



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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HK PEOPLE PROTECTED BY UK OVERSEAS

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CONSULAR PROTECTION IS PROVIDED BY BRITISH DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO HONG KONG RESIDENTS TRAVELLING ABROAD ON HONG KONG TRAVEL DOCUMENTS IN THE SAME WAY AS TO BRITISH CITIZENS OR OTHER BRITISH NATIONALS.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON IAN STRACHAN, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN LEE.

"HOWEVER, NO SUCH PROTECTION CAN BE PROVIDED BY HMG (HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT) IN COUNTRIES OR TERRITORIES WITH WHICH HMG HAS NO DIPLOMATIC OR CONSULAR RELATIONS OR WHERE IT HAS NO INTERESTS SECTION IN ANOTHER COUNTRY'S EMBASSY.

"CURRENTLY, COUNTRIES OR TERRITORIES IN THIS CATEGORY INCLUDE TAIWAN, NORTH KOREA AND ALBANIA," MR STRACHAN SAID.

NOTING THAT CONSULAR OR CONSULAR TYPE PROTECTION WAS A MATTER OF HMG, MR STRACHAN SAID HMG HAD NO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH, OR CONSULAR REPRESENTATION IN, TAIWAN, AND THERE WERE NO PLANS FOR THIS POSITION TO CHANGE IN FUTURE.

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SHA SPELS OUT POLICY ON RECEPTION AND BROADCAST OF TV SIGNALS

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THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HAS ESTABLISHED A POLICY FRAMEWORK TO GOVERN THE RECEPTION AND BROADCAST OF TELEVISION SIGNALS BY SATELLITE, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MISS LEUNG WAI-TUNG, MR TSAO SAID THE POLICY HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO ENABLE HONG KONG PEOPLE TO HAVE ACCESS TO A WIDE RANGE OF TELEVISION PROGRAMMING OFFERED BY MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT.

IT HAS ALSO DESIGNED TO ENSURE EQUITABLE TREATMENT IN THE DEGREE OF COMPETITION BETWEEN EXISTING AND POTENTIAL TELEVISION BROADCASTING FRANCHISEES, HE ADDED.

"THIS POLICY FRAMEWORK WAS ANNOUNCED ON OCTOBER 31, 1990 AND REMAINS UNCHANGED."

AS REGARDS THE RECEPTION OF SATELLITE TELEVISION SIGNALS, MR TSAO NOTED THAT THE GENERAL RULES WERE THAT INDIVIDUAL TELEVISION RECEIVE ONLY (TVRO) DISHES, CONNECTED TO A SINGLE TELEVISION SET, WERE EXEMPT FROM LICENSING.

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"THAT IS, SYSTEMS WHERE TELEVISION SIGNALS RECEIVED BY A DISH ARE DISTRIBUTED BY INTERNAL WIRED NETWORK TO MORE THAN ONE TELEVISION SET WITHIN ONE BUILDING OR DEVELOPMENT, WILL REQUIRE TO BE LICENSED," HE SAID.

MR TSAO ALSO POINTED OUT THAT AN APPROPRIATE LICENCE UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE WAS NOW BEING DRAFTED, WITH THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL PROVISIONS:

- * ONLY SIGNALS INTENDED FOR GENERAL RECEPTION SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE SYSTEM;
- * NO SUBSCRIPTION FEES OR PACKAGING OF PROGRAMMES WILL BE ALLOWED; AND FINALLY
- * COMPLIANCE WITH ANY DIRECTION FROM THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL PROHIBITING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROSCRIBED PROGRAMME SERVICES.

ON THE SATELLITE BROADCASTING SIDE, MR TSAO SAID INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS TO ESTABLISH SATELLITE BROADCASTING OPERATIONS IN HONG KONG WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS, HAVING REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING MAIN CONSIDERATIONS:

- * THE SIGNALS SHOULD NOT BE TARGETTED PRINCIPALLY AT A HONG KONG AUDIENCE;
- * FINANCING THROUGH ADVERTISING REVENUES SHOULD NOT RELY PRINCIPALLY ON HONG KONG'S LOCAL TV ADVERTISING MARKET;
- * NO SUBSCRIPTION FEE MAY BE LEVIED BY THE LICENSEE FOR RECEPTION OF PROGRAMMES IN HONG KONG;
- * FOR THE MOMENT NO CANTONESE LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING WILL BE PERMITTED EXCEPT THAT AFTER OCTOBER 30, 1993 PROGRAMME IN CANTONESE PREVIOUSLY BROADCAST IN HONG KONG COULD BE REBROADCAST;
- * THE LICENSEE MUST COMPLY WITH THE RELEVANT TELEVISION PROGRAMMING AND ADVERTISING STANDARDS AS LAID DOWN BY THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY; AND FINALLY
- * THE LICENSEE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING ALL REASONABLE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT HIS PROGRAMMES ARE ACCEPTABLE TO RECEIVING COUNTRIES.

GOVT TO ALIGN IMMIGRATION LAW WITH JD AND BASIC LAW

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THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW CONSIDERING HOW TO ALIGN THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON IAN STRACHAN, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW, MR STRACHAN SAID THIS WOULD INCLUDE GIVING THE RIGHT OF ABODE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS WHO HAVE ORDINARILY RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS OR MORE AND WHO HAVE TAKEN HONG KONG AS THEIR PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE.

"THERE ARE, HOWEVER, ALSO OTHER ASPECTS, MANY OF WHICH WILL REQUIRE DISCUSSION WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

"DISCUSSION ON SOME ASPECTS IS ALREADY TAKING PLACE IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP," MR STRACHAN SAID.

ON STEPS BEING TAKEN TO GIVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG TO FOREIGNERS, MR STRACHAN NOTED THAT IN JUNE THIS YEAR, THE GOVERNMENT HAD REDUCED THE RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR UNCONDITIONAL STAY FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS FROM NINE TO SEVEN YEARS.

"THUS, THEY MAY APPLY FOR UNCONDITIONAL STAY AFTER HAVING LIVED HERE FOR SEVEN YEARS, AS OPPOSED TO THE PREVIOUS REQUIREMENT OF NINE YEARS.

"THIS IS THE FIRST STEP WE HAVE TAKEN TO EXTEND THE RIGHT OF ABODE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS IN HONG KONG," MR STRACHAN ADDED.

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TAX TREATIES HELP IN ATTRACTING INVESTMENT

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THE MAIN POTENTIAL ADVANTAGE OF TAX TREATIES IDENTIFIED LIES IN ATTRACTING INVESTMENT TO HONG KONG AND IN EASING ANY TAX PROBLEMS OF LOCAL COMPANIES WITH DIVIDENDS AND ROYALTIES FROM OVERSEAS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PAUL CHENG, SIR PIERS SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN GIVING SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION AS TO WHETHER HONG KONG COULD BENEFIT FROM TAX TREATIES WITH OUR MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS.

