



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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NON REFUGEES MUST GO BACK: GOVERNOR

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, TODAY (TUESDAY) SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS IN VIETNAM THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT GENUINE REFUGEES HAVE TO GO BACK TO VIETNAM EVEN IF THAT DOES COST A CERTAIN AMOUNT SENDING PEOPLE BACK BY AIR.

HE SAID IF THE RESULT OF REPATRIATION DETERRED PEOPLE COMING HERE IN A VAIN HOPE OF GETTING SOMEWHERE ELSE, THEN THAT WAS MONEY VERY WELL SPENT.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING, THE GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS GLAD TO LEARN THAT THIS MORNING'S REPATRIATION EXERCISE WENT SMOOTHLY.

HE SAID AFTER THE FIRST REPATRIATION OPERATION WHICH WAS CARRIED OUT RECENTLY, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE COMING FROM VIETNAM DROPPED OFF VERY SHARPLY, AND IT WAS THEREFORE IMPORTANT TO KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM TO MAKE SURE THAT THE MESSAGE WENT ACROSS TO VIETNAM THAT IT DID NOT MAKE SENSE TO COME HERE IN THE HOPES OF GETTING RESETTLED IN THE UNITED STATES OR SOMEWHERE.

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PROPOSED REGULATORY REFORMS FOR OUTBOUND TRAVEL INDUSTRY

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THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL AGENTS (ACTA) HAS RECOMMENDED A PACKAGE OF REGULATORY REFORMS FOR THE OUTBOUND TRAVEL INDUSTRY, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (TUESDAY).

THE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF A REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND ADVICE BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID.

THE REVIEW CONCLUDED THAT THE SELF-REGULATORY SCHEME WHICH WAS INTRODUCED IN 1988 HAS SO FAR WORKED WELL, AND SHOULD THEREFORE CONTINUE.

"HOWEVER, THE REVIEW ALSO IDENTIFIED A FEW AREAS WHERE FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS ARE DESIRABLE TO PROMOTE EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE SELF-REGULATION BY THE INDUSTRY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF CONCERNED PARTIES, ACTA HAS MADE A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL RESERVE FUND (TICRF) AND ITS FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL (TIC), THE ONE PER CENT LEVY, COMPENSATION FOR TRAVELLERS AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR TIC.

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS SEEK TO RECOGNISE THE STATUS OF TIC AS A TRADE ASSOCIATION PERFORMING SELF-REGULATORY FUNCTIONS.

/RE-CONSTITUTION

RE-CONSTITUTION OF TICRF

A MAJOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE RECOMMENDED IS TO GIVE TICRF, PRESENTLY A SUBSIDIARY COMPANY OF TIC, A SEPARATE IDENTITY.

"THE PROPOSAL IS TO RE-CONSTITUTE TICRF INTO A STATUTORY FUND TO BE MANAGED BY A BOARD OF TRUSTEES," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

FINANCIAL AUTONOMY FOR TIC

IN PARALLEL WITH THE SEGREGATION OF TICRF FROM TIC, ACTA RECOMMENDED THAT TIC SHOULD NO LONGER RELY UPON DISBURSEMENT FROM TICRF FOR ITS DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS.

INSTEAD, TIC SHOULD BE GIVEN A FIXED PERCENTAGE OF THE LEVY INCOME AND MANAGE ITS OWN FINANCES. THE PERCENTAGE WOULD BE SPECIFIED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FROM TIME TO TIME.

"THE POLICY INTENTION IS FOR TIC TO BE LARGELY FUNDED BY THE LEVY IN RECOGNITION OF ITS SELF-REGULATORY EFFORTS, BUT ALSO PARTLY BY MEMBERSHIP FEES AND OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE FROM WITHIN TIC AS ONE OF TIC'S OTHER OBJECTIVES IS TO PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF ITS OWN MEMBERS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"IN PROPOSING FINANCIAL AUTONOMY FOR THE TIC, WE ARE ALSO MINDFUL OF THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT," HE ADDED.

REDUCTION OF LEVY AND INCREASE IN COMPENSATION

ACTA HAS NOT RECOMMENDED AN IMMEDIATE REDUCTION OF THE ONE PER CENT LEVY. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT SIZE OF THE RESERVE FUND (\$75 MILLION) AND THE INFREQUENCY OF THE NEED TO RESORT TO IT IN RECENT TIMES, ACTA CONSIDERS THAT ONCE THE RESERVE FUND REACHES A TARGET AMOUNT, THE LEVY SHOULD BE REDUCED.

