



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SCS to make statement to select committee

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A government spokesman announced today (Saturday) that the Administration has suggested to the Hon Ip Kwok-him, Chairman of the LegCo "Select Committee to Inquire into the Circumstances Surrounding the Departure of Mr LEUNG Ming-yin from the Government and Related Issues", that Mr W K Lam, Secretary for the Civil Service, would be prepared to make a statement to the Select Committee as soon as practicable. Mr Ip has agreed to make arrangements for the Select Committee to reconvene some time early next week.

End

No alteration to fire exits

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Illegal alterations to means of escape and fire resistance construction pose a great threat to the occupants in case of fire, the Director of Buildings, Dr Choi Yu-leuk, said today (Saturday)

"Conversion of wooden doors to glass doors, removal of doors at fire exits, and making openings through fire resisting wall are the most common types of dangerous alteration.

"We will take actions to rectify the situation as soon as we know about such problems," he said.

Dr Choi was speaking at the launching ceremony of the 1997 Building Safety Campaign held at the Dragon Centre in Sham Shui Po.

Also officiating at the ceremony were Legislative Councillors Mr Edward Ho and Mr Frederick Fung.

Dr Choi said the improvement of building safety and fire safety relied mainly on the support and co-operation of owners to take good care of their properties.

He said that the increasing number of accidents which involved falling loose concrete and rendering had already set an alarm.

"Nearly half of the 50,000-odd buildings in the territory are over 20 years old. Some of these buildings have already shown signs of aging such as loose or bulging rendering with cracks around them, spalled concrete, and deep cracks in concrete with visible rust stains.

"Remedial actions should be taken immediately whenever these problems appear.

"A well-maintained building will benefit the owners and occupants by not only enhancing their own safety, but also prolonging the service life of the building and upkeeping its market value," said Dr Choi.

The Building Safety Campaign, organised by the Buildings Department, is aimed at educating members of the public on the needs and standards of maintaining their buildings.

Highlights of the campaign include a roving exhibition on building maintenance throughout the territory, a new 30-second promotional film to be broadcast on television from today, and distribution of leaflets and posters on building safety.

A booklet entitled 'Maintaining Your Building' is also published to guide residents on proper ways to maintain their properties. Copies will be distributed to all owners' corporations in the territory.

The roving exhibition on building maintenance will be held at the following venues:

Venue	Date
Dragon Centre in Sham Shui Po	January 11-13
Tai Yau Arcade in Wan Chai	January 14-20
Times Square in Causeway Bay	January 21-23
Kowloon City Plaza in Kowloon City	January 25-27
New Town Plaza in Sha Tin	January 28-30
Metroplaza in Kwai Fong	January 31- February 2

End

Villagers benefit from rural improvement works in Tuen Mun

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Two thousand and five hundred villagers living in So Kwun Wat and nearby area will directly benefit from the Home Affairs Department's latest rural environmental improvement project at So Kwun Wat Tsuen, Tuen Mun, the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau, said today (Saturday).

Speaking at an opening ceremony marking the completion of an open channel improvement project under the Department's Rural Planning and Improvement Strategy (RPIS) minor works project, Mrs Lau said the project was aimed at minimising the flooding risk posed on villagers in the area.

She said the channel project, costing about \$5 million, was implemented in three phases undertaken by the Tuen Mun District Office. The first and the second phases had already been completed while the construction of the third phase was in progress.

She complimented the Tuen Mun District Office for achieving remarkable results in implementing RPIS minor works programme, revealing that the office had completed a total of 26 RPIS minor projects costing an estimated \$32.5 million, while projects worth another \$36 million will be commenced in 1997/98.

Presently, projects worth a total of \$42.4 million are in progress, she added.

The Executive Council had earmarked \$1.6 billion for the 10-year implementation of RPIS minor works programme with the aim of improving the infrastructure and living environment in rural areas.

The strategy was divided into two parts with Territory Development Department being responsible for all major works projects and HAD for minor works projects valued less than \$15 million each. This was decided to take advantage of the close ties established between HAD and local communities to expedite the implementation of RPIS Minor Works.

To further speed up the implementation, HAD also introduced a two-tier administrative structure, including the RPIS Minor Works Steering Committee and the nine NT District Working Groups to facilitate local participation in the formulation of the programme and consultation with rural residents.