"WE NEED TO EXAMINE WHAT WE MIGHT WISH TO SEEK TO INCLUDE IN SUCH TREATIES, AND WHETHER SUCH PROVISIONS WOULD FIND FAVOUR WITH THE OVERSEAS TAX TERRITORIES WITH WHOM WE MIGHT WISH TO NEGOTIATE.

"MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, WE MUST BE SATISFIED THAT THERE IS SOME TANGIBLE ADVANTAGE FOR HONG KONG," SIR PIERS SAID.

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BILL TO ALLEVIATE STRUCTURAL RISK OF BUILDING PASSED

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THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1990 WHICH ENABLES THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TO TAKE PROMPT ACTION TO REMOVE DANGEROUS ILLEGAL AND UNAUTHORISED BUILDINGS AND BUILDING WORKS WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FOUR LEGISLATORS, THE HON MARIA TAM, THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN, THE HON CHUNG PUI-LAM AND THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG SPOKE IN THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE BILL AND THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

IN ADDITION, A MOTION BY THE HON PETER WONG ON THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE WAS PASSED. THREE MEMBERS, THE HON PETER WONG, THE HON MARTIN LEE AND THE HON EDWARD HO SPOKE ON THE MOTION.

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THE RETURN NUMBER OF NEWLY-CATEGORISED VBP DISAPPOINTING

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THE NUMBER OF WITHDRAWALS FROM THE INITIAL GROUP OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE (VBP) TO BE REPATRIATED IN THE CATEGORY OF THOSE WHO DID NOT OPPOSE REPATRIATION WAS DISAPPOINTING, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON IAN STRACHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT ENTIRELY UNEXPECTED THAT SOME VBP WOULD CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW, THE SECRETARY SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR STRACHAN SAID: "EACH PERSON HAD HIS OWN REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING.

"OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE INITIAL VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION FLIGHTS SHOWED A SIMILAR PATTERN, BUT ONCE WELL ESTABLISHED, THE DROP-OUT RATE QUICKLY DECLINED."

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HOPED A SIMILAR PATTERN WOULD EMERGE WITH THIS NEW CATEGORY.

THE SECRETARY SAID HE COULD NOT, AT THIS STAGE, COMMENT ON THE OUTCOME OR THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE JUDICIAL REVIEW CURRENTLY BEFORE THE COURT, RELATING TO THE DETERMINATION OF STATUS OF NINE ASYLUM SEEKERS.

HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UNHCR WERE WORKING HARD TO ACHIEVE A RATE OF RETURN OF AT LEAST 1,000 PER MONTH.

"THE NUMBERS RETURNING TO VIETNAM ARE INCREASING.

"THE OVERALL POPULATION IS ALSO GRADUALLY BUT STEADILY REDUCING.

"WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN IN CONJUNCTION WITH UNHCR TO BUILD UPON THIS TREND, AND INCREASE THE MOMENTUM OF THE REPATRIATION PROGRAMME," HE ADDED.

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WIDE VARIETY OF COUNTERFEIT GOODS BEING DISPOSED OF

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COUNTERFEIT GOODS CONFISCATED BY THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT ARE DISPOSED OF BY AUCTION THROUGH THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES, MAKING AVAILABLE TO THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES FOR VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, DONATING TO CHARITY, OR BEING DESTROYED.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID THIS IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ELSIE TU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIR PIERS SAID IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT CONFISCATED AND DISPOSED OF A WIDE VARIETY OF COUNTERFEIT GOODS.

CONFISCATED ITEMS INCLUDED GARMENTS, WATCHES, LEATHERWARE, AUDIO/VIDEO CASSETTE TAPES, COMPUTER SOFTWARE, COMPUTER MANUALS, PUBLICATIONS, FOODSTUFFS, CHINESE PARENT MEDICINES AND PLASTIC GOODS.

HE SAID COUNTERFEIT GOODS WERE CONFISCATED UNDER THE COPYRIGHT AND TRADE DESCRIPTIONS ORDINANCES IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OWNERS AND TO PROTECT CONSUMERS AGAINST COUNTERFEIT MERCHANDISE WHICH COULD BE SUBSTANDARD OR ENDANGER PUBLIC HEALTH.

SIR PIERS EXPLAINED THAT THE METHOD OF DISPOSAL HAD REGARD TO THE TYPES OF GOODS AND THE REASONS FOR CONFISCATION.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, PIRATED COMPUTER SOFTWARE AND FAKE COMPUTER MANUALS AND COUNTERFEIT WATCHES, MEDICINE AND LEATHERWARE WOULD BE DESTROYED.

"THEORETICALLY, COUNTERFEIT AUDIO/VIDEO CASSETTE TAPES COULD BE WIPE CLEAN AND MADE AVAILABLE FOR AUCTION. HOWEVER, THIS WOULD BE UNECONOMICAL AND SUCH ITEMS ARE THEREFORE ALSO DESTROYED," HE ADDED.

FOR GARMENTS, AS A GENERAL RULE, WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO REMOVE THE OFFENDING TRADE MARK OR WHERE THE PRODUCT IS OTHERWISE UNIDENTIFIABLE, ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE FOR THE GOODS TO BE AUCTIONED OR MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OR DONATED TO CHARITY.

"HOWEVER, FOR SOME CONFISCATED GARMENTS, THE OFFENDING TRADE MARK FORMS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ARTICLE, AND ITS REMOVAL WOULD HAVE RENDERED THE GARMENTS UNUSABLE. IN THIS CASE, DESTRUCTION REMAINS THE ONLY VIABLE OPTION," SIR PIERS SAID.

VARIOUS INCOME GROUPS BEING TAKEN CARE OF IN TAX PACKAGE

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL, IN CONSIDERING ANY TAX PROPOSAL, TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE EFFECT ON VARIOUS INCOME GROUPS, INCLUDING THE LOWER INCOME GROUP, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG, SIR PIERS SAID AT AROUND THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS HAD SENT IN SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE FORTHCOMING BUDGET.

MANY OF THE SUGGESTIONS GENERATED SOME DEGREE OF PUBLIC DEBATE, HE SAID.

"GENERALLY, I ALLOW THE DEBATE TO CONTINUE WITHOUT MY STEPPING IN TOO EARLY TO KNOCK IT ON THE HEAD.

"BUT, BY NOT DISMISSING A PROPOSAL, I AM BY NO MEANS IMPLYING THAT I SUPPORT IT," SIR PIERS SAID.

MANY PROPOSALS RECEIVED HAD PROVEN TO BE UNACCEPTABLE FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

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LEGAL AID - FREE FOR ALL REGARDLESS RESIDENCE OR NATIONALITY

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RESIDENCE IN HONG KONG IS NOT A FACTOR IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY OF RECEIVING LEGAL AID, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM, SIR PIERS, SAID ANYONE INVOLVED IN PROCEEDINGS IN THE DISTRICT OR HIGH COURT WAS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR LEGAL AID, REGARDLESS OF RESIDENCE OR NATIONALITY.

