



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of the Governor's media session

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The following is the transcript of the media session of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after visiting Yiu Tung Estate today (Tuesday):

Governor: I am delighted to have had the opportunity of another visit to Chai Wan and to Eastern District - I was here just the other day - and I am particularly pleased that I have been accompanied today by Mr Fatchett, the Labour Party's spokesman on Hong Kong, who is paying another visit to Hong Kong. He is with us for about three days and is having a wide-ranging number of meetings, as I think you know.

I have been pleased to see another example of what our Housing Authority is doing and to see the facilities for the elderly and young people.

Question: Some of the complaints made by some parents that a couple of babies ... after receiving some treatment in the Princess Margaret Hospital ... Do you think it is necessary to make an application for an inquiry board to investigate these complaints?

Governor: Obviously, the parents concerned are making a very serious point and it will need to be investigated. It has not been raised with me before but I will certainly make enquiries about it.

Question: Governor, will the civil servants who will be sent to help the Chief Executive designate belong to the secretariat grade?

Governor: It is of course tempting to share with you some of our ideas about co-operation with the Chief Executive designate, but I think it is probably more sensible for me to talk to him first of all because as I have said on a number of occasions before, and say again, we have a number of ideas that we would like to discuss with him but obviously we do not want to impose any particular set of plans on the Chief Executive.

He will have his own views about the sort of supporting staff and the logistical support he needs and we would obviously like to go forward in co-operation with him, responding to his requests rather than imposing anything on him. We wouldn't seek to do that.

Question: While talked to the 400 Selection Committee members last week, Mr Tung had been asked by the Committee member whether he would go into your premises after he had been elected. He said your premises's 'fung shui' was not good and it was too crowded. Do you think he is teasing on you or ...?

Governor: No, Mr Tung has his own flat to which I am sure he and his wife Betty are very attached. All of us are attached to the places that we live in. I think he said he had not made up his mind and I am sure he will want to do that, if he is selected, shortly after his selection.

Obviously, we would like the staff concerned to know what their future is. That is my main consideration. I am bound to say I have never felt that Government House was particularly cramped - but there it is.

Question: Governor, right now there are around 50,000 Hong Kong people who have the right of abode in Britain, but after 1997 those people will not have protection by British Consulates.

Governor: I beg your pardon?

Question: So there are 50,000 people who have the right of abode in Britain.

Governor: Yes, there are about 150,000/160,000 people who will have British passports under the British Nationality Scheme. They are just like any other passport and I hope they will get exactly the same protection around the world as other British passport holders would get.

Question: Against the issue, you know, how are things ... for those civil servants who are sent to help SAR and Chief Executive Designate?

Governor: There is no ...

Question: For example, now they are against the Provisional Council but all ... Chief Executive Designate, they have to provide the information may be for the Provisional Council. In a way they are in support of the British.

Governor: It will be for the Chief Executive designate to explain and justify the facilities that he requires and the way he uses them. It is not a matter for me. What I am pledged to do is to help him as much as possible within of course the terms of the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. I am sure he would not want me to do other than that.

As you know, the Government has made its position absolutely plain on the so-called Provisional Legislature which in our judgement and in the Foreign Secretary's words would be reprehensible and unjustifiable.

Question: ... the British Nationality Scheme ... recommendation that ... has just said that Hong Kong people ... with British right of abode will not enjoy the protection of British Embassies after 1997 if based in Hong Kong. So what kind of protection will the British Government offer?

Governor: I hope they won't need any protection but as I have said, if they are in any other country they will get exactly the same protection as anybody else travelling on a British passport would get. As to their position in Hong Kong, I suggest you direct your question to Chinese officials who have said some rather unhelpful things about the British passport.

Question: Governor, what is the practical problem - would you recommend that when ... civil servant assistant to the Chief Executive, would you recommend some kind of expert from the Legal Department who has had special knowledge in the law drafting ... they are being asked to help the CE - what if they be asked to draft some statute regarding the Provisional Legislature?

