



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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BUILDING OWNERS HAVE ONUS TO CHECK SAFETY: GOVERNOR

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THE OWNERS OF OLD AND NEW BUILDINGS MUST CHECK THE SAFETY OF THEIR BUILDINGS AND MUST MAINTAIN AND KEEP THEM UP TO STANDARD, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (SATURDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER OPENING THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH WEEK AT SHA TIN, SIR DAVID SAID THAT WAS THE WAY TO TRY TO AVOID THE SORT OF APPALLING ACCIDENT THAT OCCURRED LAST NIGHT.

"WE ARE ALL HORRIFIED BY THE INCIDENT YESTERDAY WITH THE COLLAPSE OF A CANOPY AND I HEARD THE NEWS WITH DEEP DISTRESS FOR THE FAMILIES OF THOSE CONCERNED," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT WAS WORKING ON TRYING TO ESTABLISH WHAT CAUSED THE COLLAPSE. "AND I'VE ASKED FOR A REPORT ON IT."

HE ALSO STRESSED THAT IT WAS NOT JUST DURING CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING THAT WAS IMPORTANT, BUT MAINTAINING IT WAS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT.

SIR DAVID NOTED THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE A CORONER'S INQUIRY INTO THE INCIDENT AND DETAILED QUESTIONS WOULD THEN BE ASKED: "SO IF THERE IS A CORONER'S INQUIRY, THE PEOPLE CONCERNED CAN'T SAY ANYTHING UNTIL THE INQUIRY."

"BUT IF THERE HAD BEEN INFRINGEMENTS OF THE REGULATIONS THEN OBVIOUSLY THAT HAS TO BE LOOKED INTO, BUT WE DON'T KNOW THE CAUSE SO I WOULDN'T LIKE TO GO INTO THAT AT THE MOMENT," HE SAID.

"I DO WANT TO EMPHASISE THAT OWNERS OF BUILDINGS HAVE A REAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR BUILDINGS," HE ADDED.

ASKED IF SOMETHING URGENT SHOULD BE DONE BECAUSE OF THE SHORTAGE OF BUILDING INSPECTORS AND THE RECENT COLLAPSE OF AN OLD BUILDING IN SHEUNG WAN, THE GOVERNOR POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE BUILDING INSPECTORS GOING AROUND INSPECTING EVERY SINGLE BUILDING EACH YEAR IN HONG KONG.

"OF COURSE, THEY WANT TO LOOK AT THE OLD BUILDINGS AND DO IT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. OF COURSE, THEY HAVE LIMITATIONS ON MANPOWER. EVERYBODY HAS THAT. THEY DO THE BEST THEY CAN AND THAT IS WHAT THEY HAVE GOT TO GO ON DOING," HE SAID.

"BUT WITH A NEW BUILDING, SOMETHING CLEARLY IS WRONG. THE BUILDING HASN'T JUST DETERIORATED OVER AGE AND FOR THAT, ONE HAS TO LOOK TO THE OWNERS TO SEE WHAT WENT WRONG," HE ADDED.

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GOVT DETERMINED TO IMPROVE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY: GOVERNOR

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THE GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO IMPROVE HONG KONG'S RECORD IN THE FIELD OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (SATURDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH WEEK, SIR DAVID SAID THIS WOULD BE DONE THROUGH A SET OF NEW REGULATIONS WHICH WOULD COME INTO FORCE IN JUST OVER A MONTH'S TIME.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THE MESSAGE SHOULD BE CLEAR TO ALL - EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ALIKE.

HE SAID MUCH HAD BEEN DONE IN HONG KONG TO PROMOTE GREATER SAFETY AT WORK.

THESE INCLUDED REGULAR AND INCREASINGLY-SOPHISTICATED PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS, REINFORCED INSPECTORATE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND TIGHTENED AND IMPROVED LEGISLATION.