THERE SHOULD THEN BE A SIMULTANEOUS INCREASE IN THE RATE OF COMPENSATION AVAILABLE TO TRAVELLERS.

IN SUGGESTING A TARGET AMOUNT FOR THE RESERVE FUND, ACTA GAVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE RESERVES TO COPE WITH MAJOR DEFAULTS IN THE PEAK SEASON OF OUTBOUND TRAVEL INDUSTRY.

"WE CONSIDER ACTA'S RECOMMENDATIONS AS BALANCED AND CAPABLE OF ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS OF BOTH THE INDUSTRY AND THE TRAVELLERS. WE SHALL SHORTLY DISCUSS THE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH TIC AND TICRF," THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

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LEGCO TO DEBATE RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEME
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MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL ASK A TOTAL OF 20 QUESTIONS AND CONSIDER FOUR BILLS AT THE COUNCIL'S MEETING TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

OF THE FOUR BILLS, THREE WILL BE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATES ON THEM WILL BE ADJOURNED.

THEY ARE THE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, THE NOISE CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991.

DEBATE ON THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1991 WILL BE RESUMED AND IT IS DUE TO GO THROUGH THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND BE GIVEN A THIRD READING.

IN ADDITION, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER WILL MOVE TWO MOTIONS UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE AND THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE.

MEANWHILE, THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG WILL MOVE A MOTION ON THE RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEME.

THE MOTION READS: "THAT THIS COUNCIL WELCOMES THE DECISION BY GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPULSORY RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEME AND URGES GOVERNMENT TO DRAW UP EXPEDITIOUSLY, AFTER WIDELY SEEKING AND FULLY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE PUBLIC, A PLAN FOR SOLVING EFFECTIVELY THE LIVELIHOOD PROBLEM OF RETIRED AND ELDERLY PEOPLE".

THE HON EMILY LAU WILL MOVE A MOTION UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE.

ALSO, REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD WILL RAISE UNDER STANDING ORDER 9(5) THE MATTER OF "STRATEGIC SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME" FOR ADJOURNMENT DEBATE.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY WILL PRESENT THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1991.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY WILL PRESENT THE REPORT BY THE TRUSTEE OF THE POLICE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION TRUST AND THE POLICE EDUCATION AND WELFARE TRUST FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 1990 TO MARCH 31, 1991.

THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG WILL PRESENT AND ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 1990/91.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM THE PUBLIC GALLERIES. THEY MAY MAKE RESERVATIONS BY CALLING 869 9492.

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TAC RECOMMENDS URBAN AND NT TAXI FARE INCREASES

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THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) TODAY (TUESDAY) DISCUSSED FARE INCREASE APPLICATIONS FROM THE URBAN, NEW TERRITORIES AND LANTAU TAXI OPERATORS, THE OPERATING BOUNDARIES OF NT TAXIS AND MEASURES AGAINST TAXI MALPRACTICES.

THE COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED A FARE INCREASE FOR URBAN AND NT TAXIS AT A LOWER PERCENTAGE THAN THOSE REQUESTED BY THE TRADE, BUT NO ADJUSTMENT TO LANTAU TAXI METER FARES.

IN ARRIVING AT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS, THE TAC TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION THE POLICY OF ESTABLISHING A SUBSTANTIAL FARE DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN TAXIS AND OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT MODES, THE EFFECT OF INCREASED OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS, AND THE NEED TO MAINTAIN AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF TAXI SERVICE IN THE TERRITORY.

IN VIEW OF CONTINUING PUBLIC CONCERN WITH INFLATION, THE TAC HAD ALSO TAKEN INTO FULL ACCOUNT PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY IN DETERMINING THE MAGNITUDE OF TAXI FARE INCREASES.

APART FROM INCREASES IN MAIN TAXIMETER FARES FOR URBAN AND NT TAXIS, THE TAC ALSO RECOMMENDED A MODERATE INCREASE IN RADIO-CALL SERVICE AND BAGGAGE SURCHARGE FOR URBAN AND LANTAU TAXIS. AN INCREASE IN THE BAGGAGE SURCHARGE FOR NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS WAS ALSO RECOMMENDED.