Governor: Don't you think that rather than answering entertaining hypothetical questions it would be more sensible for me to have this discussion with the Chief Executive designate first? Yes I repeat, as far as the Government is concerned we think that there is no justification for a Provisional Legislature and we think that were a Provisional Legislature to do anything before 30 June it would be questionable in law.

Question: If the Provisional Legislature actually was held in Hong Kong next month, will the Police offer any security measures to protect ...?

Governor: The Police always, operating within the law and provide people with the right to meet, the right to demonstrate within the law, the right to make their own views clear within the law, so you can tell yourself what the answer is.

But I think that the process of selecting members for the Provisional Legislature is inevitably going to be controversial. We have got a situation in which a purported legislature is going to be made up of people who are appointing one another from the Selection Committee or is going to be made up from people who have failed to get elected to a properly constituted legislature. I think inevitably, as I have said, that is going to cause controversy and argument. It is not my making, it is the making of Chinese officials. I am sure you will have noticed what the International Commission of Jurists said on the subject yesterday. Thank you very much indeed.

End

## Proposals to revamp Employees Retraining Scheme

\* \* \* \* \*

The Government proposes to revamp the Employees Retraining Scheme so that it will focus primarily on providing retraining for the hard core of the unemployed, who are aged 30 and above and have no more than lower secondary education.

The Government also proposes to extend the ERS to cover new immigrants by introducing into Legislative Council a bill on December 18 to amend the Employees Retraining Ordinance.

These proposals are part of the recommendations contained in a consultation paper on the review of the ERS which was published today (Tuesday). The review was launched in April this year with a view to improving the effectiveness of the ERS in meeting the requirements of employers and retraining needs of the local workforce.

The Government also proposes to make a capital injection of \$500 million into the Employees Retraining Board in the current financial year, so as to enable it to implement the proposed expanded and enhanced retraining programme.

The other major recommendations of the review include:

- \* transferring ERB's role in skills upgrading for the employed to the Vocational Training Council (VTC) in phases;
- \* gradually phasing out the existing On-the-Job programme;
- \* introducing a placement-tied and performance-based payment system for the training bodies, so as to encourage training bodies to find jobs for their trainees;
- \* replacing the existing retraining allowance by a new allowance of \$500 aimed at meeting the travelling and meal expenses incurred by a retrainee whilst undergoing retraining; and
- \* evaluating the number and composition of the training bodies with a view to improving their effectiveness and monitoring their performance and quality.

Speaking at a press conference this (Tuesday) afternoon to announce the results of the review of the Employees Retraining Scheme(ERS), the Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joseph W P Wong said the proposals were put forward after taking into account the outcome of the review of the ERS and the results of the recent strategic and organisational review of the VTC conducted by the Government.

"In the review, the Government has looked at the management structure of the ERB, the current mode of operation of the ERS and the various types of retraining courses with a view to finding ways and means to improve the effectiveness of ERS in meeting the employers' needs and retraining needs of local workers. Upon completion of this review, we reckon that the ERS does serve to help workers adjust to changes in the labour market. However, there is considerable scope for improvement," Mr Wong said.

Explaining the proposal to focus the ERS primarily on the unemployed including new immigrants, who are aged 30 or above and have attained lower secondary education or below, Mr Wong said that since this group is at the lower end of the social and educational spectrum, "they constitute the 'hard-core' of the unemployed who are most vulnerable to the adverse effects of any structural change in the economy and who also stand the highest chance of being displaced from the labour market."

"However, the ERB could apply both the age and the educational attainment criteria flexibly in individual cases, in particular for new immigrants, given their different educational and vocational backgrounds," he added.

Mr Wong said that the new retraining programme would take the form of a specially-designed and structured package of job-oriented intensive courses, aimed at helping the retrainees to secure and hold down their jobs.

"In order to focus the ERS on training the 'hard core' of the unemployed including new immigrants, the Government has proposed that all the skills upgrading courses for the employed persons, and the ancillary retraining courses for the elderly and the disabled now being offered under the ERS, should in future be provided by the VTC instead. In this process, we will also ensure that the retraining needs of the needy group, in particular the elderly and the disabled will not be adversely affected.