Mrs Lau thanked members of the NT district boards, Heung Yee Kuk and Rural Committees for their support in identifying and prioritising local improvement projects and revolving many of the difficulties in implementing the programme.

End

Customs and Excise recruits urged to update skills

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New recruits of the Customs and Excise Department were today (Saturday) reminded to update their skills and techniques to deal with criminals who are constantly changing their tactics.

The reminder was given by the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Lawrence Li Shu-fai, when taking the salute of a passing-out parade of 14 probationary inspectors and 51 probationary Customs officers.

For its part, Mr Li pointed out, the Customs and Excise would have to modify its tactics and training.

"You will all receive further training as your careers progress but those who go furthest will be those who make their own efforts on self learning and self development," he added.

Mr Li also reminded the new recruits that the change of sovereignty would pose a great challenge to them as their performance had an impact on Hong Kong's stability and prosperity.

Earlier, Mr Li called on the recruits to uphold the Customs and Excise Department's good reputation as an honest and effective organisation.

"Our trading partners have confidence in us and in our integrity.

"It is therefore a duty of everyone of us to make sure that this confidence does not diminish and Hong Kong's trade and reputation round the world continue to grow," he added.

End

First insectarium in Hong Kong opens

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Members of the public will be presented with the wonderful and diverse world of insects following the opening of Hong Kong's first ever insectarium this (Saturday) morning.

Situated at the Lions Nature Education Centre (LNEC) in Sai Kung, the \$6-million insectarium is one of the very few similar facilities in southeast Asia designated for the display of insects of all kinds.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dr Lawrence Lee, said the insectarium was indeed an additional attraction to the popular LNEC.

Dr Lee said the insectarium would serve as a catalyst which could arouse more public interest and concern on the study and conservation of the mysterious and yet extremely important group of creatures that Hong Kong was fortunate enough to possess.

"Hong Kong has a very rich insect fauna despite it is a highly-urbanised commercial city. The country parks and conservation programme have successfully preserved a wide range of indigenous insects," he said.

"Notwithstanding the negligible size of Hong Kong compared to China, one-twelfth of the mainland's insect species can be found locally."

Dr Lee also took the opportunity to thank the Sir Murray MacLehose Trust Fund and the Vegetable Marketing Organisation for sponsoring the construction costs of the buildings and the installation of the displays respectively. He also paid tribute to Mr William Lee for donating the lanternfly model for the insectarium.

The insectarium composes of an indoor display hall of 1,700 square feet and a net house of 2,000 square feet which provides a semi-natural environment for live insects.

It houses exhibits of over 1,000 insect species. The main focus is on indigenous species though some exotic ones are also included.

Exhibits are displayed in the form of live insects, specimens as well as descriptive panels and interesting games.

There are also a number of enlarged models, showing rare species or those important insects which are hard to be seen in the natural environment due to their small size.

Part of the information and specimens are contributed by the Natural History Museum (UK), the Booth Museum and governments from over 30 countries.

In addition, the Northwest Agricultural University, Shanghai Entomology Research Institute, Nanjing Institute of Termite Control, South China Agricultural University and Guangdong Entomological Institute have all contributed to the success of the insectarium through their valuable advice and assistance in various aspects.

Also present at today's opening ceremony were the District Governor of Lions Clubs International (Hong Kong and Macau), Mr So Chun-yu; LNEC Committee Chairman, Mr Shum Lok-nin; the Chairman of the Sai Kung District Board, Mr Ng Sze-fuk.

End

Weather of December 1996

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December 1996 was generally fine and dry. The mean temperature of 18.3 degrees was 0.7 degree higher than normal. The mean relative humidity was 64 per cent and fire danger warnings were in effect on 27 days in the month.

Only a trace of rainfall was recorded against a normal of 27.3 millimetres in the month. The accumulated rainfall of 2,249.1 millimetres since January 1 was two per cent above normal.

The first day of the month was fine and sunny. Cloud amount increased as easterly winds set in that evening. Winds were strong offshore early the next morning with some light rain patches in the evening.

A cold front crossed the south China coast on the morning of December 5, bringing drier air to the territory.