HOWEVER, SIR DAVID SAID MUCH REMAINED TO BE DONE AND ATTITUDES STILL NEEDED TO BE CHANGED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ACCIDENTS AT WORK COST SOCIETY DEARLY IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY AND HEALTH CARE, DESTROY LIVES AND IMPOVERISH FAMILIES.

"THEY REMOVE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE FROM THE WORKPLACE AND DEMORALISE THOSE WHO REMAIN.

"OUR ACCIDENT RECORD IS STILL FAR FROM GOOD," HE SAID, POINTING OUT THAT THIS WAS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WHERE THE ACCIDENT RATE HAD BEEN INCREASING BOTH IN TOTAL AND AS A PROPORTION OF THE WORKFORCE.

IT WAS THUS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT THE "FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE" WAS AMENDED LAST YEAR TO REINFORCE OBLIGATIONS ON BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO ENSURE SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK.

PRISON SENTENCES WERE INTRODUCED FOR SERIOUS BREACHES OF THE REGULATIONS, HE ADDED.

"EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN GIVEN 12 MONTHS TO PREPARE FOR THESE NEW OBLIGATIONS. THEY COME INTO FORCE IN JUST OVER A MONTH'S TIME.

"WORKING SYSTEMS, EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES SHOULD BY NOW HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY REVIEWED TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY MEET THE NEW REQUIREMENTS.

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"IF ANY OF THOSE INVOLVED STILL HAVE QUERIES ABOUT THE NEW REGULATIONS THEY SHOULD QUICKLY CONTACT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL WHO WOULD BE HAPPY TO HELP," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE GOVERNOR, HOWEVER, SAID IN THE FIELD OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, EDUCATION WAS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN LEGISLATION.

"THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH WEEK WILL EDUCATE," HE SAID, "IT WILL FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY AT WORK."

"IT WILL ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS TO SEE SAFETY AS A VITAL ELEMENT IN EFFICIENT, MODERN MANAGEMENT.

"AND IT WILL HIGHLIGHT FOR EMPLOYEES THE PERSONAL BENEFITS OF SENSIBLE WORK PRACTICES," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL HAS THE GOVERNMENT'S FULL SUPPORT.

"I WISH THE COUNCIL AND ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH WEEK EVERY SUCCESS IN DRIVING HOME THE SAFETY MESSAGE," HE SAID.

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NEW MODE OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THE DISABLED

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HONG KONG IS CURRENTLY EXPERIMENTING A NEW EMPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR THE DISABLED, WHICH IS A MODE OF EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT IN THE OPEN MARKET AND SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD A REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN BEIJING.

SPEAKING AT THE NINTH ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL IN BEIJING TODAY (SATURDAY), MRS WONG SAID SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT WAS NO LONGER THE ONLY OUTLET FOR THOSE PEOPLE WITH RELATIVELY SEVERE DISABILITIES.

"EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT, GIVEN ADEQUATE TRAINING AND SUPPORT, SUCH PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO WORK OUTSIDE SHELTERED WORKSHOPS," SHE SAID.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE CONCEPT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT WAS INTRODUCED IN HONG KONG. IT WAS SUITABLE FOR THOSE FOR WHOM COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT AT OR ABOVE MARKET WAGE LEVEL WAS UNLIKELY UNLESS ONGOING SUPPORT WAS AVAILABLE IN THE FORM OF ON-THE-JOB SUPERVISION, TRAINING AND COUNSELLING.

"THROUGH SUCH SUPPORT, DISABLED PERSONS CAN GAIN ACCESS TO A WIDER RANGE OF WAGE-GENERATING WORK IN A VARIETY OF WORK SETTINGS, OBTAINING HIGHER INCOME AND BETTER JOB SECURITY."

MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE FOUR PROGRAMME MODELS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT UNDER WHICH VARIOUS TYPES AND CONDITIONS OF WORK WERE MATCHED TO ABILITY. THE FOUR WERE: SUPPORTED JOBS MODEL, ENCLAVE MODEL, MOBILE CREW MODEL AND BENCHWORK MODEL.

