



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of Governor's media session

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The following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, on his arrival at the airport from Singapore:

Governor: I've had a short but interesting visit to Singapore. I spoke at a conference organised on world economic issues by Fortune magazine. Other speakers were the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and Singapore, Dick Cheney, the former Secretary for Defence in the American Administration, Lady Thatcher, the Senior Minister of Singapore and a number of business leaders including business leaders from Hong Kong like Gordon Wu and Richard Li. It's a good conference and I think you would have seen copies of my speech. I've also had meetings with Singaporean governmental leaders and business leaders, most notably the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Finance Minister and the Senior Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who I was pleased to have 55 minutes with this afternoon. So it's been a pretty full programme and I am pleased to be back.

Question: Did you take up the case of Daniel Chan who is ... making personal appeals ?

Governor: I referred in my conversations with the Prime Minister to a number of appeals for clemency with which we dissociated ourselves. In the case of Mr Chan, there was an appeal from the British Government with which I and the Hong Kong Government associated ourselves. And then there was a further demarche by the further appeal by the European Union with which we again associated ourselves and I referred to those matters in my conversation with the Prime Minister but obviously in the Singapore system, it's a matter for the President rather than for him.

Question: Governor, would you please correct me if I'm... what you said in the previous question time in the Legco, you mentioned that you don't cross out the possibility to implement the Old Age Pensions scheme so far as there are sufficient support in Legco. So what do you think about last night's debate ?

Governor: Well I think what I said this morning in Singapore and what the Chief Secretary said yesterday and what Jackie Willis said this afternoon, yesterday there were a number of debates in the Legislative Council, during the course of which, the Legislative Council voted by quite a substantial margin for an MPF, and then later on, voted by a small margin for an Old Age Pension Scheme, not I think entirely the one we had in mind, plus a substantial and immediate increase in CSSA rates. So the Government in those circumstances has to decide what is the best way forward and where the largest degree of support is. And I think you would agree that the whole community would think we are taking leave of our senses, if we try to follow both courses of action. We have to make a choice and I think it is reasonable to base that choice both on the size of the votes in the Legislative Council and on what we understand is the view of the business community and others. It's not an easy choice, but I think your newspaper and other newspapers are urging the Government to get on with the issue and not just to put it off. You could make out a case in these circumstances, for the Government thinking well. The community's been talking about this for 30 years, maybe we should talk about it for another 30 years. But I don't myself think that that would be responsible. I think the community expects us to act. In trying to implement an MPF, and you've heard what Jackie said this afternoon about the consultancy study and the timing of that, we have to recognise that there is an argument raised about problems faced by some elderly people in need today. In other words, the whole question of CSSA rates and benefit levels comes up. And we've made it clear that we think that should be considered as part of the overall review that we are doing of CSSAs, based, for instance, on the household expenditure survey which we are doing during the year. So I think that is a rational and responsible way forward. I think that most people would hope that we would be as decisive as possible on the basis of the scheme which appeared to have the broadest community support. So that is our position and it will be for others to explain how the Legislative Council was able to vote in so many different and not entirely mutually agreeing fashions.

Question: Looking at the MPF, the SAR Government would not bear responsibility for the MPF unless the Government with China ... the issue.

Governor: Well, we'll look forward to discussing it through the JLG. It's never been any doubt about that.

Governor: Did you hear the answer that I also gave at patient length to Carrie. I'm not sure what I can add to what I said to Carrie.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: Are you seriously suggesting that we should do both, that we should introduce a mandatory provident fund and an old age pension ?

Question: Some of the opinions said you can..

Governor: Is that your paper's view ?

Question: No.

Governor: Heavens above. I wouldn't have thought so. I think if I suggested that, there would be quite a lot people in the community who would suggest that I should be swiftly attended by man in white ...

Question: I didn't hear the question quite clear. But your answer said, are you looking forward to discussing the pension scheme with China through the JLG ?

Governor: Yes.

Question: Has the government informed China of the latest proposal though?

Governor: No, but we will be. Now that we have had vote in the Legislative Council and we'll be telling them all about the work that we are going to do with the consultants.

Question: Would they be informed before the review was passed on to Legco ?

Governor: No, but I imagine that since they are so widely informed that they've been reading the newspapers just as we have.

Question: But NCNA today refused to comment on the latest...

Governor: That seems to me to be, to show characteristic wise restraint on their part.