"THIS IS THE NORMAL PRACTICE ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD AND IT IS NOT UNIQUE TO HONG KONG," SIR PIERS SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ALL APPLICANTS WERE SUBJECT TO A MEANS TEST. IN CIVIL CASES, THERE MUST ALSO BE REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR LITIGATING. IN CRIMINAL CASES, IT MUST BE IN THE INTERESTS OF JUSTICE FOR LEGAL AID TO BE PROVIDED.

"RESIDENCE IN HONG KONG IS NOT THEREFORE A FACTOR IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY, AND SEPARATE STATISTICS ARE NOT MAINTAINED ON NON-HONG KONG RESIDENTS TO WHOM LEGAL AID HAS BEEN GRANTED.

"EXTRACTING SUCH STATISTICS FROM THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT'S CASE FILES WOULD BE A HUGE TASK, REQUIRING THE DIVERSION OF STAFF RESOURCES BETTER USED IN ASSISTING APPLICANTS FOR LEGAL AID," SIR PIERS SAID.

FOR THE YEAR 1989/90, 15,810 LEGAL AID APPLICATIONS ON CIVIL CASES AND 4,849 ON CRIMINAL CASES WERE RECEIVED. DURING THE SAME PERIOD, 5,541 AND 2,906 LEGAL AID CERTIFICATES WERE ISSUED FOR CIVIL CASES AND CRIMINAL CASES RESPECTIVELY.

MEANWHILE, THE EXPENDITURE ON LEGAL AID FOR THE YEAR 1989/90 WAS SOME \$89.14 MILLION. THIS COMPARED TO SOME \$75.78 MILLION FOR THE YEAR 1988/89.

ON THE OTHER HAND, REVENUE RECEIVED TO RECOVER COSTS IN LEGAL AID CASES WAS SOME \$38.9 MILLION FOR THE YEAR 1989/90 AND SOME \$33.55 MILLION FOR THE YEAR 1988/89.

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MEDICAL CHECKS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT EMPLOYEES SATISFACTORY
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THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY MAJOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES CONCERNING MEDICAL CHECKS FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES ARE GENERALLY SATISFACTORY, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM, MR LEUNG ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND ENCOURAGE PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES TO PAY DUE ATTENTION TO THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF THEIR STAFF.

HE SAID THE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE CONCERNING RETIREMENT AGE AND MEDICAL CHECKS WAS NOT UNIFORM THROUGHOUT PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES.

"IN GENERAL, THE NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE FOR EMPLOYEES SET BY MOST COMPANIES IS 60.

"IN SOME CASES, ANNUAL EXTENSION OF SERVICE UP TO 65 MAY BE ALLOWED, SUBJECT TO MEDICAL CHECKS," MR LEUNG SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID ALL MAJOR COMPANIES PROVIDED FREE MEDICAL SERVICE FOR THEIR STAFF, BUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMPULSORY MEDICAL CHECKS DIFFERED.

"FOR EXAMPLE, KMB AND CMB REQUIRE ALL DRIVERS OVER 60 TO BE SUBJECT TO ANNUAL MEDICAL CHECKS. YOUNGER DRIVERS ARE ALSO CHECKED IF THE COMPANY HAS DOUBTS ON THEIR FITNESS TO DRIVE.

"OTHERS SUCH AS THE STAR FERRY, HONG KONG TRAMWAYS AND PEAK TRAMWAYS REQUIRE ALL STAFF TO BE MEDICALLY EXAMINED EACH YEAR FROM THE AGE OF 55.

"EMPLOYEES OF THE TWO RAILWAY CORPORATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO ANNUAL CHEST X-RAY EXAMINATIONS AND MORE THOROUGH MEDICAL CHECKS ON DOCTOR'S ADVICE," MR LEUNG SAID.

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TAX CONCESSION LEVEL ON CHARITABLE DONATIONS REASONABLE
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THE PRESENT LIMIT, WHICH IS 10 PER CENT OF ASSESSABLE INCOME, ON THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF CHARITABLE DONATIONS THAT CAN BE DEDUCTED FROM ASSESSABLE INCOME, IS REASONABLE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG, SIR PIERS SAID: "WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A LOW TAX SYSTEM, WE NEED TO KEEP THE NUMBER AND INDEED THE COST OF CONCESSIONS AND EXCESSIONS AND EXCEPTIONS TO THE MINIMUM.

"IT SHOULD ALSO BE BORNE IN MIND THAT IN HONG KONG, DIVIDENDS, INTEREST AND OFFSHORE INCOME, OUT OF WHICH DONATIONS MAY WELL BE MADE, ARE NOT CHARGEABLE TO TAX AT ALL."

SIR PIERS POINTED OUT THAT NOT ALL BODIES RECEIVING CHARITABLE DONATIONS WERE IN THE SUBVENTED SECTOR, AND INCREASED RECEIPTS THROUGH DONATIONS DID NOT ALWAYS RESULT IN A REDUCTION IN THE SUBVENTION.

"AN INCREASE IN DONATIONS, THEREFORE, WOULD NOT NECESSARILY GUARANTEE A DROP IN THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION," HE STRESSED.

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LOAN SHARKING ACTIVITIES ON A DECLINE
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THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT LOAN SHARKING ACTIVITIES IN NEW TOWNS ARE HIGHER OR INCREASING AT A GREATER RATE THAN IN THE URBAN AREAS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON IAN STRACHAN, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ROSANNA TAM, MR STRACHAN SAID POLICE STATISTICS INDICATED THAT REPORTED LOAN SHARKING CASES IN NEW TOWNS ACCOUNTED FOR 22 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SUCH CASES IN THE TERRITORY LAST YEAR AND 18 PER CENT SO FAR THIS YEAR.

"INDEED, THERE HAS BEEN A STEADY DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF REPORTED LOAN SHARKING CASES IN THE TERRITORY OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS," HE ADDED.

MR STRACHAN ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND THE PUBLIC THAT LOAN SHARKS WERE UNSCRUPULOUS AND RUTHLESS.

"ONCE IN THEIR CLUTCHES, A DEBTOR RARELY RECOVERS.

"THE PUBLIC IS THEREFORE URGED NOT ONLY TO STAY AWAY FROM LOAN SHARKS BUT ALSO TO REPORT THEIR ACTIVITIES TO THE POLICE TO HELP CRACK DOWN ON SUCH CRIME SYNDICATES," HE ADDED.

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UNHCR REMINDED TO DISCHARGE ITS DEBTS

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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, HAS TAKEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES OF ITS OBLIGATIONS TO DISCHARGE ITS DEBTS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON IAN STRACHAN, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WE HAVE ALSO FREQUENTLY AND CONSISTENTLY REMINDED THE MAIN DONOR COUNTRIES THAT UNHCR REQUIRES ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ENABLE THE COMMISSION TO MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS IN HONG KONG," MR STRACHAN SAID, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI.

