



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of the Governor's doorstep interview

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Following is the transcript of the doorstep interview by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, following meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Michael Heseltine, in London today (Friday):

Governor: Good morning, I had a very interesting meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Heseltine, who is an old friend and colleague. We had about an hour and 20 minutes together. It is the first of a number of meetings I am having with senior Ministers and officials during my visit to London.

Next week I will be seeing the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, other Foreign Office officials and one or two other Ministers, and of course I have a couple of important speeches about Hong Kong business beginning on Monday morning - I am sure you will be there! - the Trade Development Council dinner on Thursday and three public lectures in between. Quite a busy programme!

Question: Did you discuss the PWC's (Preliminary Working Committee) recent proposals regarding the Bill of Rights?

Governor: I mentioned those to Mr Heseltine. He had obviously read about them himself. I will be raising them of course principally with the Foreign Secretary and officials who are very concerned, but I will be talking to the Prime Minister about them as well.

Question: Did you discuss right of abode issues?

Governor: We talked about the whole range of JLG issues, so that included the right of abode and visa-free access and so on. Again, that is the sort of agenda I will be having with other Ministers during the week.

Question: And did Mr Heseltine generally agree with the statement you have put forward on these issues?

Governor: I always think it is dangerous when one comes out of meetings to put words into other people's mouths, but, as ever, we had a good meeting. He knows Hong Kong very well. He is very concerned, as we all are, to ensure that Hong Kong is as successful in the future as it has been up to date and so is concerned to ensure that the Joint Declaration is fully implemented.

Thank you very much.

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CS hosts dinner for HKMAO Deputy Director

In response to press enquiries, a government spokesman confirmed that the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, had invited Mr Chen Ziyang, Deputy Director, Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, for a dinner at Victoria House this (Friday) evening.

It was an informal social occasion for a small gathering of friends including the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang.

Mr Chen invited Mr and Mrs Chan for a dinner while they were in Beijing in July.

"It was only natural to reciprocate the hospitality," the spokesman said.

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Legal system to remain unchanged after 1997: Solicitor General

The present legal system will remain unchanged after July 1997, as guaranteed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, the Solicitor General, Mr Daniel R Fung, QC, affirmed the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) in Geneva today (Friday, Geneva Time).

Speaking at the second day hearing of the Committee on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Mr Fung said it was not anticipated that members of the Judiciary could not continue to remain in office after 1997.

Mr Fung also informed the Committee that English would remain in use in the executive legislature and judiciary in Hong Kong after 1997 and Chinese would progressively be used in courts in the run-up to 1997 and beyond.

He gave an outline of the use of Chinese in court programme, including the use of bilingual charge sheets in magistrate courts and district courts.

He also assured the committee that all new legislation was drafted in both English and Chinese now and that the translation of all existing legislation would be completed before 1997.

In response to a question raised by a member of the Committee, Mr Fung said Police are liable to prosecution for the unlawful use of weapons causing death or injury.

He added that it was a disciplinary offence for a police officers to exercise unlawful or unnecessary authority resulting in loss or injury to any other persons rendering him liable to punishments ranging from reprimand to dismissal.

In response to a question raised by a member of the UNHRC on whether the Government had plans to criminalise marital rape, Mr Fung said the House of Lords decision in a case in 1991 applied to Hong Kong.

That case decided that there was no longer a rule of law that a wife was deemed to have consented irrevocably to sexual intercourse with her husband.

A husband could therefore be prosecuted and convicted of rape of his wife, Mr Fung said, adding that there were no need to reform this area of the law.

On a question on how the Government dealt with domestic violence, Mr Fung said the Government provided a range of services to victims of domestic violence including counselling, psychological assessment/treatment, child care, financial assistance, as well as housing and other assistance.

When a case of domestic violence was reported, he said the Police would liaise with the Social Welfare Department to provide counselling for victims and would immediately arrange for the victim to undergo medical examination.

Moreover, the police force also maintained close liaison with other relevant Government departments, non-governmental organisations and women's groups to strengthen the training for front-line officers on crisis intervention and understanding the trauma and psychology of victims, Mr Fung said.

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Pleasant surprises in APEC Action Agenda hinted

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The Director-General of Trade, Mr Tony Miller, today (Friday) hinted at "pleasant surprises" in the Action Agenda which would be unveiled next month at the Economic Leaders' meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) in Osaka, Japan.