Question: Do you think this lack of details about the proposal, so when do you think it ...

Governor: The NCNA won't be negotiating with us in the JLG, unless they change their JLG team. But I'm sure that those who do discuss the issue in the JLG will welcome the amount of comprehensive detail we give them.

Question: What I am asking is, what do you think is the appropriate time to discuss with the Chinese ? Should that wait after the consultancy's report that is the end of April ?

Governor: No, we will want the next JLG meeting, whenever it takes place and I hope that it may take place though we haven't yet agreed dates before the date you've suggested, whenever the JLG takes place, we will want to make sure that the Chinese are well informed about what we believe is the sensible approach and the right way forward. You know as I do, and it's a point that I have made again and again, not least in relation to the old age pension scheme that since we're talking about the future by definition, since we're talking about pensions, or welfare benefits that we will pay after 1997, it is entirely proper to talk to Chinese officials about these matters since at present they seek to represent the future interest of the SAR. One last question.

Question: Going back to my question about Mr Chan who's behind in Singapore Do you take it that your request has been rejected by the government of Singapore ?

Governor: I think you can take it that I didn't receive any indication that the position of the President changed. What we have done in every case whether it's Singapore or Thailand or other cases is always behaved in exactly the same way, associating ourselves with appeals which are lodged through the United Kingdom government and most recently which are supported by a demarche from the European Union.

Question: In your speech delivered in Singapore without specific reference to this Singaporean government but you seem making a comment and criticism about it ?

Governor: No, I have made a speech, I thought it was quite an interesting speech about Hong Kong and about the importance of the rule of law in Hong Kong. There were actually references to Singapore. I recall referring to the successful management of the Singapore economy and to the extent to which people in Hong Kong regarded Singapore as a yardstick against which to match our own achievements. I think most people would regard those as complimentary references. I made it clear when I was asked at my press conference that when people talked about alleged differences in values between Asia and Europe and North America, I don't usually agree but maybe there is one different value and if so, it's that I with my background don't think it's appropriate to go to other countries and criticise them. Other Asian leaders may take a different view.

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Overwhelming support from parents to TOC initiative

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Parents have come out in clear support of the Government's Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) initiative, with more than 80 per cent of parents in a post-seminar evaluation saying that the curriculum should be implemented and that they will let their children study in TOC schools.

The curriculum, which sets clear targets, brings in stimulating approaches for more lively and effective teaching and learning and comprehensive report to parents. is designed to improve the quality of education in Hong Kong and to address some identified problems in the system.

A total of 6,303 parents of Kindergarten 3 pupils attended 83 TOC seminars organised by the Education Department at 14 different locations throughout the territory on March 4 and 5. A questionnaire survey collected 5,486 replies from the participants.

Of the 5,486 respondents, 4,464 said they believed that TOC should be implemented in Hong Kong. These parents made up 81.4 per cent of the respondents. A total of 767 (14%) parents were neutral and 94 (1.7%) did not agree; 161 (2.9%) did not respond.

A total of 4,778 (87.1%) considered that the concepts of TOC are good and 500 (9.1%) were neutral, while only 81 (1.5%) did not agree. A total of 127 (2.3%) did not respond to this item.

In addition, 4,866 (88.7 per cent) said TOC would let parents better understand the progress of their children in learning and thus help them coach their children. A total of 389 (7.1%) were neutral and only 98 (1.8%) disagreed; 133 (2.4%) did not make any response.

A total of 4,589 (83.7%) said they would let their children study in a TOC school. A total of 620 (11.3%) were neutral and 133 (2.4%) disagreed; 144 (2.6%) did not respond to this item.

A breakdown of the figures show that the "yes" replies to this question are geographically rather evenly distributed when expressed in percentages against district totals.

Among the "yes" replies, 347 are in Central and Western (85.3%); 493 in Wan Chai (94.3%); 171 in Yau Ma Tei (82.6%); 344 in Kwun Tong (79.6%); 415 in Kwai Tsing (78.8%); 229 in Sha Tin (79.8%); 462 in Kowloon City (82.4%); 441 in Mong Kok (79.3%); 405 in Hong Kong East (88.4%); 343 in Tuen Mun (86.2%); 370 in Yuen Long (82.2%); 321 in Tai Po (84%); and 248 in Sai Kung (83.2%).