"Given its remit, experience and facilities, the VTC should be well placed and equipped to fulfil this role. With this clear demarcation of training responsibilities and target clienteles, the ERB and the VTC will be able to develop their individual strengths, thus avoiding duplication.

"This proposal will enable the ERB to re-deploy some 40 per cent of its current annual expenditure (around \$110 million in 1995-96) on skills upgrading to the development of better-quality retraining programme for the unemployed and for training more people, including new immigrants," Mr Wong said.

"As regards the proposed placement-tied and performance-based payment system for the training bodies, all training bodies will be required to attain a reasonable percentage of placements for their trainees -- those capable of over-achieving the target will receive a higher than normal reimbursement from ERB, whilst those which under-achieve will receive less. In this context, a successful placement for funding purposes is defined as one where the retrainee is employed on the job for at least two to three months. We nevertheless need to consider and draw up the detailed rules and conditions in conjunction with the ERB first," Mr Wong explained.

"We plan to implement the recommendations in phases, starting with the inclusion of new immigrants in the Scheme upon the enactment of the Employees Retraining (Amendment) Bill, if approved by LegCo, early next year. As for the other recommendations of the review, we will, subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise, work closely with the ERB to ensure that the ERS will move gradually from its present mode to one which is tightly focused on the target unemployed over a period of about one year," Mr Wong said.

Turning to the Employees Retraining (Amendment) Bill 1996, Mr Wong said that the bill seeks to give legal effect to the proposal to extend the ambit of the ERS to cover new immigrants.

"On account of their working experience and educational background, many new immigrants who wish to seek jobs may not possess the skills and expertise required by the local labour market and may experience difficulties in finding and securing employment in Hong Kong.

"Under the existing Employees Retraining Ordinance, they are not eligible to apply for retraining since only 'local employees' defined as Hong Kong permanent residents who have been ordinarily resident in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than seven years are eligible."

Under the Bill, the term "local employee" under the Employees Retraining Ordinance will be replaced by 'eligible employee'. This proposal will in effect mean that all persons, who are legally remaining and free to take up any employment with any employer in Hong Kong, will be eligible to apply to attend a retraining course or programme funded by the ERB.

"Apart from new immigrants from the PRC, the other categories of persons who may qualify as "eligible employees" are unlikely to draw on the resources of the ERB in a significant way, given their educational standing, economic status and background.

"On the other hand, temporary residents on employment and student status, including foreign domestic helpers and workers imported under the labour importation schemes will be excluded as they are subject to a condition of stay which prohibits them from taking employment outside that stipulated under their employment contracts."

The Employees Retraining (Amendment) Bill will be gazetted on December 6 (Friday) and be introduced into the Legislative Council on December 18 (Wednesday).

"As the labour market remains dynamic and Hong Kong's economic restructuring continued, there will be a continued need for a well-managed, properly-focused and cost-effective retraining programme to ensure that Hong Kong's workforce can adequately cope with the changing needs of the economy. We welcome views from any interested parties on proposals arising from the review of the ERS during this consultation period which will last about a month from now," Mr Wong said.

End

#### Government intervention in market place counter-productive

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The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, said today (Tuesday) that government intervention in the market place would be counter-productive and wasteful in resources in the long run.

He was responding to proposals made by commentators that Hong Kong should "pick winners" and adopt a policy of industrial targeting; and that the Government should intervene in the economy to rescue a declining industry and seek to strike a predetermined balance between the manufacturing and service sectors.

Speaking at the opening of the Hong Kong Business Summit 1996, Mr Tsang said in theory, these proposals had a certain attraction.

"Those who put them forward speak in terms of preventing unemployment, of maintaining a more balanced and less vulnerable economy or of providing a vision and a clear framework for future development," he said.

"These are worthy goals, but government intervention to reverse market forces will not produce such results."

He said that to go against the verdict of free and fair competition was not the way for Hong Kong to respond to its challenges, and for the Government such as Hong Kong to conduct such experiments now while the economy was already stretched at full employment or enjoying sustained growth compounded the risks involved.

