DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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DEPUTY TO GOVERNOR CONDOLES FAMILIES OF LANDSLIDE VICTIMS
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THE DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNOR, MRS ANSON CHAN, THIS (SUNDAY) MORNING EXPRESSED HER DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO UNFORTUNATELY DIED IN THE SMITHFIELD LANDSLIDE WHICH OCCURRED LATE YESTERDAY, AND TO THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALISED BECAUSE OF THIS TRAGIC EVENT.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER HER VISIT TO THE LANDSLIDE SITE AND TO THE NEARBY TEMPORARY SHELTERS FOR AFFECTED RESIDENTS, MRS CHAN SAID: "EVERYBODY HAS BEEN WORKING VERY HARD TO TRY AND RESCUE AS MANY AS POSSIBLE FROM THE LANDSLIDE BUT THAT OPERATION WAS STOPPED EARLY THIS MORNING.

"I THINK, UNFORTUNATELY, THE CHANCES OF FINDING ANYBODY STILL ALIVE, BURIED UNDER THE MUD, IS PROBABLY VERY VERY SLIM. AND IT'S NOT, AT THE MOMENT, SAFE TO CONTINUE THE DIGGING."

SHE SAID THE EXPERT HAD HAD A LOOK AT THE BLOCKS CONCERNED AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE APPLYING FOR A CLOSURE ORDER TOMORROW MORNING FOR BLOCKS C AND D BECAUSE THESE TWO BUILDINGS WERE AT RISK.

"FOR RESIDENTS OF BLOCKS A AND B WHICH ARE CONSIDERED SAFE, THEY WILL BE ALLOWED BACK INTO THEIR FLATS LATER TODAY AND THE POLICE WILL ARRANGE FOR THIS," MRS CHAN SAID.

"AS SOON AS WE'VE APPLIED FOR THE CLOSURE ORDER TOMORROW AND ASSUMING THAT IT WILL BE A LITTLE WHILE BEFORE WE CAN DETERMINE WHETHER IT IS SAFE TO RE-OPEN THESE TWO BLOCKS, THE RESIDENTS WILL BE ALLOWED BACK INTO THEIR FLATS TO COLLECT THEIR BELONGINGS UNDER POLICE ESCORT."

SHE URGED PEOPLE CONCERNED, BOTH THE AFFECTED RESIDENTS AND OTHERS, TO CO-OPERATE FULLY WITH THE POLICE ON THESE ARRANGEMENTS.

ON REHOUSING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AFFECTED RESIDENTS, MRS CHAN SAID ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, THE HOUSING SOCIETY AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WERE WORKING TOGETHER TO TRY AND PROVIDE TEMPORARY SHELTERS AND ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION.

"I AM INFORMED BY THE HOUSING SOCIETY THAT FOR THOSE RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY THE CLOSURE OF BLOCKS C AND D, THE HOUSING SOCIETY WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION IN VACANT BLOCKS THAT THEY CURRENTLY HAVE IN HAND," SHE SAID.

"THEY ARE ALSO IN DISCUSSION WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO SEE WHETHER THE HOUSING AUTHORITY CAN TAKE THOSE WHOM THE HOUSING SOCIETY CANNOT TAKE.

"AND IF AT THE END OF THE DAY, THERE'S NOT SUFFICIENT, THEN THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WILL OBVIOUSLY DO THEIR VERY BEST TO TRY AND FIND TEMPORARY SHELTERS."