In all, 4,930 parents (89.9%) said the seminar had enhanced their understanding of the new curriculum. A total of 400 (7.29%) were neutral and 56 (1.02%) disagreed; 100 (1.8%) did not respond to this item.

Meanwhile, more than 20,000 leaflets and pamphlets have so far been distributed at the Education Department TOC roving exhibition at Cityplaza, Lok Fu Shopping Centre and Sha Tin New Town Plaza; a large percentage of the visitors were parents.

The roving exhibition will continue tomorrow (Friday) and Saturday at Level 2, Metroplaza opposite Kwai Fong MTR Station and, on Sunday and Monday (March 12 and 13), at Yuen Long Plaza.

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Improvement measures adopted in schools

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In response to press enquiries concerning findings of a survey released by the Professional Teachers' Union, a spokesman for the Education Department said today (Thursday) that improvement measures in schools had been introduced since the publication of Education Commission reports.

"On the issue of teacher/student ratio, additional teachers are provided. In primary schools, the teacher/class ratio is being improved from 1.2:1 to 1.3:1 for bi-sessional classes and to 1.4:1 for whole-day classes.

"In secondary schools, additional teachers are provided to strengthen remedial teaching, pupil counselling, extra-curricular activities, language teaching and split-class teaching," the spokesman said.

He added that starting from September 1993, class size was being reduced by five places. The reduction started with Primary 1 and was extending upwards by one level each year.

"Comprehensive programmes are in place to assist pupils of lower ability. This, in turn, helps to reduce the workload of, and the pressure on, teachers," he added.

The spokesman pointed out that additional resources such as improvement to clerical establishment and provision of modern office equipment (including adequate computer facilities) were also given to reduce the non-teaching duties of teachers.

He noted that the promotion prospects of teachers had also been improved. They included:

- * creation of two posts of Principal Graduate Master in a secondary school with 15 or more classes to be offset by an equivalent number of Senior Graduate Master posts with effect from September 1991;

- * upgrading of one Senior Assistant Master post in a secondary school with 24 or more classes to Principal Assistant Master with effect from September 1991;

- * upgrading of a maximum of two non-graduate posts in each secondary school to the graduate level and of a Graduate Master post to the Senior Graduate Master post in a school with 15 or more classes in September 1994; and

- * for primary schools, an improved senior teacher ratio from one Assistant Master (AM) for every four whole-day classes to one AM for every three whole-day classes and the upgrading of primary school teaching posts to graduate level by phases.

Turning to the provision of support service, the spokesman said a series of services were made available to teachers to enhance their skills in managing stress and difficulties.

They included a helpline service for school teachers, support at the Guidance Teacher Resource Centre, regional teachers' development sessions and Saturday Clinic Sessions for teachers at district education offices.

"In addition, the Education Department will join hands with the Hong Kong Medical Association to organise a stress management seminar for teachers in early May," the spokesman concluded.

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Smoking is not allowed in classrooms

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In response to press enquiries in connection with a survey on "Stop Smoking in Schools", a spokesman for the Education Department said today (Thursday):

"Section 51 of the Education Regulations stipulates that no smoking should be permitted in any classrooms during school hours.

"School authorities have been reminded about this regulation through an annual school circular. School heads are advised that their staff should avoid smoking during public appearances, and observe smoking bans and display of 'No Smoking' signs.

"In addition, their staff are requested to co-operate and refrain from smoking in schools, particularly to refrain from smoking in front of students.

"The Education Department will in the near future issue a reminder to draw the attention of school authorities to the importance of supporting the anti-smoking campaign."

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Volume and price movements of external trade in Dec

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The volume of re-exports for the whole year of 1994 increased by 14%, while the volume of domestic exports decreased by 2.3%, according to statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department. Taking re-exports and domestic exports together, the volume of total exports increased by 10%. Meanwhile, imports increased by 14% in volume.

The growth in the volume of trade is derived from the growth in trade values with the effect of price changes being discounted.

As regards price changes over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 1.5% and 1.6% respectively. Import prices increased by 2.8%.

Price changes are reflected by changes in unit value indices, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, based on specific price data.

The terms of trade index, defined as the ratio of total export price index to import price index, decreased by 1.3% in 1994.

Comparing December 1994 with December 1993, the volume of re-exports increased by 8.1%, while that of domestic exports decreased by 4.6%. Taken together, the volume of total exports increased by 5.3%. Meanwhile, the volume of imports grew by 10%.