"In Hong Kong we create new jobs and boost production by providing entrepreneurs and investors with the right environment. The message from the Asian region over the last two decades is very clear," Mr Tsang said.

"The more that politicians and bureaucrats abandon economic planning and economic controls the more room they create for enterprise, productivity and economic growth," he added.

He further pointed out that there was another all-important objection to following the interventionist advice.

According to Mr Tsang, the sort of policy changes the Government was being asked to accept would be a retreat from the capitalist system and an advance towards socialist policies.

"Such a change would be quite contrary to the Basic Law. Article 5 of the Basic Law allows for no compromise on this matter.

"It states quite bluntly: 'The socialist system and policies shall not be practised in the Hong Kong SAR, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for fifty years.'"

In his keynote speech, Mr Tsang also gave an account of the achievements from the recent APEC meeting in the Philippines and the opportunities and challenges that the ASEAN economies present to Hong Kong into the 21st century.

Mr Tsang said there were tremendous opportunities ahead but warned that the challenges should not be underestimated.

He said that first, ASEAN economies had set up a free trade arrangement which provided for staged reduction of tariffs to five per cent or below on substantially all products among ASEAN members by the year 2003.

"This arrangement theoretically will divert trade and investment from non-ASEAN economies including Hong Kong .

"So far the impact is minimal as ASEAN members have de facto extended their tariff concessions to non-ASEAN economies on an MFN basis. We would encourage our ASEAN partners to continue this exemplary practice and would work with them to this end in the context of the APEC liberalisation programme."

Second, as the Financial Secretary pointed out, development of ports in the two places may result in some of the goods being shipped directly instead of re-exported through Hong Kong.

"This would accelerate the structural shift in our indirect trade from re-exports to transshipment and off-shore trading," he said.

Third, there would inevitably be keen competition between Hong Kong and some of the fast growing ASEAN economies, in exporting to traditional developed country markets, in serving as a services hub, and in attracting foreign investment, Mr Tsang said.

"The challenge for us is to capitalise on our comparative advantages and develop functional specialisation which fosters complementary rather than duplication with our ASEAN partners," he said.

"And I am optimistic that concerted efforts in the Hong Kong-ASEAN partnership would bring about mutual benefit and enhanced growth in the region."

Mr Tsang concluded by emphasising Hong Kong's need to hold fast to its fundamental belief in free trade and non-interventionist policies.

End

Shop owners urged to keep their advertising signs safe

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Shop owners should keep their advertising signs well-maintained and remove those which they are no longer required, the Assistant Director of Buildings (Specialist), Mr Philip Lau, said today (Tuesday).

Mr Lau made the appeal during an operation by the Buildings Department this morning to remove a large abandoned and defective advertising sign at Castle Peak Road in Sham Shui Po.

The sign, measuring about five metres by one metre, was found in a dilapidated condition and posing a potential danger to pedestrians as well as the structure of the building.

Mr Lau said the Buildings Department adopted both a reactive and pro-active approach in handling defective advertising signs.

"We respond swiftly to all complaints regarding dangerous signs. In 1995, We received 230 such complaints and subsequently issued about 200 removal orders.

"Meanwhile, since early 1995, we have carried out a planned survey throughout the territory with a view to identifying and removing dangerous or abandoned signs.

"As at mid-June this year, we have inspected about 14,000 signs and about 650 of them have been removed because of their dangerous condition," Mr Lau said.

Under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, the Buildings Department will issue a Dangerous Structure Removal Notice to sign owners requiring them to remove their defective advertising signs within 14 days.

If the signs are not removed after the specified period, the department will arrange government contractor to carry out the work and all the cost will be recovered from the owners.

Mr Lau stressed that any person who intended to put up an advertising sign should plan carefully before carrying out the work.

"Generally speaking, they should obtain permission from the building owners and check that the sign does not contravene the conditions of the land leases.

"Furthermore, a building professional should preferably be consulted and a registered contractor should be appointed for the erection work.

"The most important thing is that all advertising signs should be repaired and maintained regularly to ensure public safety. They should also be removed when they are no longer in use," Mr Lau said.