"Be prepared to be pleasantly surprised both by its scope and its openness," he told a luncheon meeting of the Belgium-Hong Kong Society in Brussels in his speech entitled "APEC: A New Force for Free Trade".

The Action Agenda will be the road map for achieving the goal of free trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region by the years 2010 or 2020 for industrialised and developing economies respectively as set down by APEC Economic Leaders at their last meeting in November last year.

Referring to its scope, Mr Miller said APEC Senior Officials could have just focused their attention on the obvious traditional areas of bringing down tariffs, breaking down non-tariff barriers and opening up the markets for goods and services.

"Instead, under the guidance of the Japanese Chair, we have gone about the task of setting specific targets and guidelines for both individual and collective action across the whole range of trade and economic activity and the associated rules, procedures and policies," he said.

"Thus the Agenda will say what we plan to do in such areas as investment, competition policy, rules of origin, customs procedures, standards and conformance, intellectual property rights and so on.

"Some have said that this is unrealistic. Our response has been to say that the Leaders have set us a clear and unequivocal target, that the twin target dates of 2010 and 2020 are sufficiently far ahead for all of us to address 'political realities', and that it is not for bureaucrats to be less ambitious than their masters.

"Nevertheless, the short, medium and long-term targets which we propose represent a realistic estimate of the time needed to move things forward and to firm up proposals in those areas where more time is required."

As regards openness, Mr Miller said the Leaders had committed APEC to a policy of open regionalism.

"We have not set about bringing down internal barriers only to maintain barriers to the outside world. We are committed to non-discrimination. We are committed to consistency with GATT/WTO rules. We are intent on leading the process of liberalisation by example not by establishing another trade bloc or free trade area," he said.

On the question of "free-riding", Mr Miller pointed out that Hong Kong's position had always been the trade barriers hurt those behind them more than those beyond.

"We are confident that bringing down the barriers in Asia will stimulate growth and will encourage trade with those outside the Asia-Pacific. We hope that you will respond in kind," he told the meeting.

Mr Miller said the Action Agenda was nine-tenths complete and he was confident that it could be finished off by the time Ministers gathered in Osaka.

Setting out how he thought the timetable for its implementation would unfold, he said first, APEC Senior Officials would present an ambitious and comprehensive Action Agenda to Ministers and Leaders for their endorsement in Osaka next month.

"Second, by the subsequent Leaders' meeting in Manila in November next year, member economies will present equally comprehensive and ambitious plans for liberalisation and deregulation of their economies for implementation commencing January 1997," he said.

"Third, collective action already in hand to cut through the red-tape and bureaucratic hassle of different customs procedures, standards and the like will be pushed ahead in parallel and extended to embrace all those areas of trade and investment facilitation and deregulation which require common agreement and collective action.

"Fourth, the plans will be subject to a continuous process of review and revision right through to achievement of the goals set at Bogor in Indonesia last year."

On the search for a new approach to liberalisation and facilitation in the drawing up of the Action Agenda, he said: "The approach which has emerged from our deliberations is a hybrid, comprising both individual and collective action.

"The first part of this hybrid reflects the fact that many members of APEC have achieved more liberalisation and deregulation over the last five years or so by their own unilateral initiatives than has been squeezed from them through negotiation.

"Our approach builds on this in a freely competitive spirit and envisages individual member economies setting out what they propose to liberalise and when in their own extended action plans. These individual plans will then be 'concerted' wherever possible through a process of consultation and review."

Mr Miller, however, pointed out that whilst the "concerted unilateral approach" should work well for eliminating tariffs, it would not work for all areas of liberalisation, deregulation and facilitation.

He said clearly there were areas where, to have any impact at all, collective agreement would be needed before effective action could be taken.

"This is particularly necessary in trade facilitation, or cutting red-tape," he added.

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HK's trade and economic relations with the US after 1997

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In response to press reports that the US Department of Commerce is considering the possibility of incorporating Hong Kong's trade with the US after 1997 as a part of China's trade with the US for statistical purposes, a government spokesman said today (Friday) the Hong Kong Government is not aware of such a move.

"We do not believe that the press reports can be accurate, because such a move would be contrary to the provisions of the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992. Section 103 of that Act stipulates that the United States should seek to maintain and expand economic and trade relations with Hong Kong and should continue to treat Hong Kong as a separate territory in economic and trade matters", the spokesman said.