HE NOTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM WAS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM AND HAD BEEN RECOGNISED AS SUCH REPEATEDLY IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES.

"HONG KONG HAS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE FINANCIALLY TOWARDS THE RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM.

"IT IS ONLY RIGHT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD DO THE SAME," MR STRACHAN SAID.

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EXTERNAL TRADE STATISTICS FOR OCTOBER RELEASED

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TOTAL MERCHANDISE TRADE IN OCTOBER 1990, AT \$127,231 MILLION, GREW BY 25 PER CENT IN VALUE TERMS AS COMPARED WITH OCTOBER 1989, ACCORDING TO THE DETAILED FIGURES ON THE VALUE OF TRADE IN OCTOBER 1990 RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF COMPARISON, THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS INCREASED BY 6 PER CENT TO \$22,185 MILLION, WHILE THAT OF RE-EXPORTS ROSE BY 31 PER CENT TO \$41,838 MILLION. THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS INCREASED BY 21 PER CENT TO \$64,024 MILLION.

THE VALUE OF IMPORTS INCREASED BY 30 PER CENT TO \$63,208 MILLION.

THE VALUE OF TOTAL MERCHANDISE TRADE IN JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1990, AT \$1,037,394 MILLION, INCREASED BY 10 PER CENT AS COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1989.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF COMPARISON, THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS DECREASED BY 1 PER CENT TO \$183,785 MILLION, WHILE THAT OF RE-EXPORTS INCREASED BY 17 PER CENT TO \$334,532 MILLION.

THUS, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS INCREASED BY 10 PER CENT TO \$518,318 MILLION. THE VALUE OF IMPORTS INCREASED BY 11 PER CENT TO \$519,076 MILLION.

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO 10 MAJOR MARKETS ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 1.

COMPARING OCTOBER 1990 WITH OCTOBER 1989, THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO SINGAPORE AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY RECORDED SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES OF 54 PER CENT AND 37 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY. DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO THE NETHERLANDS, CHINA, THE UNITED KINGDOM, TAIWAN AND JAPAN ALSO INCREASED, BY 18 PER CENT, 14 PER CENT, 14 PER CENT, 5 PER CENT AND 2 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

HOWEVER, THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO CANADA, THE USA AND AUSTRALIA DECREASED BY 19 PER CENT, 9 PER CENT AND 4 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

COMPARING JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1990 WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1989, SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TAIWAN AND SINGAPORE, BY 32 PER CENT AND 30 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY. THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, CHINA AND THE NETHERLANDS INCREASED BY 10 PER CENT, 8 PER CENT AND 5 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

HOWEVER, THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM DECREASED BY 16 PER CENT, 16 PER CENT AND 12 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY. DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO JAPAN AND THE USA ALSO DECREASED IN VALUE TERMS, BY 9 PER CENT AND 8 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

TABLE 2 SHOWS THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF THE MAJOR COMMODITY DIVISIONS.

COMPARING JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1990 WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1989, INCREASES IN THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS WERE REGISTERED FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS (BY \$1,108 MILLION OR 7 PER CENT); TOBACCO AND TOBACCO MANUFACTURES (BY \$833 MILLION OR 52 PER CENT); ARTIFICIAL RESINS AND PLASTIC MATERIALS, AND CELLULOSE ESTERS AND ETHERS (BY \$700 MILLION OR 23 PER CENT); AND TEXTILES (BY \$122 MILLION OR 1 PER CENT).

DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF CLOTHING INCREASED BY \$41 MILLION OR LESS THAN 0.5 PER CENT IN VALUE TERMS.

HOWEVER, DECREASES IN THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS WERE RECORDED IN MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (BY \$2,021 MILLION OR 9 PER CENT), AND ELECTRICAL MACHINERY APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF (BY \$868 MILLION OR 6 PER CENT).

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF IMPORTS FROM 10 MAJOR SUPPLIERS ARE SUMMARISED IN TABLE 3.

COMPARING OCTOBER 1990 WITH OCTOBER 1989, THE VALUE OF IMPORTS FROM ALL THE MAJOR SUPPLIERS INCREASED.

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE VALUE OF IMPORTS FROM SINGAPORE, JAPAN, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND TAIWAN, BY 42 PER CENT, 37 PER CENT, 35 PER CENT, 33 PER CENT AND 31 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

THOSE FROM CHINA, SWITZERLAND, ITALY, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE USA INCREASED BY 28 PER CENT, 26 PER CENT, 25 PER CENT, 20 PER CENT AND 16 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

COMPARING JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1990 WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1989, INCREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE VALUE OF IMPORTS FROM ALL MAJOR SUPPLIERS.

THE VALUE OF IMPORTS FROM CHINA, SWITZERLAND, SINGAPORE AND THE USA INCREASED BY 18 PER CENT, 16 PER CENT, 11 PER CENT AND 11 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY. THOSE FROM TAIWAN, ITALY, JAPAN, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY INCREASED BY 9 PER CENT, 6 PER CENT, 5 PER CENT, 5 PER CENT, 4 PER CENT AND 4 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

TABLE 4 SHOWS THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF IMPORTS OF THE MAJOR COMMODITY DIVISIONS.

COMPARING JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1990 WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1989, CONSIDERABLE INCREASES IN THE VALUE OF IMPORTS WERE RECORDED IN CLOTHING (BY \$7,362 MILLION OR 20 PER CENT); TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT (BY \$6,863 MILLION OR 21 PER CENT); MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (BY \$6,594 MILLION OR 21 PER CENT); AND TEXTILES (BY \$3,887 MILLION OR 6 PER CENT).

/HOWEVER, DECREASES

HOWEVER, DECREASES IN THE VALUE OF IMPORTS WERE REGISTERED FOR TEXTILE FIBRES AND THEIR WASTES (BY \$1,590 MILLION OR 26 PER CENT), AND IRON AND STEEL (BY \$1,270 MILLION OR 12 PER CENT).

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS TO HONG KONG'S 10 MAJOR MARKETS ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 5.

THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS TO ALL THE MAJOR MARKETS INCREASED IN VALUE TERMS IN OCTOBER 1990 OVER OCTOBER 1989.

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE UNITED KINGDOM, FRANCE, TAIWAN, CHINA AND JAPAN, BY 102 PER CENT, 61 PER CENT, 60 PER CENT, 42 PER CENT, 32 PER CENT AND 23 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

THOSE TO SINGAPORE, THE USA, CANADA AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA INCREASED BY 14 PER CENT, 12 PER CENT, 9 PER CENT AND 4 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

COMPARING JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1990 OVER THE SAME PERIOD IN 1989, THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, FRANCE, THE UNITED KINGDOM, TAIWAN, CANADA, THE USA AND SINGAPORE INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY, BY 61 PER CENT, 37 PER CENT, 31 PER CENT, 28 PER CENT, 23 PER CENT, 22 PER CENT AND 16 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

THOSE TO JAPAN AND CHINA INCREASED BY 4 PER CENT AND 3 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, WHILE THOSE TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA DECREASED BY 3 PER CENT.