End

### Blitz on unlicensed guesthouses in Yuen Long

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The Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Police mounted a joint operation against unlicensed guesthouses in Yuen Long this (Tuesday) afternoon.

The enforcement action was part of HAD's continuing effort to crack down on unlicensed guesthouses.

During the operation, officers from HAD's Licensing Authority and the Police inspected eight guesthouses in Tung Lok Street and Kik Yeung Road in Yuen Long town centre.

Two guesthouses were found to be operating without a licence while three persons suspected to be involved in operating or managing the premises were taken back to police station for further investigation. They will be issued summonses charging them with operating or managing unlicensed guesthouses under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

A spokesman for HAD said operators of the guesthouses had already been reminded to complete the improvement works required on time; otherwise, they would have to cease operation immediately as unlicensed guesthouses would definitely not be tolerated.

"We urge members of the public to patronise only licensed guesthouses for their own safety and to help in the crackdown of unlicensed guesthouses by reporting them to the Licensing Authority on 2881 7034," the spokesman said.

End

### Full implementation of Student Health Service

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The Student Health Service provided by the Department of Health has received overwhelming response with more than 97 per cent of primary and secondary day schools and 680,000 students enrolled in the service.

Introduced last year, the service has been extended this academic year to cover both the primary and secondary day schools.

To mark the full implementation of the service, a ceremony officiated by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, and Mrs Patten was held today (Tuesday).

The highlight of the ceremony was the lighting up of the 11 student health service centres indicated on a map by Mr and Mrs Mrs Patten.

This was followed by a video show on the service and performance of the orchestra of Diocesan Boys' School.

Mr and Mrs Patten also chatted with representatives of parents and students.

Recommended by the Working Party on Primary Health Care, the Student Health Service aims to promote the physical and psychological health of school children.

There are now a total of 11 student health service centres and two special assessment centres providing a comprehensive range of promotive and preventive health services to school children annually.

Each enrolled student will be given an annual appointment to attend a student health service centre for health programmes designed to cater for the health needs at various stages of the student's development.

These programmes include physical examination; screening for health problems relating to growth, nutrition, blood pressure, vision, hearing, posture, sexual development and psychological health; individual counselling and health education.

Students found to have health problems will be referred to the Special Assessment Centre for detailed assessment and follow-up or to the appropriate specialist clinics.

End

'One-stop' land search office set up

\* \* \* \* \*

The Land Registry (LR) has set up a new Central Search Office (CSO) to provide a convenient "one-stop" land search service as part of its continuing efforts to further improve services to customers.

Located on the 19th floor of the Queensway Government Offices, CSO will centralise all search services of the Urban Land Registry on the same floor.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the new office today (Tuesday), the acting Land Registrar, Mr Kelvin Chan, said new arrangements had been introduced in CSO to speed up customer services.

"With the 'All Services' counter, customers can obtain, by attending a single counter, all the land records they require, including computerised land registers, diazo copies, copies of imaged or microfilmed documents and certified copies."

Mr Chan also introduced a new Document Express Self-Order Service.

"Customers can make use of the self-service computer terminals at CSO to obtain copies of imaged records without having to queue up for normal counter services," he said.

Looking ahead, Mr Chan said the service improvement computer projects were now in full swing and progressing very satisfactorily.

"The computerisation of all land registers will be completed by April 1997, an on-line search facility, the Direct Access Services (DAS) is already in place, and all land documents are being converted to electronic images to be maintained on the Registry's Document Imaging System set up in July this year," he said.

Mr Chan added that by early 1997, subscribers of the DAS would be able to receive facsimile copies of imaged documents at their own offices.

"Our aim is to set up a fully computerised and integrated Land Registration and Search System in 1998.

"With all land records maintained in electronic format, our customers will then be able to receive the services they require with no geographical boundary restrictions.

"Subscribers of DAS will be able to access any land records from their own offices while those who call at our counters will likewise be able to have all their requirements met in a single 'one-stop' visit," he added.

End

HKMA launches 'Distinguished Lecture' series

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The first Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) Distinguished Lecture was held today (Tuesday) attracting nearly 400 participants.

