



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Saturday, March 2, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Prudence exercised in drawing up health, welfare expenditure	1
Electors reminded to vote in by-election tomorrow	5
Prosecution against labour law offenders in 1995	5
Salt water cut in Kowloon East	6
Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations	7

Sunday, March 3, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Transcripts of the Governor's speech	8
Child abuse: early detection essential	10
DB by-election results	11

Prudence exercised in drawing up health, welfare expenditure

* * * * *

The Government plans to spend \$22.6 billion on health and \$16.5 billion on welfare in recurrent expenditure in 1996-97, an increase of 4.4 and 14.7 per cent respectively compared with 1995-96.

The money will ensure that the Administration is in a position to meet its policy commitments as well as responding to the community's expectations for improved health and welfare services for the people of Hong Kong.

"The community's wish to see expanded services is clear and we are responding to that," the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, said today (Saturday) at a press conference outlining expenditure on health and welfare in the coming financial year.

"But we are doing so in a financially prudent way. While spending, especially on welfare, is increasing significantly, it is growing in a way we can afford," she added.

On health, welfare and social security for the elderly, Mrs Fok noted that spending next year would be about \$10.2 billion.

This includes \$1.2 billion on direct welfare services for the elderly which is a 20 per cent increase over 1995-96. It should be noted that the 1995-96 figure represented a massive 36 per cent increase over the previous year.

Mrs Fok said good progress had been made on the implementation of all the recommendations of the 1994 Report of the Working Group on Care for the Elderly.

For example, plans are in hand to train next year an additional 630 health workers to work in residential homes for the elderly, establish one additional community geriatric assessment team and three psychogeriatric teams to strengthen outreaching medical services in residential institutions, and conduct a study to establish the needs of and review the services for elderly people.

In addition, an extra 43 social centres and nearly 1,600 more residential places for the elderly will be provided, and 12 more home help teams on top of the 114 existing ones will be set up.

In spite of the wide range of the services provided, Mrs Fok said there would always be more that needed to be done.

"Concerns expressed for the welfare of the elderly during the recent cold spell made that very clear," she said.

"It has made me even more aware that Government and the NGOs (non-governmental organisations) cannot do it all; we cannot ultimately replace the role of the family and of good neighbourliness.

"That is why we are encouraging social networking through our ambitious plans to expand social centres for the elderly and our programmes using volunteers to reach out to elderly people - especially those living alone.

"Both aim to ensure that they become more a part of the community in which they live and that their potential to provide mutual support is developed."

The Director of Social Welfare is drawing up initiatives with the Director of Home Affairs and in liaison with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and NGOs to promote further the need for community involvement in caring for the elderly.

Direct welfare services for people with a disability will take up \$1.3 billion next year which is a 15 per cent increase over this year.

In order to improve the opportunities for such people to obtain jobs and thus encourage their integration, the Government plans to expand vocational assessment and training services for about 900 people in sheltered workshops, traffic accident victims and injured workers.

The number of supported employment places will also be increased by 164 per cent, from the existing 360 to 950 in 1996-97.

To make it easier for the disabled to get to their workplaces, eight extra scheduled routes and three more buses will be added to the "dial-a-ride" Rehabus service. This will boost the number of passenger trips by 21 per cent to nearly 390,000 per year.

Expenditure on the non-contributory Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme is estimated to rise by about 23 per cent next year to \$5.9 billion.

To ensure the support given to CSSA recipients is adequate, the Government has started a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme in November 1994.

The review had been completed and the recommendations in the final report would be announced next week, said Mrs Fok.

Meanwhile, the CSSA standard rates for certain groups will be increased from April this year. The proposed enhancements will benefit up to 52,000 people at an annual cost of \$300 million.

On family and child welfare, the Government will be spending about \$1.4 billion to provide about 80 more family case workers and clinical psychologists, 13 more specially trained social workers to fight child abuse and to reduce the trauma of children, and 19 extra social workers to advise on arrangements for child custody in divorce cases.

In addition, about \$1 billion will be used on helping young persons at risk and providing services for the rehabilitation of offenders.

Turning to health services, Mrs Fok stressed that disease prevention and the promotion of good health practices remained a priority.

The Department of Health, which will be allocated about \$1.8 billion in recurrent expenditure for 1996-97, aims to increase health awareness both in the community and among specific target groups and to emphasise the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

To achieve these targets, the following new public health services will be provided during the year:

- * 155 infirmary beds;
- * two maternal and child health centres in Ma On Shan and Tseung Kwan O;
- * a child assessment centre and a school dental clinic in Ha Kwai Chung;
- * three clinics in Ha Kwai Chung, Ma On Shan and Tseung Kwan O;
- * a woman health centre in Tuen Mun;
- * three elderly health centres in Kennedy Town, Yuen Chau Kok and Tsuen Wan;

- * extension of the Student Health Service to cover 443,000 secondary school students; and
- * with a grant of \$8 million from the AIDS Trust Fund, a community-based AIDS Education, Research and Resource Centre to tailor AIDS education programmes to target groups at risk.