Over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 3.6% and 2.0% respectively. Import prices increased by 5.4%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of re-exports by end-use category are shown in Table 1.

Comparing December 1994 with December 1993, the volume of re-exports of all end-use categories recorded increases of various magnitudes: foodstuffs (+36%), fuels (+17%), raw materials and semi-manufactures (+14%), capital goods (+9.1%) and consumer goods (+3.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases in the prices of re-exports were noted of raw materials and semi-manufactures (+6.4%), foodstuffs (+3.3%), consumer goods (+2.8%) and capital goods (+2.7%). The prices of re-exports of fuels however decreased by 2.6%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of domestic exports by principal commodity group are shown in Table 2.

Comparing December 1994 with December 1993, commodity groups that recorded increases in volume of domestic exports included textile made-ups and related articles (+55%), and watches and clocks (+19%).

On the other hand, the volume of domestic exports of radios of all kinds and footwear decreased by 58% and 41% respectively.

Commodity groups that recorded increases in domestic export prices included textile made-ups and related articles (+13%), and textile yarn and thread (+10%).

On the other hand, the domestic export price of footwear decreased by 6.3%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of imports by end-use category are shown in Table 3.

The import volume of foodstuffs increased by 14% in December 1994 compared with December 1993.

Significant increases were recorded in the import volume of soya bean oil, peanut oil, vegetable oil and lard; and meat and meat preparations. However, decreases in the import volume were noted of rice, live poultry and animals of the bovine species.

Over the same period of comparison, the import volume of consumer goods increased by 6.7%.

Commodity items with considerable increases in import volume included alcoholic beverages and passenger motor car. On the other hand, decreases in the import volume were noted of tobacco manufactures and clothing. The import volume of raw materials and semi-manufactures increased by 15% in December 1994 compared with December 1993.

Significant increases in import volume were noted of raw cotton and man-made fibres. However, the import volume of silk fabrics and woven cotton fabrics declined.

Imports of fuels increased by 6.1% in volume in December 1994 compared with December 1993.

As regards capital goods, the import volume increased by 9.0% in December 1994 over December 1993.

Notable increases were recorded in the import volume of electrical machinery and office machines. The import volume of transport equipment and textile machinery however declined.

Comparing December 1994 with December 1993, the import prices of most end-use categories increased: raw materials and semi-manufactures (+8.1%), foodstuffs (+5.8%), consumer goods (+4.8%) and capital goods (+3.0%). The import prices of fuels however decreased by 1.7%.

Details of the statistics are published in the December 1994 issue of the "Hong Kong Trade Index Numbers".

The report will be on sale around March 13 at \$9 a copy at the Government Publications Centre on the ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway; or at the Publications Section of the Census and Statistics Department on the 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries regarding regular subscription to the report may be directed to the Information Services Department at French Mission Building, 1 Battery Path, Hong Kong (telephone 2842 8802) and enquiries on trade indices to the Census and Statistics Department (telephone 2582 4918).

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Table 1 : Changes in re-exports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing DEC 1994 with DEC 1993			Comparing JAN-DEC 1994 with JAN-DEC 1993		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	39.0	3.3	36.3	23.7	2.3	21.7
Consumer goods	5.6	2.8	3.3	11.4	1.5	9.7
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	21.4	6.4	13.7	23.0	1.3	21.3
Fuels	16.7	-2.6	17.4	6.1	-9.0	14.3
Capital goods	9.2	2.7	9.1	14.6	2.0	13.5
ALL COMMODITIES	11.2	3.6	8.1	15.2	1.5	13.8