THE SUPPORTED JOBS MODEL PLACES INDIVIDUAL ADULTS IN ORDINARY JOBS, AND SUPPORT IS PROVIDED AT THE WORK PLACE BY TRAINED STAFF IN THE COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL OR NON-PROFIT-MAKING ESTABLISHMENT.

IN THE ENCLAVE MODEL, A GROUP OF SIX TO EIGHT HANDICAPPED PERSONS WORK IN A REGULAR INDUSTRIAL OR COMMERCIAL SETTING WITH SUPPORT FROM THE EMPLOYER-AGENT. WITHIN AN ENCLAVE, DISABLED EMPLOYEES HAVE THE SAME ACCESS TO WORK IN THE COMPANY AND ENJOY THE SAME WORKING CONDITIONS AND THE SAME SALARY.

IN THE MOBILE CREW MODEL, A MOBILE CREW OR TEAM CONSISTS OF A SMALL NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS WORK UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A NON-HANDICAPPED SUPERVISOR. THEY OPERATE WITH A VAN AND TAKE UP TASKS SUCH AS LARGE-SCALE PAINTING, CLEANING OR GARDENING ON A CONTRACTUAL BASIS.

THE BENCHWORK MODEL RESEMBLES A SHELTERED WORKSHOP IN OPERATION BUT ON A MUCH SMALLER SCALE AND HENCE GREATER FLEXIBILITY. WORK IS DONE IN THE PREMISES OF THE HANDICAPPED PERSONS.

IT DIFFERS FROM A SHELTERED WORKSHOP IN RESPECT OF THE RELATIVELY GREATER COMPLEXITY OF WORK AND HEAVIER EMPHASIS ON THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL, AND HENCE HIGHER LEVEL OF INCOME.

MRS WONG SAID THE ENCOURAGING RESPONSE FROM PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL SECTORS HAS SO FAR CONFIRMED THE FEASIBILITY OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CONCEPT.

MRS WONG ALSO SAID HONG KONG WOULD CARRY OUT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF REHABILITATION SERVICES IN ORDER TO FIND OUT THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE POLICY ON ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY.

"THROUGH JOINT EFFORTS BY BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, DISABLED PERSONS IN THE COMMUNITY WILL BE ASSISTED TO LEAD A LIFE AS DIGNIFIED AND FULFILLING AS THOSE OF THE ABLE-BODIED", SHE SAID.

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LONG DISTANCE RUN ON CHEUNG CHAU

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ABOUT 350 RUNNERS WILL TAKE PART IN THE CHEUNG CHAU LONG DISTANCE RUN TOMORROW (SUNDAY) MORNING.

THIS WILL BE THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF RUNNING EVENT ON FOUR MAIN ISLANDS OF THE ISLANDS DISTRICT FOR 1990-91.

RUNNERS IN TOMORROW'S SIX-KILOMETRE RACE WILL START FROM CHEUNG CHAU SPORTS GROUND AT 10.30 AM, PASS THROUGH PEAK ROAD AT SAI WAN AND TURN BACK TO THE STARTING POINT.

ASSISTANT ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICER, MISS MIMI LEE, WILL OFFICIATE AND PRESENT PRIZES TO THE WINNERS.

THE ISLANDS DISTRICT LONG DISTANCE RUN IS AN ANNUAL EVENT JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICE, REGIONAL COUNCIL, ISLANDS SPORTS ASSOCIATION, AND ISLANDS POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS SECTION, WITH SPONSORSHIP FROM THE DISTRICT BOARD AND ISLANDS ROTARY CLUB.

SIMILAR EVENTS ON PENG CHAU, LAMMA AND LANTAU ISLANDS WILL BE HELD IN DECEMBER, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY RESPECTIVELY.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE CHEUNG CHAU LONG DISTANCE RUN TO BE HELD TOMORROW (SUNDAY) AT CHEUNG CHAU SPORTS GROUND. THE RACE WILL START AT 10.30 AM.

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