IN ASSESSING THE APPLICATIONS, THE TAC NOTED THAT THE REAL INCOME OF URBAN AND NT TAXIS OPERATORS HAD DROPPED SUBSTANTIALLY AS A RESULT OF THE INCREASED OPERATING COSTS AND INFLATION SINCE THE LAST FARE REVISIONS IN MAY/JUNE 1990.

HOWEVER, THE RECOMMENDED INCREASES ARE STILL LOWER THAN THE CUMULATIVE RATE OF INFLATION DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

THE TAC'S RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION.

MEANWHILE, MEMBERS WERE ALSO BRIEFED ON THE PROPOSED MEASURES TO REDUCE TAXIMETER TAMPERING.

THESE INCLUDED REPLACING THE LEAD SEALS CURRENTLY IN USE BY A NEW TYPE OF SERIALISED SEALS, THE SHEATHING OF THE TRANSDUCER CABLES WITH BRAIDED WIRE AND THE SEALING OF THE CABLE SOCKETS WITH EPOXY, MAKING INTERFERENCE MORE DIFFICULT; AND REQUIRING ALL TAXI METERS TO SEPARATE THE "DOLLAR" & "CENT" DISPLAYS MORE PROMINENTLY.

THE COMMITTEE NOTED THAT THE EXISTING LEGISLATION WAS ADEQUATE IN PENALISING TAXIMETER TAMPERING. IN 1990, 139 CASES WERE CONVICTED OF TAXIMETER TAMPERING OFFENCES.

/IN ADDITION

IN ADDITION, THE TAC MEMBERS SUPPORTED THE USE OF THE SHING MUN TUNNELS BY NT TAXIS.

IN ARRIVING AT THE RECOMMENDATION, THE TAC NOTED THAT THE CURRENT PROPOSAL WOULD ONLY SERVE TO LINK UP THE PERMITTED POINTS OF NT TAXIS IN SHA TIN AND TSUEN WAN WITHOUT ENLARGING THEIR OPERATING BOUNDARIES.

THE TAC ALSO NOTED THAT THE OPENING OF THE SHING MUN TUNNELS TO NT TAXIS IS INTENDED PRIMARILY TO FACILITATE TAXI PASSENGERS IN THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

SPECIAL ROUTING ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO MINIMISE THE LIKELIHOOD OF NT TAXIS COMPETING DIRECTLY WITH THEIR URBAN COUNTERPARTS BETWEEN THEIR PERMITTED POINTS IN SHA TIN AND TSUEN WAN.

ACCORDING TO SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, THE OPENING OF THE TUNNELS TO NT TAXIS IS UNLIKELY TO AFFECT THEIR AVAILABILITY IN THE REMOTE PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

AT THE MEETING, THE COMMITTEE ALSO DECIDED TO FORM A SUB-COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT A REVIEW ON ALL ASPECTS OF TAXI POLICY, INCLUDING THE LICENSING SYSTEM.

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MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO BE RECONSTITUTED
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THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MDAC) WHICH HELPS SHAPE THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL SERVICES IN HONG KONG IS TO BE RESTRUCTURED, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

SHE SAID IN DECIDING HOW THIS SHOULD BE DONE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS.

"IN MY VIEW, THE FUTURE COMMITTEE WILL HAVE TO BE WELL BALANCED BETWEEN HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES.

"IT WILL CONTINUE TO RELY ON ADVICE FROM PROFESSIONALS BUT IT MUST ALSO BE, AND BE SEEN TO BE, A FORUM FOR GREATER COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, INVOLVING A SPECTRUM OF VIEWS," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG WAS SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON WHICH SHE HOSTED FOR MDAC MEMBERS IN APPRECIATION OF THEIR VALUABLE GUIDANCE AND ADVICE IN THE PAST YEARS.

SHE PAID TRIBUTE TO MEMBERS FOR HAVING CONSIDERED MANY DIFFICULT AND IMPORTANT MATTERS RELATING TO MEDICAL SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

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FOR EXAMPLE, THE MDAC HAS GIVEN CONSIDERED AND USEFUL THOUGHTS TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND THE MDAC'S DENTAL SUB-COMMITTEE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY ACCEPTED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TWO REPORTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN PHASES.

THE COMMITTEE HAS ALSO INITIATED A SPECIAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOSPICE CARE IN HONG KONG AND ADVISED ON THE INITIAL STRATEGIES AND TARGETS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT.