Table 2 : Changes in domestic exports by principal commodity group

Commodity group	Comparing DEC 1994 with DEC 1993			Comparing JAN-DEC 1994 with JAN-DEC 1993		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Clothing	*	2.8	-3.1	1.7	2.2	-0.2
Textile fabrics	-8.5	3.0	-11.3	-8.3	-1.1	-7.4
Textile yarn and thread	6.9	10.0	-2.0	0.4	2.0	-0.8
Textile made-ups and related articles	78.1	12.7	54.7	22.8	6.7	12.7
Radios of all kinds	-61.6	2.1	-58.5	-58.9	0.9	-57.5
Electronic components	-1.2	4.0	-4.6	6.6	3.0	2.9
Footwear	-41.3	-6.3	-40.6	-24.2	-4.3	-23.8
Metal manufactures	-12.8	2.4	-14.6	-1.7	2.2	-1.8
Metal ores and scrap	23.1	7.2	9.4	2.9	1.2	-1.0
Watches and clocks	23.1	2.8	19.2	0.3	1.9	-1.3
Travel goods, handbags and similar articles	6.8	3.4	4.4	-3.0	3.2	-5.4
Domestic electrical appliances	-24.7	-0.8	-24.5	-13.7	1.5	-17.1
ALL COMMODITIES	-2.2	2.0	-4.6	-0.4	1.6	-2.3

* less than 0.05%

Table 3 : Changes in imports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing DEC 1994 with DEC 1993			Comparing JAN-DEC 1994 with JAN-DEC 1993		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	19.4	5.8	13.5	18.5	1.8	16.7
Consumer goods	11.7	4.8	6.7	13.0	3.1	10.9
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	24.8	8.1	15.2	21.6	3.7	16.8
Fuels	7.1	-1.7	6.1	23.4	-12.8	39.5
Capital goods	11.2	3.0	9.0	14.7	2.2	12.5
ALL COMMODITIES	16.2	5.4	10.4	16.7	2.8	14.0

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HA reaches out to elderly through community medical teams

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Two Deputy Secretaries for Health and Welfare, Mrs Shelley Lau and Mr Robert Wilson, today (Thursday) joined the Community Geriatric Assessment Team of Kwong Wah Hospital in their visit to Chi Lin Care and Attention Home in Diamond Hill to see for themselves how the Hospital Authority provides reaching-out services direct to elderly persons in residential institutions.

"Mr Wilson and I have started working closely together to monitor the implementation of the 71 recommendations of the Working Group on Care for the Elderly. This represents the new integrated approach Government has adopted in providing health care and welfare services for the elderly," Mrs Lau said.

The Kwong Wah Hospital's Community Geriatric Assessment Team, which is headed by a Consultant Geriatrician, Dr Chan Ming-hung, is one of the five teams now operating under the Hospital Authority to provide out-reach medical services to senior citizens requiring regular health care services but do not need hospitalisation.

Members of the team include doctors, nurses, social workers and allied health professionals.

During the visit, Mrs Lau and Mr Wilson learned that the service had been very successful and was welcomed by elderly persons. They also learned that the Hospital Authority had plans to establish three more teams in the coming year to provide more comprehensive coverage to elderly persons in the community.

Accompanied by the Deputy Director (Operations and Service Development) of the Hospital Authority, Dr Dickson Chang, Mrs Lau and Mr Wilson first observed how elderly persons were assessed by the Community Geriatric Assessment Team.

They later joined the elderly in the Physiotherapy Unit to see how they received the treatment that would help them restore or maintain physical ability.

Dr Chang explained to Mrs Lau and Mr Wilson that the community geriatric assessment service was first introduced by the Hospital Authority in 1993/94 to meet the growing demand for social and medical services of the increasing elderly population in the community.

"The teams pay regular visits to elderly homes to do medical assessment and follow-up. This will facilitate the continuity of care, provide timely diagnosis, evaluation and treatment of the health problems, and contribute to secondary and tertiary prevention to improve the functional status and quality of life for the elderly."

Dr Chang pointed out that the Hospital Authority was committed to developing these community-based assessment teams with the objectives to improve the health of elderly persons and to decrease the number of elderly persons requiring hospitalisation.

At present, more than 14,000 elderly persons reside in such institutions run by non-government organisations.

"Such teams are able to improve significantly the physical and cognitive functions of the elderly.

"Take the Chi Lin Care and Attention Home as an example. In quantitative terms, the monthly average out-patient attendance of residents of the home has dropped by 4.8 times, accident and emergency attendance by 100 per cent and hospital admissions by 37.6 per cent," Dr Chang said.

"The health care professionals of the teams provide expert and timely assessment of both the high-risk elderly and their home environment through domiciliary visits with a view to providing early treatment of medical conditions and reducing the incidence of falls and fractures.

"They also give specialist advice and education programmes to the general public and other health care providers on the knowledge and skills required in the care of the elderly."

These teams therefore can promote better interface between medical and welfare facilities by providing specialist support in the form of medical/nursing care and rehabilitation service for elderly persons in residential homes.