TABLE 6 SHOWS THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS OF THE MAJOR COMMODITY DIVISIONS.

COMPARING JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1990 WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1989, CONSIDERABLE INCREASES IN THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS WERE REGISTERED FOR MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (BY \$10,547 MILLION OR 30 PER CENT); CLOTHING (BY \$8,159 MILLION OR 26 PER CENT); TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT (BY \$6,626 MILLION OR 30 PER CENT); AND TEXTILES (BY \$2,560 MILLION OR 7 PER CENT).

HOWEVER, DECREASES IN THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS WERE RECORDED IN TEXTILE FIBRES AND THEIR WASTES (BY \$1,831 MILLION OR 42 PER CENT), AND MACHINERY SPECIALISED FOR PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES (BY \$967 MILLION OR 14 PER CENT).

AS FROM OCTOBER 1990, STATISTICS ON HONG KONG'S TRADE WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY REFER TO THE UNIFIED GERMANY.

WHERE PAST DATA ARE REFERRED TO, THE TRADE VALUES OF THE PREVIOUS FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC ARE ADDED TOGETHER TO ENSURE COMPARABILITY WITH THE CURRENT MONTH FIGURES.

ALL THE TRADE STATISTICS DESCRIBED HERE ARE MEASURED AT CURRENT PRICES AND NO ACCOUNT HAS BEEN TAKEN OF THE CHANGES IN PRICES BETWEEN THE PERIODS OF COMPARISON. A SEPARATE ANALYSIS OF THE PRICE AND VOLUME MOVEMENTS OF EXTERNAL TRADE IN OCTOBER 1990 WILL BE RELEASED IN EARLY JANUARY 1991.

DETAILED STATISTICS ON TRADE VALUE BY COMMODITY AND BY COUNTRY ARE PUBLISHED IN TRADE STATISTICS REPORTS. THE OCTOBER 1990 ISSUE OF THE "HONG KONG EXTERNAL TRADE" WITH DETAILED ANALYSES ON IMPORTS, EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS IN OCTOBER 1990 WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR SALE AROUND DECEMBER 20 AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, GPO BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL AT \$27 PER COPY.

ENQUIRIES REGARDING REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION TO THIS REPORT MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT AT FRENCH MISSION BUILDING, 1 BATTERY PATH, HONG KONG (TEL. NO. 842 8802) AND ENQUIRIES ON TRADE STATISTICS TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT (TEL. NO. 823 4915).

TABLE 1: DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO 10 MAJOR MARKETS

MAJOR MARKET	OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	OCT 90 OVER OCT 89 (%)	JAN-OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	JAN-OCT 90 OVER JAN-OCT 89 (%)
USA	6,848	- 9	54,949	- 8
CHINA	4,575	+ 14	38,701	+ 8
FR OF GERMANY	1,650	+ 37	13,911	+ 10
UK	1,374	+ 14	10,601	- 12
JAPAN	1,289	+ 2	9,925	- 9
SINGAPORE	822	+ 54	6,225	+ 30
TAIWAN	516	+ 5	4,689	+ 32
CANADA	447	- 19	4,465	- 16
NETHERLANDS	416	+ 18	4,003	+ 5
AUSTRALIA	363	- 4	2,934	- 16

/TABLE 2

TABLE 2: DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF THE MAJOR COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	OCT 90 OVER OCT 89 (%)	JAN-OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	JAN-OCT 90 OVER JAN-OCT 89 (%)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	7,165	+ 3	58,264	*
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WARES)	2,520	- 7	21,568	- 9
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	2,464	+ 30	17,284	+ 7
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	1,578	- 4	14,081	- 6
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,606	+ 7	13,886	+ 1
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	1,490	+ 3	13,617	+ 1

* DENOTES LESS THAN 0.5 PER CENT

TABLE 3: IMPORTS FROM 10 MAJOR SUPPLIERS

MAJOR SUPPLIER	OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	OCT 90 OVER OCT 89 (%)	JAN-OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	JAN-OCT 90 OVER JAN-OCT 89 (%)
CHINA	23,535	+ 28	190,264	+ 18
JAPAN	10,477	+ 37	82,747	+ 5

/TAIWAN 5,802

TAIWAN	5,802	+ 31	46,583	+ 9
USA	4,354	+ 16	43,192	+ 11
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	2,437	+ 33	22,695	+ 5
SINGAPORE	3,245	+ 42	20,626	+ 11
FR OF GERMANY	1,479	+ 35	11,994	+ 4
UK	1,311	+ 20	11,380	+ 4
SWITZERLAND	1,075	+ 26	9,151	+ 16
ITALY	1,054	+ 25	8,974	+ 6

TABLE 4: IMPORTS OF THE MAJOR COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	OCT 90 OVER OCT 89 (%)	JAN-OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	JAN-OCT 90 OVER JAN-OCT 89 (%)
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	7,616	+ 31	63,929	+ 6
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	6,045	+ 22	51,962	+ 9
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	5,615	+ 21	43,781	+ 20
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	4,815	+ 34	39,620	+ 21
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	4,563	+ 18	37,694	+ 21

/PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS

PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS,
EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES,
OPTICAL GOODS,
WATCHES AND CLOCKS

3,762 + 35 27,736 + 14

TABLE 5: RE-EXPORTS TO 10 MAJOR MARKETS

MAJOR MARKET	OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	OCT 90 OVER OCT 89 (%)	JAN-OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	JAN-OCT 90 OVER JAN-OCT 89 (%)
CHINA	10,973	+ 32	89,138	+ 3
USA	8,820	+ 12	72,683	+ 22
JAPAN	2,709	+ 23	19,386	+ 4
FR OF GERMANY	2,549	+ 102	17,523	+ 61
TAIWAN	2,002	+ 42	17,323	+ 28
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	1,165	+ 4	10,786	- 3
SINGAPORE	1,134	+ 14	10,458	+ 16
UK	1,363	+ 61	9,794	+ 31
CANADA	584	+ 9	5,509	+ 23
FRANCE	644	+ 60	5,175	+ 37

TABLE 6: RE-EXPORTS OF THE MAJOR COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	OCT 90 OVER OCT 89 (%)	JAN-OCT 1990 (HKD MN.)	JAN-OCT 90 OVER JAN-OCT 89 (%)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	5,811	+ 19	45,787	+ 30

/ARTICLES OF

ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	4,941	+ 32	38,959	+ 26
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	4,695	+ 30	37,892	+ 7
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	3,433	+ 17	30,612	+ 10
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	3,993	+ 43	28,996	+ 30
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	1,505	+ 46	12,586	+ 29

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NEW ALLOCATION SCHEME FOR ELECTION PUBLICITY
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A NEW SCHEME WILL BE INTRODUCED TO EFFECTIVELY CONTROL PUBLIC DISPLAY OF ELECTIONEERING MATERIALS TO ENSURE THAT THE ELECTIONS CAN BE CONDUCTED IN A FAIR AND ORDERLY MANNER, THE PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR BENJAMIN TANG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF CITY NORTHWEST HONG KONG, MR TANG SAID THE CONTROL WOULD BE EXERCISED THROUGH VOLUNTARY CO-OPERATION AND CONSENT AMONG CANDIDATES, BACKED UP IF NECESSARY, BY APPROPRIATE ENFORCEMENT ACTION AND DETERRENTS.

"THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW SCHEME IS TO MINIMISE THE CHANCE OF DISPUTE BY INSTITUTING A MECHANISM WHEREBY POPULAR SPOTS IN PUBLIC AREAS PRONE TO DISPUTES ARE IDENTIFIED AND APPORTIONED TO CANDIDATES ON AN EQUITABLE BASIS," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW SCHEME BASICALLY CONSISTED OF SEVERAL PHASES.

DURING THE FIRST PHASE, EACH DISTRICT OFFICE WILL IDENTIFY IN ITS DISTRICT A LIST OF PRIME SPOTS FOR THE DISPLAY OF PUBLICITY MATERIALS. ALL POSTED PUBLICITY MATERIALS IN THESE SPOTS WILL BE REMOVED BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NOMINATION PERIOD ON JANUARY 7 NEXT YEAR.

ALL THE CONCERNED PARTIES WILL BE ASKED TO REMOVE THEIR PUBLICITY MATERIALS IN THE PRIME SPOTS BEFORE THE END OF DECEMBER. THE REMAINING MATERIALS WILL BE CLEARED IN THE FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY.

"THIS WOULD ELIMINATE ANY UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OWNERS OF EXISTING DISPLAYS MAY HAVE," MR TANG SAID.

DURING THE NOMINATION PERIOD BETWEEN JANUARY 7 AND 21, NO ELECTIONEERING MATERIALS ARE TO BE DISPLAYED IN THE KEY SPOTS IDENTIFIED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICES.

AFTER THE CLOSING OF THE NOMINATION, EACH RETURNING OFFICER, IN THIS CASE THE DISTRICT OFFICER, WILL CONVENE A MEETING TO SEE IF CANDIDATES CAN AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES ON THE NUMBER OF BANNERS AND THEIR DISPLAY LOCATIONS.

"IF THEY FAIL TO REACH AN AGREEMENT, SOME FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE TO BE INSTITUTED TO ALLOCATE KEY SPOTS TO BE SHARED BY CANDIDATES ON AN EQUITABLE BASIS.

"THIS IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE FAIREST METHOD, WITHOUT PUTTING TOO MUCH RESTRAINTS ON ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES," MR TANG SAID.

ANY CANDIDATE OR HIS CAMPAIGN AGENTS WHO PUT UP UNAUTHORISED PUBLICITY MATERIALS MAY BE LIABLE TO A FINE AS WELL AS PAYMENT OF THE REMOVAL COST. HE SAID THE REMOVAL COST MIGHT BE ADDED INTO THE CANDIDATE'S ELECTION EXPENSE.

IF SO, MR TANG SAID, CANDIDATES WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IN KEEPING THEIR CAMPAIGNS WITHIN ELECTION EXPENDITURE LIMITS.

HE ADMITTED THAT THE NEW INITIATIVE MIGHT NOT ELIMINATE ALL ELECTION-RELATED DISPUTES.

"BUT WITHOUT THIS RUDIMENTARY SYSTEM OF ALLOCATION, THERE MAY EVEN BE MORE DISPUTES," HE EXPLAINED.

TO FURTHER ENSURE THAT ALL CANDIDATES COULD COMPETE ON A FAIR BASIS, MR TANG SAID, A REVIEW ON THE CEILING OF ELECTION EXPENSE HAD JUST BEEN COMPLETED.

THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT THAT A CANDIDATE CAN SPEND IN HIS ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN NEXT YEAR'S DIRECT ELECTIONS WILL RANGE FROM \$30,000 FOR DISTRICT BOARDS TO \$200,000 FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE NOTED THAT THE LATEST VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN HAD JUST ENDED WITH SATISFACTORY RESULTS. ABOUT 295,000 NEW ELECTORS WERE REGISTERED AND THE FIGURE COMPARED FAVOURABLY WITH ANYONE IN ALL PREVIOUS CAMPAIGNS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MOUNT ANOTHER CAMPAIGN TO URGE PEOPLE TO TAKE PART IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS EARLY NEXT YEAR. SUBJECT TO APPROVAL, THE ELECTION PUBLICITY FUND WOULD BE ABOUT \$18 MILLION.

"FOR THE FIRST TIME, PEOPLE WILL VOTE IN ALL THE THREE DIRECT ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR ON A SUNDAY. IT IS CONSIDERED THAT SUNDAY WOULD BE MORE CONVENIENT TO MOST OF THE ELECTORS AND WE HOPE THERE WILL BE A GREATER PARTICIPATION."

FINALLY, MR TANG STRESSED THAT GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ALONE WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO MAKE NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS A SUCCESS.

"WHAT MATTERS MORE IS THAT THE PUBLIC WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS," HE SAID.

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EXCO APPROVES TAXI FUEL SUPPLEMENT

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THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HAS APPROVED THE CHARGING OF A FLAT \$1 TEMPORARY FUEL SUPPLEMENT IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL TAXI FARE FOR URBAN, NEW TERRITORIES AND LANTAU TAXIS WITH EFFECT FROM SUNDAY (DECEMBER 16).

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE FUEL SUPPLEMENT IS A TEMPORARY MEASURE AIMED AT LESSENING THE BURDEN OF TAXI DRIVERS WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE RAPID FUEL PRICE INCREASES AS A RESULT OF THE GULF CRISIS.

THIS SUPPLEMENT SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN WHEN EITHER THE FUEL PRICE FALLS SUBSTANTIALLY, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, OR INCORPORATED INTO THE NEXT GENERAL FARE INCREASE EXERCISE.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ROAD TRAFFIC (PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES) REGULATIONS, TAXI OPERATORS ARE REQUIRED TO DISPLAY A TABLE SHOWING IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE CHARACTERS THE ADDITIONAL CHARGE THAT IS TO BE LEVIED, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE ADDITIONAL FARE TABLE SHOULD BE DISPLAYED TOGETHER WITH THE EXISTING FARE PLATE FROM SUNDAY UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT THE TEMPORARY FUEL SUPPLEMENT IS CANCELLED.