IN ADDITION, THE MDAC HAS ADVISED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOSPITAL STANDARDS TO ENSURE IN THE LONG TERM THE PROVISION OF QUALITY HOSPITAL SERVICES IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE SECTORS.

ON INFIRMARY BEDS, THE COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED A NEW POLICY DIRECTION WHICH ENSURES THAT INFIRMARIES WILL NOT BE TURNED INTO DUMPING GROUNDS FOR FRAIL ELDERLY BUT WILL BE CENTRES FOR REHABILITATION.

MRS WONG ALSO NOTED THAT THE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ESTABLISHING THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AIDS.

"IN BRIEF, THE MDAC HAS BEEN CLOSELY INVOLVED IN MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE SO VITAL FOR THE TIMES WE NOW LIVE IN.

"I LOOK TO THE RECONSTITUTED BODY FOR ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND INSPIRATION IN FUTURE IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE HAVE RELIED ON YOU IN THE PAST," MRS WONG ADDED.

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REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR RAIL CORPORATIONS WORKS WELL

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THE BROAD REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE TWO RAILWAY CORPORATIONS, WHICH OBVIATES UNDUE GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTES EFFICIENT RESPONSE TO MARKET CONDITIONS AND CUSTOMER DEMANDS, HAS WORKED WELL, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE CITY LIONS CLUB, MR LEUNG SAID THE 1990 WHITE PAPER ON TRANSPORT POLICY LAID DOWN GOVERNMENT'S BASIC PHILOSOPHY THAT PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES SHOULD BE OPERATED ON PRUDENT COMMERCIAL PRINCIPLES.

HE SAID THERE WAS MINIMUM DIRECT GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT AND CERTAINLY NO GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY, ADDING THAT THE MAIN OBJECTIVE WAS TO FACILITATE SPEEDY RESPONSE TO MARKET CHANGES.

/MR LEUNG

MR LEUNG SAID THE TWO RAILWAY CORPORATIONS IN HONG KONG WERE REQUIRED UNDER THEIR RESPECTIVE ORDINANCES TO PROVIDE SAFE, RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT RAILWAY SERVICES, AND WERE EMPOWERED BY LAW TO SET THEIR OWN FARES.

IN VIEW OF THIS, MR LEUNG SAID THERE WAS AN IMPRESSION THAT CONSUMER INTERESTS MIGHT BE SACRIFICED TO PROFIT MAXIMISATION.

EXPLAINING THE EXTENT OF GOVERNMENT MONITORING, MR LEUNG SAID THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF THE TWO CORPORATIONS WERE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR FROM A CROSS-SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY WITH THE CHAIRMEN ALSO APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

"THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT ONLY COMMERCIAL PRUDENCE, BUT ALSO CONSUMER INTERESTS AND EXPECTATIONS," HE SAID.

ON SAFETY, MR LEUNG SAID BY ANY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, BOTH RAIL CORPORATIONS HAD AN ENVIABLE RECORD FOR SAFETY.

"THE LAW ALSO PROVIDES FOR THEIR SAFE OPERATIONS TO BE CHECKED AND FOR ANY ACCIDENTS TO BE INVESTIGATED BY INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT APPOINTED INSPECTORS," HE SAID.

WITH REGARD TO FINANCIAL CONTROL, MR LEUNG SAID APART FROM REQUIRING THE TWO CORPORATIONS TO SUBMIT THEIR ANNUAL REPORTS AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FOR TABLING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, ANY INVESTMENT BY THE CORPORATIONS MIGHT ONLY BE DONE IN SUCH MANNER AS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY APPROVED.

SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THEIR BOARDS OF DIRECTORS, KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (KCRC) AND MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (MTRC) ARE ABLE TO RAISE FUNDS AND SECURE LOANS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR SERVICES.

"THIS HIGH DEGREE OF FINANCIAL AUTONOMY HAS ENABLED BOTH CORPORATIONS TO ACHIEVE HIGH INTERNATIONAL CREDIT RATINGS. THIS MEANS BETTER BORROWING TERMS AND LOWER COSTS OF FUNDS AND HELP CONTAIN OPERATING COSTS AND FARE LEVELS," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID ALTHOUGH THE TWO CORPORATIONS WERE EMPOWERED TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN FARES, IT HAD BEEN THE ESTABLISHED PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO BE INFORMED BEFORE ANY FARE REVISIONS WERE IMPLEMENTED.

