DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Statement by the Governor

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The following is a statement by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, on the recommendations announced yesterday (Sunday) by the Legal Sub-Group of the Preparatory Committee to repeal or amend 25 Hong Kong ordinances.

"These proposals will cause enormous concern, both in the community and among those around the world who want to see a successful transition in Hong Kong. Some of them appear to be aimed solely at undermining the legal basis for civil liberties in Hong Kong, and they will certainly have that effect.

There is no doubt at all that the Bill of Rights Ordinance (BORO) is entirely consistent with the Joint Declaration (JD) and with the Basic Law (BL). All the Ordinance does is to embody in Hong Kong law the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as applied to Hong Kong. The continued application of the Covenant is itself promised in the JD, and in Article 39 of the BL.

During the years in which the BORO has been a matter of public discussion, no one has at any time been able to put forward a legally respectable case as to why it, or any part of it, should be inconsistent with the BL. The proposition that it somehow purports to have a status superior to the BL is based on a misunderstanding of the common law system. There is nothing more fundamental to the success of the 'one country, two systems' concept than the preservation intact and without ambiguity of the common law in Hong Kong.

Equally, no serious justification, either in terms of the BL or in terms of stability in Hong Kong, has ever been advanced for reimposing obsolete restrictions of the kind which the Sub-Group appears to envisage under the Societies Ordinance and the Public Order Ordinance. Hong Kong is one of the most moderate and law abiding communities in the world. Is anyone seriously worried that the unlicensed use of loud hailers in demonstrations somehow threatens to plunge Hong Kong into turbulence and anarchy? The Societies Ordinance and Public Order Ordinance in their current forms are consistent both with the BL and with the ICCPR. Any attempt to repeal amendments which were expressly required to bring them into line with the ICCPR would raise serious questions about whether the promises about civil liberties in the BL will be fulfilled. In short it will create a situation of incompatibility with the BL.

These proposals will also lead to new and damaging uncertainties about Hong Kong's laws and legal system. What could happen if, absurdly, the SAR authorities decided to use repressive new public order laws to prosecute someone for holding a peaceful but unlicensed march on July 2. Would the legal basis for that prosecution be open to challenge under the BL, and if so, how would the courts respond to such a challenge? These are legitimate questions which will now be asked in response to the Sub-Group's recommendations.

So these proposals are bad news. They strike at the heart of Hong Kong's civil liberties. They appear to be based on politically motivated pretexts rather than real inconsistencies with the BL. They also fly in the face of the clear and deeply held views which the community has expressed in discussion of these matters over the years. And they are a recipe for confusion and uncertainty in the operation of our legal system after June 30.

The Hong Kong and British Governments have taken every available opportunity to urge the Chinese authorities to reject earlier proposals to gut the Bill of Rights and to reinstate obsolete legislation which has been shown to be inconsistent with the Covenants. We will now go back to them to underline in unambiguous terms the damage which these proposals, if adopted, will do to confidence in Hong Kong, both at home and abroad. In doing so, we will urge that China draw back from accepting the misguided and damaging advice now being put forward by the Legal Sub-Group of the Preparatory Committee.

Let me make one further point about this ill-judged activity in the Preparatory Committee. We now have a Chief Executive (Designate). He is in the process of putting together his administration. It should be for them - the Chief Executive and his team - to consider what, if any, changes need to be made to the laws and policies of Hong Kong. Under the JD and BL Hong Kong people are to be trusted to run Hong Kong. Civil liberties are plainly nothing to do with foreign affairs or defence. It really is about time that Chinese officials and the Preparatory Committee stopped trying to close off options for the SAR Government and stopped creating problems which that government will have to cope with after the handover. It should be for Mr Tung and his team, once in office, to take decisions freely on how they wish to administer Hong Kong."

End

Proposal to be considered in light of long-term plan

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In response to media enquiries about a proposal to expand the existing Kowloon premises of the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre, the Deputy Chief Inspector of Schools of the Education Department, Mr K C Ng, said today (Monday):

"The proposal to expand the premises of the Kowloon Centre of the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre will be considered in the light of a long-term policy to be formulated on the future development of all Education Department centres.

"To maximise cost-effectiveness, the department is actively considering centralising its resource and teaching centres which are providing advisory and supporting services to teachers.

"Preferably, the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre (Kowloon) and the future centralised resource and teaching centres should be accommodated in the same premises for the convenience of teachers who are the major users of these facilities. The move will also release much needed accommodation for whole-day primary schooling.

"The key consideration of the department is, of course, the effective use of premises in the long term. Naturally, our supporting services to teachers are expected to improve with centralisation. Consideration will take some time."