The spokesman stressed that under both the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall after 1997 continue to be a separate customs territory and a separate economic entity.

"After 1997, Hong Kong will continue to be a separate member of the World Trade Organisation, with its own separate rights and obligations vis-a-vis both the US and China," he added.

"It is therefore inconceivable that the US Government would not be maintaining a separate set of trade statistics in respect of Hong Kong after 1997."

Commenting on the reported discrepancies between the trade statistics of China and the US in respect of China's exports to the US, the spokesman said: "Hong Kong's trade statistics are compiled on the basis of internationally accepted rules of origin for manufactured products. There is, therefore, no possibility of any confusion, as far as the Hong Kong Government is concerned, between goods of Chinese origin and those of Hong Kong origin."

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Civil Service public housing quota

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The Management fully understands the staff side's disappointment over the reduction in the rental element of the public housing quota for junior civil servants, but we believe that the quota for 1995-1996 represents the best possible under the circumstances, a spokesman for the Civil Service Branch (CSB) said today (Friday).

The spokesman was responding to press enquires about the decision of the staff side of the four consultative councils not to attend a meeting with CSB officials to finalise the call circular to be issued next week to invite applications for places in the Civil Service Public Housing Quota 1995-1996.

He stressed that CSB would continue to press the Housing Department and Housing Authority to increase the rental element of the quota in future back to at least 1,300 units and with an additional element to cover the "shortfall" in 1995-96.

Noting that the overall size of the quota for 1995-96 has been increased for the first time in 10 years, from 1,700 to 1,950 places, the spokesman reiterated that the Government had absolutely no intention of changing this long-standing policy which aimed to improve the welfare of junior staff.

He added that the size of the quota was subject to negotiation each year and had varied dramatically in the past; in at least one year (1974) the quota was reduced to zero because of enormous pressure on the public housing programme that year.

"The Government is very well aware of its obligations to the staff as a good employer while we are also conscious of our obligations to the community at large. The quota for next year has taken into account this consideration and other relevant factors," he said.

The meeting was originally scheduled this afternoon between CSB and representatives of the Junior Police Officers Association, the Disciplined Services Consultative Council, Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council and the Senior Civil Service Council.

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Film Censorship (Amendment) Ordinance effective next month

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The Film Censorship (Amendment) Ordinance 1995 enacted in July this year will become effective on November 17, 1995. A notice to this effect was published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

Under the Film Censorship (Amendment) Ordinance, Category II films are divided into Category IIA and Category IIB sub-categories. Compulsory censorship is also imposed on advertising materials of Category III films.

A spokesman for the Recreation and Culture Branch said dividing Category II into two sub-categories would give more information to movie-goers, particularly parents, in the selection of films for themselves or their children.

"Category IIA films are 'Not Suitable for Children' and Category IIB films are 'Not Suitable for Young Persons and Children'," the spokesman explained, adding that these two sub-categories were still advisory in nature with no compulsory age restriction on such films.

"As regards the imposition of compulsory censorship on advertising materials of Category III films, we believe this will address the community's concern regarding the public display of offensive film advertising materials," he added.

The Film Censorship (Amendment) Ordinance has also introduced other changes which include replacing the three official members of the Board of Review (Film Censorship) with non-officials to enhance public participation in the work of the Board.

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Joint operation to flush out illegal immigrants

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A territory-wide operation against illegal immigration jointly mounted by the Police, Immigration Department and Labour Department has resulted in the arrests of 99 people.

The operation is part of the Government's continuous effort to flush out illegal immigrants.

The 58 suspected illegal immigrants arrested by the Police have been referred to the Immigration Department. Those found to be illegal immigrants will be repatriated.

A Government spokesman reiterated today (Friday) that there was no question of any amnesty for illegal immigrants.

"Our latest operation should drive home the point that there will be no change to this policy. Anyone foolish enough to believe otherwise is only cheating oneself," he said.

The spokesman stressed that apart from continuous checks throughout the territory, there was no let-up in anti-illegal immigration efforts at the border.

"A high state of vigilance will continue to be maintained by the Police and the security forces both at the land and sea borders," he said.

During the joint operation, which began at 5 am yesterday (Thursday) and ended at 5 am today, the Police stepped up their identification spot checks in public places and carried out checks at suspicious locations throughout the territory.