ON THE ROLE OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC), MR LEUNG SAID IT WAS CONSULTED ON THE BROAD OPERATIONAL RESPECTS OF RAIL SERVICES, INCLUDING INTEGRATION WITH OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT MODES.

"THE TRANSPORT COMPLAINTS UNIT OF THE TAC ALSO RECEIVES AND ACTS UPON PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS REGARDING RAIL SERVICES.

"TO STRENGTHEN THEIR MUTUAL LINKS, THERE IS CROSS MEMBERSHIP BETWEEN THE TAC AND THE BOARDS OF THE TWO CORPORATIONS," HE SAID.

/MR LEUNG

MR LEUNG SAID PUBLIC MONITORING WAS ALSO ACHIEVED THROUGH THE OMELCO TRANSPORT PANEL, THE RAISING OF QUESTIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DISTRICT BOARDS AS WELL AS THE VIGILANT WATCH OF THE MASS MEDIA.

HE SAID UNDER THE EXISTING MONITORING FRAMEWORK, THE MTRC HAD BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST HEAVILY UTILISED URBAN RAILWAYS WITH MORE THAN 1.9 MILLION PASSENGERS PER DAY, ACCOUNTING FOR APPROXIMATELY 20 PER CENT OF ALL PUBLIC TRANSPORT JOURNEYS IN HONG KONG.

"IT HAS BENEFITED THE COMMUNITY WITH A FAST, RELIABLE MODE OF TRANSPORT AT REASONABLE FARES OF AN AVERAGE OF \$0.57 PER PASSENGER KILOMETER," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, THE MTRC HAD MAJOR ASSET IMPROVEMENT PLANS. THESE INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY, REFURBISHMENT OF STATIONS, CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ENTRANCE FACILITIES AT CONGESTED STATIONS, THE FITTING OF RAIL CARS WITH MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT AND THE UPGRADING OF SIGNALLING AND RADIO COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS.

TURNING TO THE PERFORMANCE OF THE KCRC, MR LEUNG SAID THE WEEK-DAY RIDERSHIP OF 500,000 PASSENGERS ON THE KCR AND 270,000 PASSENGERS ON THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) ACCOUNTED FOR SEVEN PER CENT OF THE TOTAL PASSENGER TRIPS OF ALL PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

"LIKE THE MTRC, IT PROVIDES THE COMMUNITY WITH FAST, RELIABLE RAIL TRANSPORT SERVICES AT REASONABLE FARES," HE SAID.

LOOKING AHEAD, MR LEUNG SAID THERE WOULD BE CONTINUED AND EXCITING GROWTH AND EXPANSION PARTICULARLY IN THE LRT OPERATION WITH \$700 MILLION ALREADY BUDGETED TO UPGRADE RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES.

"BY THE END OF 1992 THE PASSENGER-CARRYING CAPACITY WOULD HAVE INCREASED BY 50 PER CENT RELATIVE TO 1989," HE SAID.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDED TWO MORE REGIONAL LINKS IN TUEN MUN TO BE COMMISSIONED IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR, COMMISSIONING OF THE \$500 MILLION TIN SHUI WAI PROJECT INCLUSIVE OF 30 NEW LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES IN EARLY 1993; AND THE COMPLETION OF AIR-CONDITIONING OF EXISTING VEHICLES AT A COST OF \$50 MILLION BY SUMMER 1993.

MR LEUNG ALSO NOTED THAT IN RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR MORE INTERACTION WITH CONSUMERS, THE KCRC HAD ESTABLISHED PASSENGER LIAISON GROUPS WHILE THE MTRC HAD RECENTLY LAUNCHED COFFEE EVENINGS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH PASSENGERS.

MR LEUNG SAID THE RAIL CORPORATIONS HAD TO COMPETE INCREASINGLY WITH OTHER TRANSPORT MODES, INCLUDING FRANCHISED BUSES.

"AS THEY ARE SET TO MAINTAIN AND EXPAND THEIR MARKET SHARE, I AM SURE THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP A EVEN CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR EXISTING AND POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS," HE SAID.

STUDY ON OVERALL MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS

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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE HONG KONG SPORTS DEVELOPMENT BOARD AND THE HONG KONG SPORTS INSTITUTE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR PAUL LEUNG, CONFIRMED TODAY (TUESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONDUCTING A MANAGEMENT STUDY TO LOOK AT THE OVERALL MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS IN HONG KONG.