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNOR'S MEDIA SESSION

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNOR, MRS ANSON CHAN, SPEAKING TO THE PRESS AFTER HER VISIT TO THE SMITHFIELD LANDSLIDE SITE THIS (SUNDAY) MORNING:-

MRS CHAN: GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE. I'LL SAY IT IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO, YOU KNOW, BE WORRIED. FIRST OF ALL, I THINK WE ARE ALL VERY SADDENED BY THIS VERY TRAGIC EVENT THAT HAPPENED LATE YESTERDAY. EVERYBODY HAS BEEN WORKING VERY HARD TO TRY AND RESCUE AS MANY AS POSSIBLE FROM THE LANDSLIDE BUT THAT OPERATION WAS STOPPED EARLY THIS MORNING. I THINK, UNFORTUNATELY, THE CHANCES OF FINDING ANYBODY STILL ALIVE, BURIED UNDER THE MUD, IS PROBABLY VERY VERY SLIM. AND IT'S NOT, AT THE MOMENT, SAFE TO CONTINUE THE DIGGING.

THE EXPERTS HAVE HAD A LOOK AT THE BLOCKS CONCERNED AND WE WILL BE APPLYING FOR A CLOSURE ORDER TOMORROW MORNING FOR BLOCKS C AND D BECAUSE THESE TWO BUILDINGS ARE AT RISK. FOR RESIDENTS OF BLOCKS A AND B WHICH ARE CONSIDERED SAFE, THEY WILL BE ALLOWED BACK INTO THEIR FLATS LATER TODAY AND THE POLICE WILL ARRANGE FOR THIS. I DO ASK FOR EVERYBODY CONCERNED WITH THIS, BOTH THE RESIDENTS AND OTHERS, TO CO-OPERATE FULLY WITH THE POLICE. AS SOON AS WE'VE APPLIED FOR THE CLOSURE ORDER TOMORROW AND ASSUMING THAT IT WILL BE A LITTLE WHILE BEFORE WE CAN DETERMINE WHETHER IT IS SAFE TO RE-OPEN THESE TWO BLOCKS, THE RESIDENTS WILL BE ALLOWED BACK INTO THEIR FLATS TO COLLECT THEIR BELONGINGS UNDER POLICE ESCORT. BUT, AGAIN, THE POLICE WILL ARRANGE FOR THIS.

AS YOU CAN SEE, ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, THE HOUSING SOCIETY AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO TRY AND PROVIDE TEMPORARY SHELTERS AND ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION. I AM INFORMED BY THE HOUSING SOCIETY THAT FOR THOSE RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY THE CLOSURE OF BLOCKS C AND D, THE HOUSING SOCIETY WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION IN VACANT BLOCKS THAT THEY CURRENTLY HAVE IN HAND. THEY ARE ALSO IN DISCUSSION WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO SEE WHETHER THE HOUSING AUTHORITY CAN TAKE THOSE WHOM THE HOUSING SOCIETY CANNOT TAKE. AND IF AT THE END OF THE DAY, THERE'S NOT SUFFICIENT, THEN THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WILL OBVIOUSLY DO THEIR VERY BEST TO TRY AND FIND TEMPORARY SHELTERS. I'D ALSO, OF COURSE, LIKE TO EXTEND OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO UNFORTUNATELY DIED IN THIS ACCIDENT AND TO THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALISED. I HOPE THAT THEY WILL RECOVER VERY SOON.

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SHENZHEN TO DISCHARGE WATER FROM RESERVOIR

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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES ON DISCHARGING WATER FROM SHENZHEN RESERVOIR, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID:

"HONG KONG HAS BEEN INFORMED BY THE SHENZHEN AUTHORITY THAT WATER WOULD BE DISCHARGED FROM THE SHENZHEN RESERVOIR FROM ABOUT 9 PM TODAY (SUNDAY).

/"THE GOVERNMENT .....

"THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT EMERGENCY CO-ORDINATION CENTRE (GSECC) HAS INFORMED VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS INCLUDING DISTRICT OFFICE (NORTH), DRAINAGE SERVICES, POLICE, FIRE SERVICES, WATER SUPPLIES AND SOCIAL WELFARE IN ORDER THAT THEY CAN TAKE NECESSRY MEASURES AS APPROPRIATE.

"THE DISTRICT OFFICE (NORTH) IS MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO INFORM LOCAL RESIDENTS OF APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO TAKE."