The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Mr William McDonough, was the inaugural speaker for the HKMA Distinguished Lecture.

Speaking on "Asia and the World Economy - A Central Banker's Perspective", Mr McDonough offered his perspective on development of Asia's high-growth economies over the last two to three decades.

He highlighted the implications of the Asian experience for achieving sustained growth in living standards, while maintaining economic and financial stability. He also emphasised the role of market forces, international competition and appropriate policies for macro-economic management.

"The most compelling lesson of the recent Asian experience is that economic development must rely heavily on competitive market forces but that markets do not operate in a vacuum and cannot do everything. The government has a substantial and irreplaceable role in the development process," said Mr McDonough.

"The popular dichotomy of state intervention versus laissez-faire is a false one. Indeed, the experience of Asia's high growth economies tells us that when markets and governments work in harness, the results can be spectacular," he added.

Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China (PBoC), Mr Chen Yuan, concurred with Mr McDonough's view and added that the Asian success was brought about by responsible governments, openness to trade, improved managerial and technical know-how as well as advancement in productivity.

Mr Chen was the HKMA Distinguished Lecture's discussant.

"At the heart of the drive for the deepening of economic reforms and market liberalisation is our desire, which the Asian economies all share, for stability and steady growth," said Mr Chen.

"We are keenly aware of the inherent volatilities associated with a market economy. This explains why Chinese reforms, like most Asian reforms, are taken on a 'gradualist' approach."

Mr Chen added that the successful and stable growth of the Chinese economy could only be helpful to the smooth transition of Hong Kong through 1997.

Today's HKMA Distinguished Lecture was the first of a series organised by HKMA to bring influential and distinguished persons from the international financial and academic community to Hong Kong to speak on issues of current and long-term interest.

The Distinguished Lecture series is intended to provide a forum for the Hong Kong financial community to hear and exchange views with leading world experts.

On the occasion of their visits, HKMA Chief Executive, Mr Joseph Yam, took the opportunity to exchange views with Mr McDonough and Mr Chen to improve understanding of central banking issues in general.

The areas covered included Hong Kong's monetary arrangements after 1997, Hong Kong's payment systems and central bank co-operation in the areas of market information exchange and linkages of payment and settlement systems.

In the discussions, Mr Yam thanked Mr McDonough and his colleagues for providing guidance and support over the years. Mr Yam said the New York Fed has been particularly helpful in the establishment of HKMA's first overseas representative office in New York and the provision of technical advice on the Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) System. The RTGS System will be implemented later this month.

Mr McDonough noted the robust monetary framework and policies that Hong Kong has put in place to ensure monetary stability in 1997 and beyond. He also noted that the linked exchange rate has served Hong Kong well for over 13 years.

Mr McDonough added that the mutually independent relationship HKMA will have with the PBoC is commensurate with the independence that all monetary authorities need to safeguard stability of the currency under their guardianship.

"I am very happy to be here today in the company of the senior representatives of the HKMA and the PBoC," Mr McDonough said.

"The Federal Reserve has had a positive and constructive relationship with these fine institutions for many years. I was particularly pleased to support each for their autonomous participation in the Bank for International Settlements," he added.

Mr Yam said: "We are grateful to Mr McDonough for his personal support to the work of HKMA. The Hong Kong dollar is linked to the US dollar. We all feel that the link has served Hong Kong well and will continue to do so through 1997."

Mr McDonough invited HKMA and PBoC to take part in a financial seminar to be hosted by the New York Fed on February 14, 1997.

End

#### SCOLAR holds its second meeting

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The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) decided at its meeting today (Tuesday) to set up a Database on Language Education and Research in Hong Kong.

The Committee Chairman, Dr Daniel Tse Chi-wai, said: "The Database will provide an updated, centralised and systematic source of information to assist the Committee in defining areas of research in language education."

The meeting also decided to adopt a long- and a short-term approach in dealing with the ECR6 priority areas.

