDEVELOPED, AT A COST OF \$500 MILLION, FOR COMPLETION BY 1997, SHE ADDED.

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MORE S6 STUDENTS IN PREVOCAATIONAL SCHOOLS

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A TOTAL OF 275 SECONDARY FIVE STUDENTS OF PREVOCAATIONAL SCHOOLS CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES IN SECONDARY SIX IN THE SAME SCHOOLS IN 1993/94 COMPARED TO 263 IN 1992/93, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN, MR LAM SAID THESE FIGURES REPRESENTED 9.84 PER CENT AND 11.71 PER CENT OF THE RELEVANT ENROLMENT RESPECTIVELY.

HE ALSO TOLD MEMBERS THAT OF THE 570 SECONDARY SIX PLACES IN PREVOCAATIONAL SCHOOLS IN 1993/94, 526 WERE ALLOCATED UNDER STAGES I TO IV OF THE ADMISSION PROCEDURE ON THE BASIS OF ACADEMIC MERIT AND SCHOOL SELECTION.

THE REMAINING 44 PLACES WERE ALLOCATED CENTRALLY TO 43 STUDENTS UNDER STAGE V.

IN 1992/93, ALL THE 420 AVAILABLE PLACES HAD BEEN ALLOCATED BEFORE THE CENTRAL ALLOCATION STAGE WAS ACTIVATED.

ON THE NUMBER OF SECONDARY SIX STUDENTS IN PREVOCAATIONAL SCHOOLS WHO DID NOT OBTAIN PASSES IN CHINESE OR ENGLISH IN THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION (HKCEE), MR LAM SAID IN 1993/94, 85 (16%) DID NOT OBTAIN A PASS IN CHINESE LANGUAGE, 91 (17.1%) DID NOT OBTAIN A PASS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND 22 (4.1%) DID NOT OBTAIN PASSES IN BOTH CHINESE LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR 1992/93 WERE 51 (12.3%), 65 (15.7%) AND 12 (2.9%).

THERE WERE ALSO 24 (5.8%) SECONDARY SIX STUDENTS WHO LEFT SCHOOL IN 1992/93 BECAUSE THEY DID NOT OBTAIN A PASS IN EITHER CHINESE LANGUAGE OR ENGLISH LANGUAGE OR BOTH AFTER RESITTING THE HKCEE IN 1993.

THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS TO RESIT THE 1994 HKCEE IS NOT YET AVAILABLE.

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DOMESTIC HELPERS FROM CHINA NOT PERMITTED

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ENTRY OF DOMESTIC HELPERS FROM CHINA IS NOT PERMITTED AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLAN TO CHANGE THE POLICY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR ASPREY SAID THERE WOULD BE DIFFICULTIES TO MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE IMMIGRATION CONTROL IF DOMESTIC HELPERS FROM CHINA WERE PERMITTED TO ENTER. THE DIFFICULTIES ARE:

* DOMESTIC HELPERS FROM CHINA COULD BECOME HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS AFTER SEVEN YEARS OF ORDINARY RESIDENCE HERE;

* PEOPLE MIGHT ABUSE THE SITUATION BY, FOR EXAMPLE, BRINGING IN FAMILY MEMBERS FROM CHINA BY REPRESENTING THEM AS DOMESTIC HELPERS;

* WORKERS MIGHT OVERSTAY OR TAKE ON OTHER JOBS; AND

* A WRONG SIGNAL TO WOULD-BE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, AND RESULT IN AN INFLUX OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

THE POLICY ON FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF PERMITTING ENTRY OF DOMESTIC HELPERS FROM CHINA, WAS REVIEWED REGULARLY, MR ASPREY SAID.

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USE OF NYLON ROPES UNDER CONTROL

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THERE WAS ONE FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING NYLON ROPES IN A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR LAM SAID THE SAFE USE OF ROPES MADE OF SYNTHETIC FIBRES SUCH AS NYLON AS A COMPONENT OF A LIFTING GEAR IN AN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING WAS GOVERNED BY THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (LIFTING APPLIANCES AND LIFTING GEAR) REGULATIONS.

"THE CONTROL ON LIFTING APPLIANCES AND LIFTING GEARS HAS JUST BEEN TIGHTENED IN JULY THIS YEAR. IT WILL BE REVIEWED IN 12 MONTHS' TIME," SAID MR LAM.

UNDER THE REGULATIONS, THE OWNER OF THE ROPE IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT:

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- * IT IS OF ADEQUATE STRENGTH AND FREE FROM PATENT DEFECT;
- * STEPS ARE TAKEN FOR ITS SAFE USE; AND
- * IT IS EXAMINED BY A COMPETENT EXAMINER EVERY SIX MONTHS.

THE COMPETENT EXAMINER SHOULD BE A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER REGISTERED UNDER THE ENGINEERS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE.

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GENERAL POLICY ON RURAL SCHOOLS EXPLAINED

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A NEW CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO REPLACE FIVE SMALL VILLAGE SCHOOLS IN SAI KUNG IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN OPERATION IN SEPTEMBER 1995, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SIU-TONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LAM SAID THIS WAS IN LINE WITH THE GENERAL POLICY ON RURAL SCHOOLS, WHICH SOUGHT TO REPLACE THOSE RURAL SCHOOL OPERATING LESS THAN SIX CLASSES BY LARGER SCHOOLS SERVING A WIDER CATCHMENT AREA.

SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RURAL SCHOOL POLICY IN 1981, THREE CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN BUILT - THE SAI KUNG CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL, SHA TAU KOK CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND HANG HAU CENTRAL SHING HANG FONG MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL.

MR LAM NOTED THAT THERE WERE 127 RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN 1993/94, COMPARED TO 134 IN 1992/93. THE ENROLMENTS ARE 15,560 AND 17,953 RESPECTIVELY.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS ADVISED 10 RURAL SCHOOLS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ADMIT PRIMARY ONE CLASSES IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR.

IN ADDITION, 23 RURAL SCHOOLS MAY BE CLOSED DOWN IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS - SEVEN EACH IN 1994/95 AND 1995/96, AND NINE IN 1996/97.

UPON CLOSURE OF A RURAL SCHOOL, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL CONSIDER WHETHER THE VACATED PREMISES CAN BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES, SUCH AS A SPECIAL SCHOOL OR A TEACHING CENTRE.

"THE PREMISES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE RELEVANT DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE FOR DISPOSAL IF THEY ARE CONSIDERED UNSUITABLE FOR ANY EDUCATIONAL USE," SAID MR LAM.

AT PRESENT, SOME OF THE FORMER RURAL SCHOOL PREMISES ARE BEING USED AS OFFICES OF VILLAGE COMMITTEES, SOCIAL AND RECREATION CENTRES FOR VILLAGERS OR ACTIVITY CENTRES FOR SCOUTS.

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