End

Value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in November 1996

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The value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand for local production in November 1996 decreased by 5% over a year earlier, according to the provisional results of a monthly survey released today (Monday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Comparing November 1996 with November 1995, the value of orders of the fabricated metal products industry increased by 9%. The textiles industry and the wearing apparel industry both recorded a slight increase of 1%, comparing with the consecutive declines for a number of months. The value of orders for the electrical products industry was virtually unchanged.

On the other hand, decreases in the value of orders were recorded in the printing and publishing industry (-16%), the plastic products industry (-11%) and the electronic products industry (-11%).

Compared with October 1996, and bearing in mind that this comparison may be affected by seasonal factors, the value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in November 1996 increased by 3%.

The Monthly Survey of Orders-on-hand covers a sample of some 300 manufacturing firms engaging 50 or more workers.

Manufacturers' orders-on-hand refer to orders and parts of orders received earlier by manufacturers for local production which remain unfilled as at the end of the reference month. Orders received by traders not engaged in production are included if such orders are further placed to manufacturers for production locally. However, orders placed to manufacturing firms for production in China and other places outside Hong Kong are not included in this series of orders-on-hand statistics.

A spokesman for the Census and Statistics Department pointed out that caution should be exercised in interpreting the manufacturers' orders-on-hand figures in a single month. Instead, the trend movement of the series as displayed over a wider span of time points should be looked at.

The survey report for November 1996, at $7 a copy, is now available for sale at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway, and the Census and Statistics Department Publications Unit, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be made to the Industrial Production Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6441.

The following table shows the year-on-year percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in different manufacturing industries.

	Percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in	
	Oct 1996 over Oct 1995 (Revised)	Nov 1996 over Nov 1995 (Provisional)
All industries covered in the survey	- 6	- 5
- Wearing apparel	- 1	+ 1
- Textiles	*	+ 1
- Electronic products	-11	-11
- Electrical products	- 3	*
- Fabricated metal products	+ 5	+ 9
- Plastic products	-10	-11
- Printing and publishing	-14	-16

* Changes within +/-0.5%

End

Tender for second issue of 10-year Exchange Fund notes

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The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced today (Monday) that the tender for the second issue of 10-year Exchange Fund notes will be held next Monday (January 27) for settlement on Tuesday (January 28).

An amount of HK$500 million 10-year notes will be offered. Another HK$100 million will be held as reserve by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority for supply to market makers in the secondary market.

The notes will mature on January 29, 2007 and will carry interest at the rate of 6.89% per annum payable semi-annually in arrears. Terms and conditions of the issue are described fully in the Information Memorandum.

Members of the public who wish to tender for the Notes may do so through any of the market makers or recognised dealers on the published list which can be obtained from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, 30th floor, 3 Garden Road, Hong Kong (or telephone 2878 8150). Each tender must be for an amount of HK$50,000 or integral multiples thereof.

Tender information for the second issue of
10-Year Exchange Fund notes

Issue number	: 1701
Tender date and time	: Monday, 27 January 1997, 9.30 am to 10.30 am
Issue and settlement date	: Tuesday, 28 January 1997
Amount on offer	: HK$500 million plus an additional HK$100 million as reserve stock for the Monetary Authority
Maturity	: Ten years
Maturity date	: 29 January 2007
Interest rate	: 6.89% per annum payable semi annually in arrears

Interest payment dates	: 28 Jul 1997, 27 Jan 1998, 28 Jul 1998, 28 Jan 1999, 28 Jul 1999, 28 Jan 2000, 28 Jul 2000, 29 Jan 2001, 30 Jul 2001, 28 Jan 2002, 29 Jul 2002, 28 Jan 2003, 28 Jul 2003, 28 Jan 2004, 28 Jul 2004, 28 Jan 2005, 28 Jul 2005, 30 Jan 2006, 28 Jul 2006, 29 Jan 2007
Tender amount	: Each tender must be for an amount of HK$50,000 or integral multiples thereof. Members of the public who wish to tender for the notes may approach Market Makers or Recognised Dealers on the published list
Other details	: Please see Information Memorandum published or approach Market Makers or Recognised Dealers

End

Premium vegetable production seminar on Thursday

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Local farmers and people interested in vegetable farming are invited to take part in a seminar on premium vegetable production to be held at the Tai Lung Experimental Station this Thursday (January 23).

The seminar, jointly organised by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) and the Federation of Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Societies, is aimed at promoting the cultivation of exotic vegetable varieties and the use of environmentally friendly measures in pest and disease control.