At present, the five Community Geriatric Assessment Teams under the Hospital Authority are able to serve more than 6,500 elderly persons a year. With the setting up of three more teams in 1995/96, care will be provided to an additional 4,900 persons each year.

As recommended by the working group, these teams will extend their services to non-residential setting and take referrals from home help teams, social centres, day care centres and other social service units.

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HK shares experiences on CITES implementation

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A Conservation Officer of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, Dr So Ping-man, today (Thursday) shared Hong Kong's experiences on implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at a seminar in Seoul.

Jointly organised by the Ministry of Environment of Korea and the TRAFFIC East Asia, the seminar on international trade of wild fauna and flora was participated by about 120 experts, Korean medicinal specialist and representatives from Korean Management and Scientific Authorities.

The primary objective of the seminar was to strengthen awareness of controls over the trade of endangered species, especially among traders, medicinal specialists, traditional doctors and relevant government officials.

The seminar placed its focus on improving the effectiveness of CITES implementation; protection of endangered species among oriental medicinal specialists and controlling illegal trade and reinforcing customs inspections.

Speaking at the seminar, Dr So pointed out that Hong Kong had for many years been fully committed to the implementation of CITES. It had one of the strictest legislation in the region.

He said in support of international concern over the use of endangered species, especially rhino and tiger ingredients, in traditional Chinese medicines, the Hong Kong Government had stepped up controls last year.

Apart from prohibiting the import and export of rhino and tiger parts, Hong Kong's legislation also prohibited the possession and trading of medicine containing or claiming to contain rhino or tiger ingredients.

On the enforcement side, an Endangered Species Protection Liaison Group was set up in late 1993 to co-ordinate enforcement actions of the Customs, Police and the Agriculture and Fisheries Department.

Last year, there were a total of 557 successful prosecutions under the Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance, resulting in a total fine of \$1.4 million.

The levels of penalties for such offences had also been sharply increased early this year to reflect the seriousness Hong Kong attached to this kind of offences.

People who illegally trade in highly endangered species will now have to face a maximum penalty of a \$5 million fine and imprisonment for two years.

Dr So was glad to share his experiences on Hong Kong's implementation of CITES with the participants at the seminar, stressing that co-operation in the region was vital in stamping out such illegal trade.

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Safety first on construction sites

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The Chief Factory Inspector of the Labour Department, Mr Chan Tat-king, today (Thursday) reminded building contractors of the importance of taking proactive safety precautions before the commencement of any construction works, even though they were having a hectic construction schedule.

Mr Chan said proper design and plan for safety should be incorporated into construction processes, particularly those having an inherent hazardous nature.

He advised contractors of the following salient points in preparing safety plans for work processes:

- * identify and assess the risks involved;
- * devise a safe system of work;
- * prepare a method statement for the work;
- * properly brief all workers engaged in the work; and
- * assign a competent person to supervise the work.

"For more complex work processes, such as the use of heavy machinery's or sophisticated methods of construction, a qualified engineer should be assigned to assume overall supervision instead of leaving it simply to a charge-hand or just a hand-pick from among the team of workers," Mr Chan said.

"Whenever foreign workers are involved, they have to be trained, instructed and informed of the work procedures in their language to avoid any misunderstandings," he added.

The Chief Factory Inspector pointed out that it was equally important for contractors to ensure proper co-ordination and communication among supervisors and workers at all levels on a construction site to enhance safety.

"Failing to implement safety precautionary measures is definitely a breach of safety legislation which may end up in court," he said.

"If anything went wrong as a result of such failure or gross negligence, it could give rise to other legal actions outside the safety laws."

Meanwhile, a team of experienced Factory Inspectors, led by Superintendent of Factory Inspectors Wong Ching-kwok of the New Airport and Railway Office, are still investigating the fatal accident which occurred on the Route 3 site in Kwai Chung on February 24.

They are working together with the professionals in the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and the Highways Department in carrying out in-depth investigations.

Mr Chan said: "The cause of the mishap will be useful in the prevention of similar accidents from occurring again."

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1000-Day Regiment takes the field

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The following is issued on behalf of Joint Service Public Relations Staff:

Hong Kong's newest and shortest-lived regiment, the Hong Kong Logistic Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, is to conduct a field training exercise from tomorrow (Friday) to March 12.