Winds strengthened from the north on December 6 and temperatures dropped to 13.5 degrees, the lowest in the month. A hill fire broke out in Shing Mun Country Park and lasted for 27 hours, scorching an area of 150 hectares.

Easterly winds returned on the afternoon of December 7 and it became cloudy.

A dry continental airstream reached the territory on December 9, clearing the clouds the next day. The weather became generally fine and sunny for the next few days. Temperatures rose to 24.8 degrees on December 17, the highest in the month. A surge of the northeast monsoon reached the south China coast that evening with winds freshening offshore. Temperatures dropped about three degrees on December 18.

It was cloudy and hazy on December 19 but it turned sunny again the next day. Fine weather prevailed until Christmas Day, with temperatures falling below 10 degrees under clear skies at night over the northern part of the New Territories.

There were some light rain patches early on December 26 but fine and sunny weather returned during the day and it remained fine until the end of the month apart from some cloudy periods on December 29.

Two tropical cyclones occurred in the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in the month.

Details of the issuance/hoisting and cancellation/lowering of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal of December are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 1 Warnings and Signals in December 1996

<u>Warnings/Signals</u>	<u>Effective date and time</u>
Strong Monsoon Signals	2 Dec 0315 - 2 Dec 0745 5 Dec 2025 - 6 Dec 0925
Fire Danger Warnings	
Yellow	30 Nov 0600 - 1 Dec 0545
Red	1 Dec 0545 - 2 Dec 0600
Red	5 Dec 1800 - 9 Dec 1730
Red	10 Dec 0600 - 12 Dec 0600
Red	13 Dec 0600 - 14 Dec 0600
Yellow	14 Dec 0600 - 16 Dec 0600
Red	18 Dec 0000 - 18 Dec 1800
Yellow	18 Dec 1800 - 21 Dec 0600
Red	21 Dec 0600 - 22 Dec 0600
Yellow	22 Dec 0600 - 23 Dec 0600
Red	23 Dec 0600 - 23 Dec 1730
Yellow	23 Dec 1730 - 24 Dec 0600
Red	24 Dec 0600 - 24 Dec 1730
Yellow	24 Dec 1730 - 30 Dec 0730
Gas Heater Alert	6 Dec 1630 - 7 Dec 1630

Table 2. Figures and Departures from Normal - December 1996

Total Bright Sunshine	177.3 hours; 4.2 hours below normal
Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation	11.19 MJ/SQM; 0.84 MJ/SQM below normal
Total Rainfall	Trace; 27.3 mm below normal
Mean Cloud Amount	49%; normal
Mean Relative Humidity	64% ; 4% below normal
Mean Daily Maximum Temperature	20.4 Degrees Celsius; 0.1 Degree Celsius below normal
Mean Air Temperature	18.3 Degrees Celsius; 0.7 Degree Celsius above normal
Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	16.4 Degrees Celsius; 1 Degree Celsius above normal
Mean Dew Point	11.1 Degrees Celsius; 0.1 Degree Celsius below normal
Total Evaporation	85.6 mm; 25.9 mm below normal

Remarks: All measurements were made at the Royal Observatory except sunshine, solar radiation and evaporation which were recorded at King's Park.

End

Wong Tai Sin Fire Station Open Day

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Wong Tai Sin Fire Station will be open to members of the public from 10 am to 4 pm tomorrow (Sunday).

The open day is part of the Fire Services Department's effort to promote the 1996/97 Fire Prevention Campaign.

Members of the public visiting the fire station will have a chance to learn more about fire prevention.

They can see various types of modern fire appliances such as Hydraulic Platform, Turntable Ladder, Reserve Heavy Pump, Mobile Command Unit, Light Rescue Unit and Mobile Casualty Treatment Centre.

They can also see various kinds of fire-fighting and rescue equipment, including rescue cushion, slice cutting set, power lifting bags, fireman's chemical protection suit, thermal imaging camera and defibrillator.

Four fire-fighting and rescue demonstrations by firemen will take place at 11 am, noon, 2 pm and 3 pm respectively.

There will be a set of display boards on fire safety advice. A video tape on fire prevention in industrial premises will also be shown.

Officers from the Department's Fire Protection Bureau will be on hand to give fire safety advice and to distribute information leaflets to visitors.