"IT SHOULD BE DISPLAYED IN THE SIMILAR MANNER AS THE EXISTING FARE TABLE, AT THE INTERIOR NEARSIDE REAR DOOR AND THE FRONT DASHBOARD ON THE PASSENGER SIDE OR THE FRONT NEARSIDE DOOR," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

THE TABLE SHALL BE A STICKER WITH A MATTE SURFACE PLASTIC FILM, MEASURING AT LEAST 50 MILLIMETRES HIGH AND 240 MILLIMETRES WIDE, AND SHALL HAVE A YELLOW BACKGROUND WITH LETTERS, CHARACTERS AND NUMERALS IN BLACK.

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40,000 TAXATION ELECTION FORMS SENT TO MARRIED COUPLES
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THE COMPUTER PROGRAMS TO IDENTIFY AND NOTIFY THOSE MARRIED COUPLES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM AN ELECTION TO BE ASSESSED JOINTLY ARE NOW FULLY OPERATIONAL, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"ONCE THE INDIVIDUAL INCOMES FOR BOTH THE HUSBAND AND THE WIFE HAVE BEEN DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT, COMPUTER PROGRAMS WILL COMPARE THE TOTAL TAX PAYABLE BY THEM IF TAXED AS INDIVIDUALS WITH THAT PAYABLE IF TAXED JOINTLY.

"WHERE IT IS FOUND THAT JOINT ASSESSMENT WOULD RESULT IN A LESSER AMOUNT OF TAX PAYABLE A SIMPLE ELECTION FORM WILL BE PRODUCED AND SENT TO THE COUPLE FOR COMPLETION," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID ABOUT 40,000 SUCH ELECTION FORMS HAD BEEN ISSUED.

"THE COMPLETED ELECTION FORMS SHOULD BE RETURNED AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY TO ALLOW PROCESSING BEFORE THE DUE DATE FOR PAYMENT OF ANY TAX," HE ADDED.

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NEW ELIGIBILITY RULE FOR STUDENT TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME
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THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS APPROVED THE INTRODUCTION FROM SEPTEMBER 1991 OF MEANS TESTS FOR THE STUDENT TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME (STSS).

"THE STUDENT TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME ITSELF WAS NOT BEING CHANGED. HOWEVER, STARTING FROM THE 1991-92 ACADEMIC YEAR, ELIGIBILITY FOR THE STSS WOULD BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF NEED," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT PRESENT, ALL CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 12 ENJOY CONCESSIONARY FARE ON MOST FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT. STUDENTS AGED 12 AND ABOVE, AND RECEIVING FULL-TIME EDUCATION, ARE COVERED BY THE STSS ON A NON-MEANS-TESTED BASIS.

IN 1989-90 EACH STUDENT RECEIVED AN AVERAGE SUBSIDY OF \$570, OR \$57 PER MONTH DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.

"UNDER THE NEW RULES OF ELIGIBILITY, CHILDREN RECEIVING FULL-TIME PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION WILL HAVE TO ESTABLISH THEIR NEED FOR THE SUBSIDY BY UNDERGOING A MEANS TEST BASED ON SIMILAR CRITERIA OF ELIGIBILITY AS APPLIED TO THE EXISTING TEXTBOOKS GRANTS AND FEE REMISSION SCHEMES," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

/"FOR STUDENTS

"FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING POST-SECONDARY OR TERTIARY EDUCATION, THEIR ELIGIBILITY WILL BE DETERMINED BY REFERENCE TO WHETHER THEY SUCCEED IN OBTAINING GRANTS OR LOANS UNDER THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME OR THE LOCAL STUDENT FINANCE SCHEME RESPECTIVELY," HE SAID.

"THE NEW RULES OF ELIGIBILITY WILL NOT AFFECT THOSE WHO NEED AND ARE RECEIVING HELP, AS THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BENEFIT UNDER THE SCHEME," THE SPOKESMAN STRESSED.

THIS GROUP OF STUDENTS TYPICALLY COME FROM FOUR-MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS EARNING LESS THAN \$10,000 PER MONTH.

"THE MEANS TEST ITSELF WOULD NOT INVOLVE CUMBERSOME PROCEDURES," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"ARRANGEMENTS EITHER EXIST ALREADY OR CAN BE EASILY ADAPTED TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENTS STUDYING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS.

"THE MEANS TEST FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN WILL BE APPLIED IN A FLEXIBLE WAY."

APPLICANTS WHO FAIL TO QUALIFY MARGINALLY OR WHOSE PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE SPECIAL TREATMENT WILL OBTAIN ASSISTANCE UNDER THE STSS.

THE EFFECT ON THE FINANCIALLY BETTER-OFF FAMILIES SHOULD BE MINIMAL. THE SUBSIDY THEY WILL FORGO WILL BE LESS THAN \$60 PER MONTH PER STUDENT ON AVERAGE.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MEANS TEST WILL BRING THE STUDENT TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME INTO LINE WITH ALL OTHER PUBLICLY-FUNDED SCHEMES THAT PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS.

"WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE STSS, ALL SUCH SCHEMES ARE BASED ON NEED BEING ESTABLISHED BY WAY OF A MEANS TEST, AND IT IS ONLY RIGHT THAT THE STSS SHOULD BE BROUGHT WITHIN THIS GENERAL RULE, WHATEVER THE STATE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCES," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE INTRODUCTION OF MEANS TESTING TO THE STSS SHOULD NOT HAVE THE EFFECT OF DISCOURAGING CHILDREN FROM GOING TO SCHOOL OR FROM TAKING PART IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS NOT THE SCHEME THAT WAS BEING CHANGED, ONLY ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SUBSIDY.

"THIS MEASURE IS BEING INTRODUCED IN RESPONSE TO CALLS MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE 1990-91 BUDGET DEBATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSCIENTIOUSLY REVIEW EXISTING SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES, AND CUT BACK ON THOSE WHICH ARE NO LONGER JUSTIFIED.

"THIS MEASURE WILL, INCIDENTALY, ENABLE THE EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BRANCH TO RE-FOCUS ITS PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE."

PAYMENT OF THE SUBSIDY UNDER THE STSS FOR THE CURRENT (1990-91) ACADEMIC YEAR IS DUE TO BE MADE IN EARLY 1991. SUCH PAYMENTS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE NEW RULES OF ELIGIBILITY, WHICH WILL NOT BE APPLIED UNTIL THE 1991-92 ACADEMIC YEAR BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER 1991.

SCHOOLS AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO INTRODUCE RULES OF ELIGIBILITY.

ENQUIRIES MAY BE MADE TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS OR TO THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AGENCY LOCATED ON THE SIXTH FLOOR OF CLUB LUSITANO BUILDING, 16 ICE HOUSE STREET, HONG KONG (TEL. NO. : 801 5772).