On a day-to-day basis members of the Logistic Support Regiment are employed in a variety of special occupations, from cooks to drivers, storemen to mechanics. However, like all members of the British Army, they are required to be fighting soldiers first and foremost, and the exercise is designed to test their abilities under a series of difficult conditions.

The regiment, known as the 1000-Day Regiment because of its short life span, is unusual in that it is made up of personnel of three different nationalities. Two 20-man platoons, of British, Gurkha and Chinese soldiers, will begin their training on Stonecutters Island before taking part in an exercise at Sai Kung Country Park, Lo Wu Camp and Castle Peak Ranges.

The Logistic Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, was formed in April 1994 as part of the drawdown of British Forces in the territory and the need to concentrate and manage the remaining logistic expertise. The regiment employs over 500 military and civilian personnel and has its headquarters at Osborn Barracks, Kowloon Tong.

Attention news editors:

You are invited to cover the exercise on Saturday (March 11). Photo opportunities will be provided to see members of the regiment abseiling at High Island Camp and attempting a water obstacle course at Wong Shek Pier.

A coach will be provided to carry the media from Prince of Wales Barracks in Central to High Island. The coach will depart at 8.15 am and those attending should arrive at the barrack no later than 8 am. The coach will leave High Island at 1.30 pm and return to the Prince of Wales Barracks.

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Social Welfare Department awards subvention review contract

The Social Welfare Department today (Thursday) awarded a \$6.4 million contract to Coopers & Lybrand Management Consultants Limited to review the existing social welfare subvention administration.

The review, expected to be completed in 18 months, is conducted with a view to achieving better value for money and to strengthening the department's partnership with non-governmental organisations as well as to simplify existing subvention allocation procedures.

The contract-signing ceremony took place at the press conference room of the Government Information Services.

End/Thursday, March 9, 1995

Applications invited for visual arts development projects

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The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council:

The Visual Arts Committee of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ADC) is inviting applications from qualified individuals or groups to carry out seven visual arts development projects.

Altogether, \$900,000 will be allocated for these projects which are aimed at nurturing and developing an environment conducive to the planning, promotion and production of visual arts activities.

The titles of the seven projects are:

- * The Hong Kong Artists' Series Pilot Publication Scheme
- * A Pilot Programme to Promote Exhibition Activities in Local Primary and Secondary Schools
- * The Establishment of a Frame Bank - A Pilot Scheme

* A Pilot Study on Establishing an Archival System on Existing Resources, Information, Materials and Research Studies Related to Visual Arts Development in Hong Kong

* The Survival of Visual Artists Training Programme

* A Pilot Study on Establishing a Development Scheme for Visual Arts Organisations

* A Needs Assessment Study on Establishing a Dedicated Academy for Cultural Studies, Literary Arts and Visual Arts in Hong Kong

A sum of \$200,000 will be allocated to each of the first two projects while the rest will each be given \$100,000.

Any individuals or organisations wishing to apply for one or more of the seven projects are requested to submit a concrete and elaborate project proposal, along with a detailed account of the individual's qualifications or the past project records of the organisation.

"Interested parties should obtain from the Secretary of the Visual Arts Committee a specific information sheet outlining the specifications for developing the proposals for each individual project," a spokesman for the ADC said today (Thursday).

"The proposals will be considered by the committee at the end of March this year," he said, adding that all submitted documents would be held in strict confidence and returned to the applicants upon request if the proposals failed to be selected.

All applications and supporting documents should be submitted in written form to the Secretariat of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council in Room 4004, 40th floor, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong (fax no. 2519 9301) on or before March 25.

Enquiries regarding the seven projects can be made on 2594 5627.

End/Thursday, March 9, 1995

Public urged to support heritage preservation

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The mammoth port and airport development and other construction programmes in Hong Kong have necessitated major archaeological rescue excavations which have helped to increase significantly the public's knowledge of prehistoric activities in the territory, the Secretary for Recreation and Culture, Mr James So, said today (Thursday).

These excavations have been carried out by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the Recreation and Culture Branch as well as outside parties commissioned on a project by project basis.

"It has been heartening that recently funds for many of these excavation projects have come from the developers of the sites in question, indicating that heritage preservation is gaining greater recognition and more support from the private sector," Mr So said.

"The Jockey Club has also been particularly supportive with grants for archaeological excavations."