"IT WILL BE A HIGH-LEVEL ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT STUDY, AIMED AT STREAMLINING THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF SPORTS IN HONG KONG AT THE POLICY AND TRAINING FOR EXCELLENCE LEVEL," MR LEUNG SAID.

"THE DECISION TO COMMISSION THE STUDY IS TO ENSURE THAT AVAILABLE RESOURCES ARE APPLIED IN AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE MANNER FOR THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS.

"THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE REPORTED TO THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TWO BODIES CONCERNED," HE ADDED.

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RESTRUCTURING OF GOVERNMENT LAUNCH CREW

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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT MET STAFF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENT DOCKYARD THIS (TUESDAY) MORNING TO FURTHER DISCUSS DETAILS OF A SCHEME WHICH WOULD MODERNISE THE MANNING OF GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES.

THESE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION WITH THE STAFF AFFECTED SINCE JANUARY THIS YEAR.

THE PRESENT CREW STRUCTURE WAS INTRODUCED MANY YEARS AGO WHEN THE DESIGN OF LAUNCHES WAS SUCH THAT SEPARATE ENGINE AND DECK STAFF WAS NECESSARY, A MARINE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

MODERN WELL-EQUIPPED LAUNCHES CAN BE OPERATED BY A SMALLER NUMBER OF STAFF TRAINED IN BOTH NAVIGATION AND ENGINEERING DUTIES AS EXPERIENCE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS WELL SHOWN.

THE DEPARTMENT IS THEREFORE PROPOSING TO INTRODUCE A NEW GRADING STRUCTURE WHICH WILL PROVIDE A SMALLER NUMBER OF BETTER PAID STAFF TO OPERATE NEW AND MODERNISED GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES.

SERVING CREW STAFF WILL BE GIVEN APPROPRIATE TRAINING TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL DECK OR ENGINE QUALIFICATION FOR TRANSFER TO THE NEW GRADE. ON REGRADING, THEY WOULD ALL ENJOY THE ENHANCED PAY SCALES OF THE NEW RANKS.

/AT THIS

D E S K E T T E S

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AT THIS MORNING'S MEETING, THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE RESTRUCTURING PROPOSALS, IN PARTICULAR, DETERIORATION IN THEIR PROMOTION PROSPECTS.

WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT PROMOTION FOR SOME STAFF WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THIS WILL BE COMPENSATED BY PAY INCREASE ON REGRADING TO THE NEW STRUCTURE WHICH IS ALMOST TANTAMOUNT TO PROMOTION IN THE EXISTING STRUCTURE FOR CERTAIN RANKS.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW MANNING STRUCTURE WOULD MEAN THAT THE PRESENT 450-STRONG LAUNCH CREW WILL BE REDUCED BY SOME 80 STAFF OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, BUT THE DEPARTMENT ENVISAGES THAT THIS REDUCTION COULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH NORMAL WASTAGE.

THERE IS NO QUESTION OF STAFF BEING MADE REDUNDANT, OR SAFETY STANDARDS OF GOVERNMENT VESSELS BEING COMPROMISED, THE SPOKESMAN STRESSED.

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AUCTION OF SPECIAL CAR NUMBERS

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL HOLD ANOTHER AUCTION OF SPECIAL VEHICLE REGISTRATION NUMBERS ON SATURDAY (DECEMBER 14) AT THE CITY HALL RECITAL HALL. THE AUCTION WILL BEGIN AT 10 AM.

A TOTAL OF 40 SPECIAL CAR NUMBERS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR BIDDING. THEY ARE:

ET968	EU823	AH8881	EU228
BB3550	AT89	EU6789	AA3219
EU163	EU928	HK226	EU601
CN87	XX731	EU1348	CT10
EU836	AK400	BC9	EU120
BS143	EU1668	EU190	ET8038
EU2972	CS2948	CC1118	EU1128
AB121	EU666	EW1199	ER999
EU4606	EU7113	EU428	ET3168
BU3999	ET8017	AP3228	EU348

SUCCESSFUL BIDDERS MUST PAY BY CHEQUE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BIDDING.

A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN REMINDED BIDDERS THAT THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION NUMBER WOULD BE ASSIGNED ONLY TO A VEHICLE REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF THE SUCCESSFUL BIDDER WITHIN 12 MONTHS OF THE AUCTION.

/THE CERTIFICATE

THE CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION MUST BE PRODUCED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE AUCTION IF THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARK IS TO BE REGISTERED UNDER THE NAME OF A BODY CORPORATE.