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INCLEMENT WEATHER BRINGS LANDSLIPS AND FLOODING

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INCLEMENT WEATHER HAS CONTINUED TO CAUSE LANDSLIPS AND FLOODING IN THE TERRITORY TODAY (SUNDAY).

A TOTAL OF 24 CASES OF LANDSLIPS HAVE BEEN REPORTED UP TO 6 PM, 10 IN HONG KONG, FIVE IN KOWLOON, FIVE IN NEW TERRITORIES AND FOUR IN ISLANDS DISTRICT.

TWO CASES OF FLOODING HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM YUEN LONG AND NORTH POINT DISTRICTS THIS MORNING WHILE ABOUT 60 AND 100 CASES OF FLOODING REPORTED EARLIER RESPECTIVELY IN KOWLOON AND THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE BEING CLEARED BY THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

AT THE HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HEAVY RAIN HAS DELAYED FIVE DEPARTURE FLIGHTS AND ONE IN-COMING FLIGHT, AND DIVERTED FOUR FLIGHTS TO OTHER DESTINATIONS.

SERVICES OF 11 BUS ROUTES AND THREE GREEN MINI-BUS ROUTES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED.

AT 7 PM, THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION HAS OPENED 34 TEMPORARY SHELTERS FOR PEOPLE IN NEED OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION. A TOTAL OF 365 PEOPLE ARE STAYING IN THESE SHELTERS WITH 284 IN CENTRAL AND WESTERN, 30 IN YAU TSIM, 19 IN YUEN LONG, 13 IN NORTH DISTRICT, NINE IN SHA TIN, SIX IN MONG KOK AND FOUR IN SOUTHERN DISTRICT.

RESCUE OPERATION AT THE SCENE OF LANDSLIDE IN SMITHFIELD CEASED THIS MORNING AND RESUMED AT 7 PM. AT PRESENT, 280 AFFECTED RESIDENTS ARE STAYING IN THE URBAN COUNCIL SHEK TONG TSUI COMPLEX INDOOR GAMES HALL.

AFTER THOROUGH INVESTIGATION, BLOCKS A AND B OF KWUN LUNG LAU HAVE BEEN DECLARED SAFE WHILE CLOSURE ORDER FOR BLOCKS C AND D WILL BE APPLIED TOMORROW. THE HOUSING SOCIETY IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IS MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION.

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18 PROSECUTED FOR UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS

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IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR, THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAS PROSECUTED UNDER THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING 18 OFFENDERS IN 15 UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT CASES.

"THIS IS THE RESULT OF THE STEPPING UP OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT SINCE NOVEMBER 1993," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT SAID.

THE DEPARTMENT SETS UP AN INTERIM CENTAL ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION SECTION IN LAST NOVEMBER TO STREAMLINE ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS.

THOSE WHO HAVE UNDERTAKEN UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS IN DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREAS ARE PROSECUTED IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT NECESSARILY GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF SERVING NOTICES. ONCE CONVICTED, OFFENDERS ARE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF $100,000.

"THE MAJORITY OF THE 18 OFFENDERS HAD CHANGED AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR OPEN STORAGE OF VEHICLES AND CONTAINERS WITHOUT OBTAINING THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD'S PERMISSION.

"AMONG THEM, 13 HAVE BEEN CONVICTED AND FINED FROM $30,000 TO $90,000. THE REMAINING FIVE WILL TAKE PLEA IN DUE COURSE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROSECUTE OFFENDERS OF UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT GIVING PRIOR WARNING," HE NOTED.

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EMPLOYEES MUST COMPLY WITH SAFETY LAWS

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT REMINDED EMPLOYEES IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTORS TO COMPLY WITH SAFETY LAWS OTHERWISE THEY ARE LIABLE ON CONVICTION TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF $50,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS.