The short-term approach includes:

- the dissemination of the results of the Language Fund Projects to promote a positive awareness of language issues and language development programmes for public information;
- the development of Vocational Programmes for English and Putonghua;
- the investigation of the relationship between Use of English grades and the ability to cope with University study.

The more long-term approach is to identify priority areas for research. Members agreed that the areas which needed immediate attention are : the relationship between Chinese and Putonghua in the curriculum; language learning patterns for Hong Kong children acquiring their Mother Tongue; the Academic Aptitude Test and levels of language proficiency; and teacher training.

End

249 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flights

\* \* \* \* \*

Two groups totalling 249 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam today (Tuesday) on the 81st and 82nd flights under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP).

The majority of the returnees, comprising 99 men, 64 women, 46 boys and 40 girls, are from South and Central Vietnam. Eleven of the returnees are from North Vietnam.

Most of them arrived in Hong Kong in 1990, with the remaining in 1989, 1991 and 1996.

The two groups brought to 8,067 the total number repatriated on ORP flights since November 1991.

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Orderly Repatriation Programme operation this (Tuesday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The two monitors comprised a non-official Justice of the Peace, Mr Wong Poming; and representative from a non-government organisation, Ms Gilla Nemayechi from Medecins Sans Frontieres.

End

Census and Statistics Department new facilities opened

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The Commissioner for Census and Statistics, Mr Frederick W H Ho, officiated at an opening ceremony of the new facilities for the department's two service centres on trade matters today (Tuesday).

The two service centres are the public reading area of the Trade Statistics Dissemination Section and the manifest receiving and enquiry counter of the Trade Statistics Processing Section on the 19th floor and 22nd floor respectively of Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road.

The opening ceremony was one of the department's events in the Serving the Community Week programme organised by the Government.

Members of the Customer Liaison Group on Trade Matters of the department were invited to attend the ceremony.

A spokesman for the department stressed that the department was committed to providing the public with efficient, courteous and high quality services.

"To improve the environment in which members of the public can obtain services of the department, the two service centres have recently been re-furnished," he said.

The Trade Statistics Dissemination Section is mainly responsible for disseminating trade statistics to the public, including the handling of public enquiries on trade statistics. The public can visit the public reading area of the section during office hours to look up and extract trade statistics from publications and computer printouts.

As for the Trade Statistics Processing Section, it is mainly responsible for processing cargo manifests submitted by shipping and forwarding companies. Besides receiving cargo manifests, the section also handles enquiries from the public on cargo statistics.

The spokesman added that the department welcomed any comments or suggestions on the way the services of the two centres were delivered.

Members of the public may write to the Service Manager (Trade Matters) of the department at 17th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road or telephone 2582 4900.

End

#### Primary schools invited to join extensive reading scheme

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Primary schools are invited to participate in Phase III of the Hong Kong Extensive Reading Scheme in English next September.

A total of 40 schools will be selected to join the scheme.

The Education Department began implementing Phase I of the Hong Kong Extensive Scheme in English in public sector primary schools in September 1995.

At present, there are 83 schools in Phases I and II of the scheme.

The scheme is a curriculum project for upper primary pupils. It is aimed at helping upper primary students develop a reading habit in English and improving their English proficiency through reading good quality English books.

Through a well-organised reading programme, pupils will eventually be able to improve their writing abilities and other skills.

Participating schools will be provided with a complete resource package consisting of one set of 250 books graded into six different levels accompanied by reading and teaching aids.

Specialist support including seminars and induction courses will be offered to schools before implementing the scheme.

Those interested in participating in the scheme are requested to send in their application to the English Section of Education Department's Advisory Inspectorate, Room 304 Advisory Inspectorate Teaching and Resources Centre, 19 Hok Yuen Street, Hung Hom on or before December 11.

Further enquiries can be made to the section on 2333 8477 or 2892 6573.

End

#### Country parks management centres open to public on Saturday

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For the first time, selected country parks management centres will be opened to the public this Saturday (December 7).

The open day is organised by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) as part of the Government's Serving the Community Week with the objective of introducing the work of country parks staff.

An AFD spokesman said today (Monday) that it was the first time to open these centres to the public and would provide an opportunity for the community to know more about the services provided in these areas.