PROCEEDS OF THE AUCTION WILL AS USUAL GO TO THE GOVERNMENT LOTTERIES FUND.

THE COMING AUCTION WILL BE THE 171ST ORGANISED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SINCE MAY 1973.

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EARLY WELFARE PAYMENT

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RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE HOLDING CASH ORDER BOOK COUPONS MAY RECEIVE THEIR WELFARE PAYMENT EARLIER IF THEIR PAYMENT DATES FALL ON THE COMING HOLIDAYS.

A SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THEY MAY CASH THEIR COUPONS ON DECEMBER 23 AND 24 OR AFTER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD AT THE DESIGNATED POST OFFICES AND TREASURY SUB-OFFICES.

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SIK SIK YUEN PRAISED FOR ITS SOCIAL SERVICES

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TODAY (TUESDAY) PRAISED SIK SIK YUEN FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION IN THE PROVISION OF VARIOUS SOCIAL SERVICES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF SIK SIK YUEN'S GOOD WISH GARDEN IN THE WONG TAI SIN TEMPLE, MR SUEN SAID THE CHARITABLE INSTITUTION HAD IN THE PAST 70 YEARS PROVIDED FREE MEDICAL SERVICE FOR THE POOR.

"IT BEGAN TO BUILD SCHOOLS IN 1974 TO HELP NURTURE QUALIFIED PERSONNEL FOR SOCIETY.

"IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, THE INSTITUTION ALSO RENDERED ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS," HE SAID.

MR SUEN POINTED OUT THAT THE VARIOUS SERVICES PROVIDED BY SIK SIK YUEN HAD MADE WONG TAI SIN HIGHLY RESPECTED BY ITS FOLLOWERS.

ON THE NEWLY OPENED GOOD WISH GARDEN, MR SUEN SAID ITS ANCIENT CHINESE STYLE DESIGN WOULD MAKE PEOPLE FEEL LIKE SPENDING THEIR HOLIDAY THERE AS WELL AS ATTRACTING TOURISTS FROM OVERSEAS.

HE ALSO ENCOURAGED MEMBERS OF SIK SIK YUEN TO CONTINUE WITH THE GOOD TRADITION OF THEIR INSTITUTION BY ACTIVELY STRIVE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE TERRITORY.

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CHEUNG CHAU RESIDENTS ASSURED OF BETTER FIRE PROTECTION
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CHEUNG CHAU RESIDENTS WERE TODAY (TUESDAY) ASSURED OF BETTER PROTECTION AND SERVICES DURING FIRE AND EMERGENCIES FOLLOWING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE CHEUNG CHAU FIRE STATION.

THE \$5.4 MILLION NEW FIRE STATION WAS PLANNED IN 1977 TO REPLACE THE OLD STATION ON PRAYA STREET AND WAS PUT INTO OPERATION IN MAY 1989.

OCCUPYING AN AREA OF 775 SQUARE METRES, THE STATION HAS A FLEET OF THREE MODERN AND WELL-EQUIPPED FIRE APPLIANCES, INCLUDING TWO MINI-APPLIANCES, AND A STAFF OF 27 FIRE SERVICES OFFICERS.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE CHEUNG CHAU FIRE STATION, THE CHAIRMAN OF ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD, MR LAM WAI-KEUNG, SAID: "THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS WORKED HARD TO PROMOTE FIRE PROTECTION AND PROVIDES EXCELLENT SERVICES, RESULTING, IN A GREAT DECREASE IN SERIOUS FIRES."

"EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT HONG KONG FIRE SERVICES IS RENOWNED FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE," HE SAID.

MR LAM SAID HONG KONG WAS A DENSELY-POPULATED CITY WITH CROWDED LIVING ENVIRONMENT, ADDING THAT FIRES FREQUENTLY OCCURRED.

"IN THIS REGARD, THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS REMARKABLE." HE SAID.

MR LAM SAID IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF THE OUTLYING AREAS IN RECENT YEARS, THE DEPARTMENT HAD ENHANCED THE SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL DISTRICT.

"NOWADAYS, FIRE STATIONS, EQUIPPED WITH SOPHISTICATED FIRE APPLIANCES, ARE SET UP ON ALL THE FOUR OUTLYING AREAS.

"AS FAR AS I KNOW, FIRE SERVICES ON THE OUTLYING AREAS HAS A LONG HISTORY," HE SAID.