Moreover, funding has been secured for 1,400 nursing home beds to help reduce the pressure on infirmary beds.

As regards the Hospital Authority, its recurrent grant in 1996-97 will amount to \$19.2 billion, an increase of 14.8 per cent over this year. The following improved or new facilities will be provided:

- * 830 new beds;
- * a dialysis centre to serve 100 chronic patients with end-stage renal failure;
- * two rehabilitation co-ordination teams to provide rehabilitation programmes and enhance community care for 1,000 chronic patients;
- * one community geriatric assessment team and three psychogeriatric teams to strengthen outreach medical and psychiatric support for 15,000 elderly patients;
- * a pilot adolescent care centre to provide medical and psychiatric care to adolescents in need; and
- * eight patients and carers resource centres to promote the concept of self-help and mutual support among patient groups.

Furthermore, the final phase of the Castle Peak Hospital redevelopment will take place during the year at a capital cost of about \$850 million.

"This will enable us to improve the curative and rehabilitative services for mental patients so that they can enjoy better prospects for reintegration into society," Mrs Fok said.

End

Electors reminded to vote in by-election tomorrow

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) today (Saturday) reminded the 8,387 electors of Tin King constituency to vote in the Tuen Mun District Board by-election in respect of their constituency tomorrow (Sunday).

The polling station will be set up in Ho Sau Ki School, Tin King Estate, Tuen Mun, and opened from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm.

An REO spokesman said an elector must bring along his identity card to the polling station. But it would facilitate polling proceeding if he could also carry the poll card sent to him earlier.

For enquiries, please call 2827 1122.

End

Prosecution against labour law offenders in 1995

The Labour Department achieved 8,621 convicted cases against labour law offenders in 1995, resulting in a total fine of more than \$47.8 million.

Compared with the figures in 1994, the number of convictions and total fines imposed last year increased by 11.3 and 59.3 per cent respectively.

Senior Labour Officer (Prosecutions), Mr John Sung, said today (Saturday) that the department would continue to step up prosecutions against employers who did not abide by labour law.

"They will have to pay for their malpractices if they do not take the safety and welfare of workers seriously," he added.

About 39 per cent or 3,387 of the convicted cases last year were related to industrial safety. Among them, 3,252 involved the violation of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance and 135 the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Ordinance.

Apart from industrial safety offences, there were 5,218 convictions concerning the violation of the Women and Young Persons (Industry) Regulations, Employment of Children Regulations, Employment Ordinance and Employees' Compensation Ordinance. Fines imposed totalled \$8.3 million.

Of the 5,218 convictions, 687 were related to the employment of women and young persons to work overtime or on rest days. Convictions concerning the failure of employers to take out insurance policies for employees or give them statutory holiday pay totalled 2,117.

Sixty cases were related to the failure of employers to pay their employees wages on the due date or upon termination of their service.

There were also 16 cases relating to the failure of employers to keep or produce employees' records for inspection by labour inspectors as required by the Immigration Ordinance.

End

Salt water cut in Kowloon East

* * * * *

Flushing water supply to all premises in Kowloon East will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (March 6) to 6 am the following day to facilitate works for the maintenance of watermains.

The suspension will affect San Po Kong, Ngau Chi Wan, Choi Hung Estate, Choi Wan Estate, Ping Shek Estate, United Christian Hospital, Shun Lee Estate, Shun Tin Estate, Shun On Estate, Shun Chi Court, Shun Lee Tsuen Temporary Housing Area, Ngau Tau Kok, Lok Wah Estate, Jordan Valley, Kowloon Bay, Kwun Tong, Lam Tin, Sau Mau Ping and Cha Kwo Ling.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

* * * * *

	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$ million)
	-----	-----	-----
Opening balance in the account	2,057	09:30	+530
Closing balance in the account	1,932	10:00	+530
Change attributable to:		11:00	+530
Money market activity	+530	11:30	+530
LAF today	-655		

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.5 *+0.0* 2.3.96

End

Transcripts of the Governor's speech

* * * * *

The following is a transcript of a speech given by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, at a dinner given in honour of the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon John Major, at Government House last (Sunday) night:

Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen,

The last time, Prime Minister, that you and I spoke as it were side by side, the circumstances were certainly very different. I think it is fair to say the continent was different too. But going back even further into the dark ages, when we were both young with hardly a grey hair between us, the first time we spoke, if not side by side then certainly seriatim, was when we were in the same queue of aspirants applying to become the Conservative Party's candidate in Huntingdon, a safe seat in England.