An AFD agricultural officer, Ms Wendy Ko, said today (Monday) that the focus of this seminar would be on exotic vegetable varieties suitable for cultivation in cool weather.

Ms Ko said most of these vegetables supplied in Hong Kong were imported and sold at higher prices.

"However, there is not much difference in the production cost of exotic vegetables and that of the local varieties," she said.

"Local farmers can make use of the winter season to cultivate premium vegetables, in addition to growing local produce, to meet market demand."

The varieties to be introduced will include compositae vegetables such as romaine lettuce, red butterhead lettuce and radicchio; crops with special outlook such as red pear tomato, yellow pear tomato and pearl-like tomato; the newly introduced squash variety; and popular exotic vegetables like basil and broccoli.

This one-day seminar is part of AFD's continued programmes to transfer technical know-how and expertise to local farmers.

Topical lectures by the department's agricultural officers on cultivation methods, pest and disease control measures, as well as market situation for exotic vegetables would be given.

Participants will also have a field visit to learn more about the production of these premium vegetables.

The seminar will be held at the Tai Lung Experimental Station, Lin Tong Mei, Sheung Shui at 10 am on Thursday. As the seating capacity is only 50, priority will be given to farmers if more participants turn up.

Further enquiries on the seminar and other related farming issues can be directed to AFD's Horticulture Section or Plant Protection Section on 2679 4294 or 2679 4354.

End

Provision of non-confidential establishment particulars

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The Census and Statistics Department maintains a comprehensive and up-to-date computerised Central Register of Establishments which contains information relating to some 350,000 active establishments in Hong Kong.

The Register serves mainly as the sampling frame for various economic surveys conducted by the department. Besides, many other government departments and private organisations also make use of the records kept in the Register in their publicity, business promotion, survey and research work.

"Information kept in the Central Register of Establishments is updated on a quarterly basis," a spokesman for the department said today (Monday).

"Updated information in respect of the third quarter of 1996 is now available. A sample listing containing 20 per cent of the records randomly selected from the Register is accessible by prospective users."

Application for the supply of non-confidential particulars (including the name, address, major type of economic activity and employment size class) of all or part of the listed records can be made to the Central Register of Establishments Section of the department.

The information can be supplied in the form of photocopies or specially-run magnetic tapes. A charge will be levied for this service, at the following rates:

* $6.1 per page of photocopy for the first 20 pages and $1.4 for each additional page thereafter; or

* a charge of about $1,000 for a job requiring special computer run (exact amount depending on the complexity of the job concerned), if the information is required on magnetic tapes. The magnetic tape can be provided by the applicant, or by the department at a charge of $143 per tape.

Further details about the provision of this service can be obtained from the Central Register of Establishments Section of the department on 2582 4760.

End

Water storage figure

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Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Monday) stood at 78.7 per cent of capacity or 461.210 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 470.396 million cubic metres of water, representing 80.3 per cent of capacity.

End

Water cut in Yuen Long

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Fresh and flushing water supply to some premises in Yuen Long will be suspended from 11 pm on Thursday (January 23) to 6 am the following day for waste detections on watermains.

The suspension will affect those premises along Kam Tin Road between Ko Po Tsuen and Kam Sheung Road, including Tsz Tong Tsuen, Tai Hong Tsuen, Kat Hing Wai and Shek Wu Tong Tsuen.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority interbank liquidity

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		TIME	AGGREGATE BALANCE OF SETTLEMENT ACCOUNTS
OPENING AGGREGATE BALANCE	784 MN	0930 HR	9,358 MN
CLOSING AGGREGATE BALANCE	514 MN	1000 HR	10,318 MN
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100 HR	17,575 MN
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+294 MN	1200 HR	23,509 MN
LAF REVERSAL	+5,793 MN	1500 HR	27,701 MN
LAF TODAY	- 6,357 MN	1600 HR	32,333 MN

LAF RATE 4.00% BID/6.00% OFFER TWI 126.2 *+0.2* 20.1.97

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF Bills		EF Notes/MTRC Notes				
Terms	Yield	Terms	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.38	2 years	2811	5.72	100.20	5.68
1 month	4.43	3 years	3001	6.17	100.19	6.19
3 months	4.57	5 years	5112	6.57	100.12	6.65
6 months	4.80	7 years	7311	6.80	100.18	6.88
12 months	5.10	10 years	1610	7.37	102.92	7.07
		5 years	M503	7.35	102.13	6.91

TOTAL TURNOVER OF EF BILLS AND NOTES - $18,681 MN

CLOSED JANUARY 20, 1997

End