/TAKING CHEUNG

TAKING CHEUNG CHAU AS AN EXAMPLE, MR LAM SAID THERE WAS A FIRE STATION IN PRE-WAR DAYS ON HING LUNG BACK STREET AND WAS MANNED BY ONLY TWO FIREMEN.

IT WAS THEN MOVED TO THE SITE NEAR THE PIER IN 1958.

"I AM AWARE THAT THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO ITS WORK ON THE ISLANDS OVER THE YEARS.

"I HOPE THAT THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT WILL KEEP UP ITS GOOD TRADITION, CONTRIBUTING TO THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF OUR DISTRICT AS WELL AS HONG KONG SO THAT EVERYONE CAN ENJOY A HAPPY AND CONTENT LIFE," MR LAM SAID.

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EARLY CHRISTMAS TREATS FOR CENTRAL AND WESTERN RESIDENTS
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CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT RESIDENTS WILL BE OFFERED EARLY CHRISTMAS TREATS ON SUNDAY (DECEMBER 15).

THE "KENNEDY TOWN AND MT DAVIS CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S CARNIVAL" WILL BE HELD FROM 2 PM TO 5 PM IN THE SMITHFIELD TEMPORARY PARK, KENNEDY TOWN. ADMISSION IS FREE.

THERE WILL BE SINGING, DANCING AND PIPE-BAND PERFORMANCES, KUNG-FU DEMONSTRATION, MAGIC SHOWS AND GAMES.

MEANWHILE, THERE WILL BE A VISIT TO THE NEW TERRITORIES ESPECIALLY ARRANGED FOR THE DISTRICT'S DISABLED PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILY ON THAT DAY.

THE ITINERARY WILL INCLUDE A TOUR OF THE TUEN MUN TOWN PARK, A VEGETARIAN MEAL AND A SEMINAR AT THE TSUEN WAN COMMUNITY HALL.

HOSTED BY EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS, THE SEMINAR IS DESIGNED TO HELP FAMILIES BETTER UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF THEIR DISABLED MEMBERS AND LEARN HOW TO TAKE CARE OF THEM IN A PROPER WAY.

A FEE OF \$20 PER HEAD WILL BE CHARGED FOR THE OUTING. EACH DISABLED PERSON CAN BE ACCOMPANIED ON THE TRIP BY TWO FAMILY MEMBERS.

ENTRY FORMS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE'S SUB-OFFICE ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT COMMUNITY CENTRE, 36A WESTERN STREET, SAI YING PUN.

ON DECEMBER 21 (SATURDAY), A CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE DISTRICT'S RESIDENTS WILL BE HELD AT THE JUBILEE RESTAURANT, MAN YEE BUILDING, CENTRAL.

TICKETS FOR THE PARTY, AT \$100 PER PERSON, ARE AVAILABLE AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE'S PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
 MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	DATE	\$ MILLION
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CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON	9.12.91	500
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	10.12.91	-20
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		+20
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		NEUTRAL

TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 110.2 *-0.1* 10.12.91

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.16 PCT	24 MONTHS	2311	6.25	101.89	5.29
1 MONTH	3.78 PCT					
3 MONTHS	3.90 PCT					
6 MONTHS	4.03 PCT					
12 MONTHS	4.57 PCT					

TURNOVER - BILLS 4,483 MN, BONDS 55 MN

CLOSED 10 DECEMBER 1991

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1991

- 15 -

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
TENDER RESULTS
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TENDER DATE	10 DEC 91	10 DEC 91
PAPER ON OFFER	EF BILLS	EF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q150	H179
AMOUNT APPLIED	HKD 1,792 MN	HKD 1,032 MN
AMOUNT ALLOTTED	HKD 500 MN	HKD 200 MN
AVERAGE YIELD ACCEPTED	3.92 PCT	4.04 PCT
HIGHEST YIELD ACCEPTED	3.95 PCT	4.07 PCT
PRO RATA RATIO	ABOUT 46 PCT	ABOUT 67 PCT
AVERAGE TENDER YIELD	3.97 PCT	4.12 PCT

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

TENDERS TO BE HELD IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 16 DECEMBER 1991 -

TENDER DATE	17 DEC 91
PAPER ON OFFER	EF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q151
ISSUE DATE	18 DEC 91
MATURITY DATE	18 MAR 92
TENOR	91 DAYS
AMOUNT ON OFFER	HKD500 + 100 MN
COUPON	N.A.

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