CITING A RECENT COURT CASE IN WHICH A WORKER WAS FINED $750 FOR BREACHING THE NO-SMOKING REQUIREMENT INSIDE A FACTORY, DEPUTY CHIEF FACTORY INSPECTOR MR KAN HON-SANG SAID: "FULL CO-OPERATION AND COMMITMENT OF ALL EMPLOYEES IS THE KEY ELEMENT IN IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING THE STANDARDS OF SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK."

MR KAN POINTED OUT THAT THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY REGULATIONS HAD CLEARLY SPELT OUT THE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF PROPRIETORS OF INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS AND THOSE WHO WORKED IN THESE PLACES.

"UNDER THE SAFETY LAW, EVERY PROPRIETOR HAS THE DUTY TO PROTECT THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF WORKERS, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF A SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK, SAFE PLANT, NECESSARY TRAINING AND INSTRUCTIONS, AND SUITABLE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT," HE SAID.

"MEANWHILE, AN EMPLOYEE IS REQUIRED TO TAKE REASONABLE CARE FOR THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF HIMSELF AND OF OTHERS BY CO-OPERATING WITH HIS EMPLOYER IN THE ADOPTION OF SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND IN THE PROPER USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT.

/"THE LABOUR .....

"THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IS ALWAYS COMMITTED TO MINIMISING INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS AND FACTORY INSPECTORS WILL NOT HESITATE TO PROSECUTE ANY WORKER WHO FAILS TO OBSERVE HIS GENERAL DUTIES UNDER THE ORDINANCE," MR KAN SAID.

"PROSECUTION OF A WORKER WILL BE TAKEN OUT WHEN OUR INSPECTORS ARE SATISFIED THAT THE EMPLOYERS HAVE FULFILLED THEIR PART IN MEETING THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS BUT THE EMPLOYEES DO NOT CO-OPERATE OR RESPOND.

"IN FACT, SIX WORKERS HAVE BEEN PROSECUTED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IN THE FIRST-HALF OF 1994, FIVE OF THEM WORKED IN CONSTRUCTION SITES AND THE REMAINING ONE IN A FACTORY," HE ADDED.

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NEW VIDEO TAPES TO PROMOTE PROPER BUILDING MANAGEMENT

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THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION HAS ADDED TWO NEW TITLES TO ITS SERIES OF VIDEO FILMS TO PROMOTE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF BUILDINGS.

THE FILMS, IN CANTONESE AND ENTITLED "ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE" AND "IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN OWNERS' CORPORATIONS AND OWNERS TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE BUILDING MANAGEMENT", ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR LOAN FREE OF CHARGE FROM ALL DISTRICT OFFICES.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE CNTA SAID MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, IN PARTICULAR OWNERS' CORPORATIONS (OC) AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES (MAC) ARE WELCOME TO BORROW THE FILMS.

THREE OTHER TITLES IN THE SERIES, NAMELY "THE ROLE OF A CARETAKER", "RECOVERY OF OVERDUE MANAGEMENT FEES AND OTHER CHARGES" AND "BUILDING INSURANCE" ARE ALSO AVAILABLE.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO CALLED ON OFFICE-BEARERS OF OCS AND MACS TO INTRODUCE THESE FILMS TO RESIDENTS OF THEIR BUILDINGS.

"THESE CAN ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF BUILDING MANAGEMENT," HE ADDED.

ENQUIRIES ON PROCEDURES FOR BORROWING THE TAPES CAN BE MADE AT THE PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRES OF DISTRICT OFFICES.

MEANWHILE, THE CNTA HAS PUBLISHED A PAMPHLET ON "HOW TO FORM AN OWNERS' CORPORATION AND TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE BUILDING MANAGEMENT", WHICH SERVES AS A GUIDE TO THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BUILDING MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE.

THE PAMPHLETS, IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE, CAN BE OBTAINED FROM ALL DISTRICT OFFICES.

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