As my guests may have noticed this evening, I was not chosen. I doubt whether either of us, Prime Minister, would have guessed then where politics and chance were to carry us. I break no secrets when I say again, which you know I mean, that I am delighted that a fair wind carried you to Number 10 Downing Street, and that it's brought you here again tonight.

You are the second British Prime Minister to have visited Hong Kong in office. This is the fourth visit by a serving Prime Minister. Your predecessor came twice, and you have come on your second visit as well. But this is a community which of course you know well, first as a banker and we have Ian Wilson here tonight to prove it - I hope John Gray doesn't mind me making that point - and more recently, as politician and as Prime Minister.

We are delighted that we are able to see you at the end of a week which has included among much else the Anglo-Irish Summit and the Bangkok Summit. All of us are accustomed to being introduced by chairmen who express their gratitude that we've interrupted our busy schedules to come and speak to them. Prime Minister, we are a part not just of your busy schedule this week but of an extraordinarily punishing schedule, and we are extremely pleased that you are able in those circumstances to spend a couple of days here with us in Hong Kong.

You know, Prime Minister, how tough and how difficult are the challenges that we face in Hong Kong. The last time you came here you were hotfoot from Peking where you had just signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the Airport. While it is true that things did not subsequently work out quite as smoothly as we had all hoped - I speak with my usual mixture of euphemism and diplomatic tact - we nevertheless just got on with things and built the airport anyway, and you were able to see the spectacular results today.

I think that's typical of Hong Kong. Whatever the challenges, Hong Kong manages to rise to them so that today we remain one of the most successful, one of the most prosperous and one of the most decent cities in the world. I'm optimistic that Hong Kong with its magnificent civil service will work its way just as successfully through the problems of the next few years.

In managing the transition, in managing this unique enterprise, both Britain and China face very difficult tasks. I want to thank you personally, Prime Minister, for the generous and unequivocal support that you've given to us in Hong Kong since I've been Governor. We couldn't have asked for more and I think it's particularly valuable that the question of Hong Kong and its future has never been allowed to become a matter of cross-party controversy at Westminster.

I know, Prime Minister, that you will be making your principal speeches in Hong Kong tomorrow, talking to the Legislative Council and talking to the Chambers of Commerce at lunch and then addressing an open press conference later in the day. And I also suspect - in fact I know - that you share with me an antipathy to spoiling the digestive process by making lengthy speeches after dinner. But we would all be grateful if on what may be the last occasion on which a British Prime Minister visits this house under British sovereignty, we would all be very grateful if you would say a few words to us this evening. Thank you.

End

Child abuse: early detection essential

* * * * *

Early detection and reporting of suspected child abuse cases are essential in the fight against child abuse, the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Ian Strachan, said today (Sunday).

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Eastern/Wan Chai District Public Education Programme on Prevention of Child Abuse, Mr Strachan said awareness among the general public and sensitivity on the part of professionals working with children were fundamental to prevent and combat child abuse.

"In Hong Kong, we adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to deal with the problem of child abuse, both at a territory-wide and at district level.

"I am pleased to learn that the Eastern/Wan Chai District Committee on Child Abuse was set up in mid-1995, with the aim to promote better understanding of the child abuse problem amongst different professionals, to examine the problem on a district basis, and to effect better co-ordination in the protection for vulnerable children and better management of child abuse cases in the district," Mr Strachan said.

The event today featured a seminar on child care, an exhibition on protection of children, Child Care Information Counter and family games.

"Through this programme, all of us will appreciate more the importance of protecting our children from being abused.

"It is important that parents and children learn to understand and communicate each other in a positive manner which would strengthen parent-child relationship rather than to mishandling, damage, neglect or abuse," he added.

The Eastern/Wan Chai District Committee on Child Abuse is one of the five district committees set up to better co-ordinate multi-disciplinary resources to tackle child abuse at a district level. The other four districts are Tai Po/North, Tuen Mun, Sham Shui Po and Kwun Tong.

End

DB by-election results

* * * * *

The following is the number of votes received by each of the four candidates of the Tuen Mun District Board by-election in respect of the Tin King constituency:

Mr Lee Yiu-hung	209 votes
Ms Ho Hang-mui	1132 votes
Mr Tse Yee-fong	134 votes
Mr Lee Hung-sham Lothar	1579 votes

Mr Lee Hung-sham Lothar elected by the Returning Officer, Mr Patrick Chan.

End