However, he pointed out that these efforts would be largely in vain if heritage preservation was merely an academic pursuit of interest to a handful of scholars.

"The community must also be positively involved in order to show concern, to appreciate and to learn from the relics of our past," he added.

Mr So was speaking at the opening of the five-day Conference on Archaeology in Southeast Asia, organised by the University of Hong Kong's Museum and Art Gallery with the assistance of the AMO.

He said up to the present, 51 items including ancient rock carvings, archaeological sites and historical structures had been declared as monuments in Hong Kong, with 10 other outstanding examples of historical architecture deemed as such.

Furthermore, 340 buildings have been graded, which will serve as a pool for selection for further protection.

The Government is also planning to set up another heritage trail in Kam Tin, Yuen Long, in addition to the existing one in Ping Shan, to cater for the increasing public wish to learn about Hong Kong's heritage.

Mr So told the gathering that to promote awareness of the local heritage amongst the public, and in particular among young people, seminars, workshops, field studies, lectures, exhibitions, and voluntary services such as maintenance of historic sites and processing of archaeological finds were frequently organised.

The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust has provided funding support to schools and youth groups for the organisation of heritage-related activities, and sponsored a number of large-scale promotional and educational programmes, including this international conference and a 13-episode weekly television programme on Hong Kong's heritage.

A learning package on local history for junior secondary students is being prepared by the Curriculum Studies Department of the University of Hong Kong, providing useful reference materials to assist younger generation in their venture into the 6,000 years of local history.

Mr So said Hong Kong was also maintaining cultural exchange programmes with neighbouring territories.

"An archaeological study at Sha Tsui Tau, Tung Chung, is being conducted jointly by the Antiquities and Monuments Office and the General Office of the Shenzhen Committee for Protection of Antiquities and Monuments, the Guangdong Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and the Anthropology Department of the Zhong Shan University," he said.

He remarked that the task of heritage preservation, conservation and education was never-ending.

"A great deal of work has yet to be done and we need continued support from both organisations and individuals to further our work," he added.

End/Thursday, March 9, 1995

Immigration investigators catch 51 illegal workers

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Immigration investigators arrested 51 people suspected to have taken up unapproved employment as workers in restaurants or offices during a large-scale operation in Tsim Sha Tsui and Yau Ma Tei today (Thursday).

Six of them were also found to have overstayed in Hong Kong.

Of the 33 women and 18 men arrested, 29 were Filipinos, five Pakistanis, five Sri Lankans, eight Chinese, one Bangladeshi, one Indian, one Belgian and one Korean.

Among them, 28 were foreign domestic helpers and the rest were visitors.

A Chinese woman is helping with investigation.

Acting on information, 78 officers were mobilised to check a large number of business establishments and residential premises.

A spokesman for the Immigration Department said visitors were not allowed to take up any employment, whether paid or unpaid, without permission from the Director of Immigration.

"Foreign domestic helpers should only take up domestic duties for their contract employers and are not permitted to work part-time or engage in non-domestic duties.

"Those who breach their conditions of stay will be prosecuted and on conviction, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment for two years," he said.

People who aid and abet others to commit the offences are also liable to prosecution and penalty, he added.

End/Thursday, March 9, 1995

Weakened water supply to Tsuen Wan on Saturday

Fresh water supply to some premises in Tsuen Wan will be weakened from 11 pm on Saturday (March 11) to 3 pm the following day to facilitate water mains connection.

The affected areas include Texaco Road, Yeung Uk Road, Hoi Hing Road, Tsuen Wan MTR station, Luk Yeung Sun Tsuen, Riveria Garden and those along the section of Castle Peak Road from Tsuen Wan to Ting Kau.

End/Thursday, March 9, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
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Opening balance in the account	2,131	0930	+523
Closing balance in the account	1,266	1000	+523
Change attributable to :		1100	+629
Money market activity	+590	1200	+590
LAF today	-1,455	1500	+590
		1600	+590
LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.8 *+1.1* 9.3.95			

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.13	15 months	2605	6.35	99.78	6.64
1 month	5.30	24 months	2702	7.50	101.00	7.06
3 months	5.88	29 months	3707	6.95	99.74	7.19
6 months	6.24	35 months	3801	8.00	101.77	7.44
12 months	6.56	58 months	5912	8.15	101.27	7.97

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$22,928 million

Closed March 9, 1995

End/Thursday, March 9, 1995