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MONG KOK BUILDINGS DECLARED DANGEROUS

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DECLARED THE EXTERNAL REAR STAIRCASE AT 199 AND 201 PORTLAND STREET, MONG KOK, DANGEROUS AND THEIR MAIN BUILDINGS LIABLE TO BECOME DANGEROUS.

THE AUTHORITY ALSO DECLARED THE BUILDING AT 64 TUNG CHOI STREET TO BE DANGEROUS.

IN A STATEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING SURVEYOR SAID THE BUILDINGS AT PORTLAND STREET, WERE SIX STOREYS HIGH WITH COCKLOFTS.

THEY WERE POST-WAR REINFORCED CONCRETE-FRAMED BUILDINGS WITH REINFORCED CONCRETE FLOORS AND ROOFS, AND BRICK INFILL PANEL WALLS.

ORDERS UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE FOR THE REPAIR OF THE BUILDINGS, INCLUDING THE EXTERNAL REAR STAIRCASES WERE ISSUED ON JULY 9, 1990

HOWEVER, FURTHER INVESTIGATION BY AN AUTHORISED PERSON AND SUBSEQUENTLY BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE REVEALED THAT THE DEGREE OF DETERIORATION IN THE REINFORCED CONCRETE FRAME OF THE REAR STAIRCASE AND REAR PART OF THE MAIN BUILDING WOULD RENDER REPAIR TO THE STAIRCASE IMPOSSIBLE.

ACCORDINGLY, SUCH STAIRCASE SHOULD BE CLOSED AND DEMOLISHED.

THE DEMOLITION OF THE REAR STAIRCASE WILL RENDER THE ALREADY DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF ADEQUATE MEANS OF ESCAPE. THEREFORE, THE BUILDINGS THEMSELVES SHOULD ALSO BE CLOSED AND DEMOLISHED.

THE DEFECTS APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN CAUSED IN PART BY LACK OF ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE BY THE OWNERS OF THE BUILDINGS OVER THE PRECEDING YEARS.

/THE BUILDING

THE BUILDING AUTHORITY ADVISED THAT SHOULD THE OWNERS WISH TO RE-BUILD THE REAR STAIRCASE, FORMAL APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED FOR ITS CONSIDERATION.

UNTIL SUCH TIME AS ALL REQUIRED WORKS TO MAKE THE BUILDINGS SAFE GENERALLY HAD BEEN SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED, THE BUILDINGS SHOULD REMAIN CLOSED.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDERS IN HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON FEBRUARY 12, 1991 WAS POSTED TODAY ON THE BUILDINGS.

IN A SEPARATE STATEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING SURVEYOR SAID THE DANGEROUS BUILDING AT TUNG CHOI STREET WAS A THREE-STOREY PRE-WAR BUILDING CONSTRUCTED OF LOADBEARING BRICK AND MASONRY WALL WITH REINFORCED CONCRETE FLOORS AND BEAMS.

THE BUILDING, WHICH HAS BEEN UNDER OBSERVATION SINCE 1983, IS THE REMAINING HALF OF A PAIR OF BUILDINGS WHICH SHARED A COMMON STAIRCASE.

IT WAS NOTED THAT THE BUILDING HAD TILTED TOWARDS NO. 66 TUNG CHOI STREET LAST YEAR.

RECENT INSPECTIONS INDICATED THAT MOVEMENT OF PARTS OF THE BUILDING STRUCTURE WAS CONTINUING, WITH PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR ONE OF THE SUPPORTING PIERS ON THE PAVEMENT WHICH HAD BECOME DISTORTED.

IT IS CONSIDERED THEREFORE THAT THE BUILDING IS IN A DANGEROUS CONDITION AND, FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, SHOULD BE CLOSED AND DEMOLISHED.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A CLOSURE ORDER IN HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON JANUARY 23, 1991, WAS POSTED TODAY.

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COURT ORDER FOR WINDING-UP OF INSURANCE COMPANY
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AN ORDER WAS MADE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE WINDING-UP OF GRAND UNION GENERAL AND MOTOR INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED ("THE COMPANY"), AN INSURER WHICH WAS PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED IN WRITING MOTOR VEHICLES INSURANCE BUSINESS.

THE ORDER WAS MADE FOLLOWING THE WINDING-UP PETITION PRESENTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID ON BEHALF OF AN INSURANCE CLAIMANT ON NOVEMBER 13, 1990.

THE GROUND FOR THE PETITION WAS THAT THE COMPANY WAS INSOLVENT AND UNABLE TO PAY ITS DEBTS AND THAT IT WAS JUST AND EQUITABLE THAT THE COMPANY SHOULD BE WOUND UP.

THE PETITION WAS SUPPORTED BY THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY.

/THE OFFICE

THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE ("THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE") SAID TODAY THAT THE COMPANY HAD, SINCE JANUARY 14, 1989, BEEN REQUIRED BY THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY, THROUGH THE POWERS AVAILABLE TO HIM UNDER SECTION 27 OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES ORDINANCE, TO CEASE WRITING INSURANCE BUSINESS AND TO COMMENCE A RUN-OFF OF ITS OUTSTANDING LIABILITIES. THE COMPANY HAS NO CURRENT POLICIES IN FORCE.

THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE FURTHER STATED THAT IT HAD BEEN CLOSELY MONITORING THE RUN-OFF OF THE COMPANY'S OUTSTANDING LIABILITIES.

THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY WAS NO LONGER SATISFIED THAT THE RUN-OFF OF LIABILITIES WAS ABLE TO PROCEED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER. HE THEREFORE CONSIDERED IT DESIRABLE AND IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COMPANY'S POLICY HOLDERS AND INSURANCE CLAIMANTS THAT THE AFFAIRS OF THE COMPANY BE PLACED UNDER THE CONTROL OF A LIQUIDATOR.

THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY HAD ALREADY TAKEN INTO HIS CUSTODY A PORTION OF THE COMPANY'S AVAILABLE ASSETS. HE BELIEVED THAT SUCH ASSETS COUPLED WITH THE GUARANTEE FUND OPERATED BY THE MOTOR INSURERS' BUREAU WOULD PROVIDE A LEVEL OF SECURITY TO THE COMPANY'S POLICY HOLDERS AND INSURANCE CLAIMANTS.

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WATER SUPPLY SUSPENSION IN TSUEN WAN

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FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO SOME PREMISES IN TSUEN WAN WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 10 PM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 14) TO 7 AM THE FOLLOWING DAY TO FACILITATE LEAKAGE TESTS.

THE AFFECTED PREMISES ARE BOUNDED BY FU YUNG STREET, YUEN TUN CIRCUIT, TAI HO ROAD AND SHA TSUI ROAD.

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FC MEETING ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 14) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE COMMITTEE'S PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERIES AND THEY MAY MAKE RESERVATIONS BY TELEPHONING 844 0899.

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