"It is expected that visitors can have a better understanding of the department's efforts in the management of country parks," he said.

Management centres to be opened this weekend includes those at Tai Tong, Shing Mun, Hok Tau, Aberdeen and the Lions Nature Education Centre in Sai Kung.

"Activities will include guided tours for school parties, games and demonstrations.

"The displays and demonstrations will help the visitors to learn more about the work in county parks as well as the commitments of our staff," the spokesman added.

Award-winning videos portraying the country parks would also be shown and a limited quantity would be freely distributed to visitors.

Opening hours of these centres on the day are from 10 am to 4 pm. Members of the public are welcome to visit the centres and all activities are free of charge.

Telephone numbers of the management centres are: Tai Tong (2475 8774), Shing Mun (2489 8598), Hok Tau (2674 4399), Aberdeen (2553 7545), Lions Nature Education Centre (2792 3823).

End

Royal Observatory Almanac 1997 now on sale

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The Royal Observatory Almanac 1997 has been published.

This bilingual booklet contains the traditional Chinese Calendar and times of daily sunrise, sunset, moonrise, moonset, high and low tides, arranged on a month-by-month basis.

The times of meridian passage, rising and setting of the planets are graphically illustrated in this handy almanac.

The duration of twilight, details of equinoxes, and solstices and eclipses in 1997 as well as climatological normals of Hong Kong and other selected major cities for each month of the year are also given in this publication.

The almanac is now on sale at \$12 a copy at the Government Publications Centre, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong and the Royal Observatory Headquarters, 134A Nathan Road, Kowloon.

End

#### Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

\* \* \* \* \*

Tender date	: 3 December 1996
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q062
Issue	: 4 December 1996
Maturity date	: 2 January 1997
Amount applied	: HK\$16,000 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$5,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 4.54 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 4.55 PCT
Pro-rata ratio	: About 84 PCT
Average tender yield	: 4.59 PCT

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Tender date : 3 December 1996  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : Q649  
Issue : 4 December 1996  
Maturity date : 5 March 1997  
Amount applied : HK\$5,850 MN  
Amount allotted : HK\$2,000 MN  
Average yield accepted : 4.59 PCT  
Highest yield accepted : 4.61 PCT  
Pro-rata ratio : About 45 PCT  
Average tender yield : 4.62 PCT

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Tender date : 3 December 1996  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : H679  
Issue : 4 December 1996  
Maturity date : 4 June 1997  
Amount applied : HK\$2,540 MN  
Amount allotted : HK\$1,000 MN  
Average yield accepted : 4.75 PCT  
Highest yield accepted : 4.77 PCT  
Pro-rata ratio : About 80 PCT  
Average tender yield : 4.78 PCT

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 9 December 1996

Tender date : 10 December 1996  
Paper on offer : EF bills  
Issue number : Q650  
Issue date : 11 December 1996  
Maturity date : 12 March 1997  
Tenor : 91 days  
Amount on offer : HK\$2,000 MN + 500 MN

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

\* \* \* \* \*

		<u>Time</u>	<u>Cumulative change</u>
Opening balance in the account	4,000 MN	0930 HR	+538 MN
Closing balance in the account	4,378 MN	1000 HR	+538 MN
Change attributable to:		1100 HR	+538 MN
Money market activity	+543 MN	1200 HR	+538 MN
LAF today	-165 MN	1500 HR	+543 MN
		1600 HR	+543 MN

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 125.2 \*+0.3\* 3.12.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF Bills		EF Notes/MTRC Notes				
Terms	Yield	Terms	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.61	2 years	2811	5.72	100.44	5.55
1 month	4.59	3 years	3910	6.28	101.19	5.90
3 months	4.62	5 years	5109	7.32	103.89	6.45
6 months	4.74	7 years	7311	6.80	100.75	6.77
12 months	5.07	10 years	1610	7.37	103.30	7.02
		5 years	M503	7.35	102.63	6.80

Total turnover of EF Bills and Notes - \$20,028 million

Closed December 3, 1996

End