Wong Tai Sin Fire Station is located at 28, Fung Tak Road, Kowloon.

Sai Wan Ho Fire Station will also be open to members of the public on February 16.

End

Wong Nai Chung Carnival marks district festival

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Thousands of people enjoyed an afternoon of entertainment in a carnival in Wong Nai Chung today (Saturday) to mark Wan Chai Festival '97.

The carnival featured a puppet show by Quan Zhou Puppet Troupe, juggling, trick cycling, magic show, dancing, Taekwondo and performances by pop singer Miss Chiu Hok-ye.

Carnival goers had their palms read and visited game stalls.

Demonstrations of traditional craft such as grasshopper weaving, dragon beard candy making, string weaving and balloon twisting attracted sizeable gatherings.

The event was organised by Wong Nai Chung Area Committee with the assistance of Wan Chai District Office to mark the triennial district festival.

Among the officiating guests at the Carnival's launching ceremony were Wan Chai District Officer, Mrs Elaine Tang; Chairperson of Wan Chai District Board, Mrs Peggy Lam; and Chairman of Wan Chai Festival Organising Committee, Mr Stephen Lam.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority Interbank Liquidity

January 11, 1997

		Time	Aggregate Balance Of Settlement Accounts
Opening aggregate balance	594 mn	0930 hr	8,511 mn
Closing aggregate balance	1,121 mn	1000 hr	8,534 mn
Change attributable to :		1100 hr	8,623 mn
money market activity	-28 mn	1130 hr	8,213 mn
LAF reversal			+7,369 mn
LAF today			-6,814 mn

Laf rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer Twi 125.6 *+0.1* 11.1.97

Closed January 11, 1997

End

District board helps improve residents' living condition

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The success of many improvement projects in Kwun Tong is the result of co-operation and concerted efforts of members of the Kwun Tong District Board, area committees, mutual aid committees, owners' corporations, various government departments and voluntary agencies under the district administration scheme, the Deputy Director of Home Affairs, Mr Dominic Law, said today (Sunday).

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Kwun Tong District Festival '97, Mr Law said the many improvement projects that had been carried out in Kwun Tong in the past 10 years had not only brought the district a new appearance but also an improvement to residents' living environment.

He said there was a special meaning for the Kwun Tong District Festival '97 to use "15th Anniversary of District Administration" as its theme as Kwun Tong was the first urban district to practise district administration.

Mr Law said the Kwun Tong District Board had assumed an important role in reflecting the needs and views of residents in the past years. He hoped such practice would continue with more active involvement of local residents.

The festival, jointly organised by the Kwun Tong District Board, the Kwun Tong District Office and the Urban Council, will last until January 19. Major activities include "Night for Songs of the Oldies", film shows, Chinese operas and slogan competition.

A series of activities were organised to mark the opening ceremony, including lion and dragon dances, performances by popular singers and children chorus, dancing performance, magic show and traditional Chinese handicraft stalls.

Also present at the opening ceremony were the President of Legislative Council, Mr Andrew Wong; the Kwun Tong District Officer, Mr Tsang Hing-kay; and the Chairperson of Kwun Tong District Board, Mrs Winnie Poon.

End

Street carnival marks district festival

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Paterson Street in Causeway Bay was turned into a carnival site today (Sunday) to celebrate the Wan Chai Festival '97.

Visitors were enthralled by dragon and lion dances, a puppet show by Qian Zhou Puppet Troupe, martial arts demonstrations, dancing and singing by Miss Kelly Chan and Mr Leo Ku as well as children's choirs.

The children was amused by inflatable castles, photo sessions with cartoon characters and game stalls.

Other stalls demonstrating grasshopper weaving, sketch drawing, Chinese calligraphy, dragon beard candy making and palm reading also drew large audiences.

The Causeway Bay Carnival was organised by the Causeway Bay Area Committee with the assistance of the Wan Chai District Office.

Among the officiating guests at the Carnival's kick-off ceremony were Wan Chai District Officer, Mrs Elaine Tang; Chairperson of Wan Chai District Board, Mrs Peggy Lam and Chairman of Wan Chai Festival Organising Committee, Mr Stephen Ng.

End