As a result, a total of 15,198 persons, 1,467 vehicles and 742 vessels were stopped for identification checks.

During the operation, Immigration investigators visited a total of 21 residential addresses and business establishments and arrested 41 suspected immigration offenders.

Of the 41 people arrested, 24 were women and 17 men. Eleven of them were Two-way Permit holders, one was an illegal immigrant, nine were foreign domestic helpers, and eight were travellers. The remaining 12 were Hong Kong residents who were suspected of aiding and abetting breach of condition of stay or employing a person not lawfully employable.

On the labour front, inspectors of the Labour Department visited 2,395 establishments to weed out any illegal immigrants who may be working there and to check that employers fulfil their legal obligation of keeping proper records of their employees.

A total of 6,930 employees had their proof of identity checked.

Twelve establishments were found not able to provide a record of employees for inspection.

The spokesman reminded employers that they could be fined up to \$250,000 and jailed for up to three years if they were found to be employing illegal immigrants.

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Higher maximum fines for employment offences proposed

The Government has proposed to raise the levels of maximum fines under the Employment Ordinance and its subsidiary regulations to bring about tougher sanctions and to align the amounts of fines to the levels specified under the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Ordinance 1994.

The proposals have been endorsed by the Governor-in-Council and details outlining the proposed new maximum fines are contained in the Employment (Amendment) (No. 4) Bill 1995 gazetted today (Friday).

Noting that the levels of maximum fines under the Employment Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation, the Employment Agency Regulations, the Employment of Children Regulations and the Women and Young Persons (Industry) Regulations were last revised in 1988, a government spokesman said the question of inflation had also been taken into account when drawing up the proposals.

"It is proposed in the Bill to classify the various offences into three categories - minor, serious and very serious types - for the purpose of determining the maximum fines," the spokesman said.

The proposed maximum fine for minor offences would be \$10,000 while the existing maximum fine ranges from \$5,000 to \$10,000. An example of a minor offence is the failure to keep records or to produce documentary proof as required under the Employment Ordinance.

The existing maximum fine for serious offences ranges from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and this would be revised to a standardised amount of \$50,000. An example of a serious offence is the failure to grant statutory benefits such as annual leave, long service payment, etc.

The maximum fine proposed for very serious offences are \$100,000 while the existing level is between \$25,000 and \$100,000. Examples of very serious offences include unlawful dismissal, infringement of rights in respect of trade union membership or activities.

The Government also proposed to introduce a monetary penalty for employers contravening Section 33(4B) of the Employment Ordinance.

"Under this particular section of law, an employer will commit an offence if he terminates the contract of an employee while he or she is on sick leave in respect of which sickness allowance is payable.

"This penalty will be pitched at very serious level with a maximum fine of \$100,000," the spokesman said.

Enquiries on the Employment (Amendment) (No. 4) Bill 1995 can be made to Mrs Judy Luk of the Labour Department's Labour Relations Division at 2852 3515.

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Improvements sought for law on award of costs

A Bill seeking to set out a fair and coherent set of principles to govern the award of costs in criminal proceedings is published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

A spokesman for the Legal Department said the Costs in Criminal Cases Bill would lead to a more efficient provision of legal services and a more effective administration of justice.

He said a working group to consider reforms was set up by the Attorney General following a proposal by the Law Society in 1991 that the present law and practice concerning the award of costs for criminal cases be reviewed.

The working group, chaired by a Deputy Crown Prosecutor, comprised representatives of the Bar Association, Law Society, Law Reform Commission, Legal Aid Department and the Secretary for the Treasury.

The main improvement proposed by the Bill now being put forward would rectify the different principles applicable in the award of costs in criminal proceedings, the spokesman said.

At present, in the Magistrates Court, costs may be awarded to the defendant if the magistrate is satisfied that the proceedings ought not to have been instituted or pursued. In the High Court and District Court, a different test applies, in that costs ought normally to be awarded to the defendant unless there are positive reasons why they should not be.

"Thus, in the Magistrates Court, an acquitted person carried the burden of demonstrating that the prosecution is at fault; in the District Court and High Court, he will normally be awarded costs, unless he is at fault or the acquittal turns on a technicality," the spokesman said.

The Bill now provides for courts at all levels to have a complete discretion on the question of costs. That discretion should normally be exercised in favour of the acquitted person unless there should be positive reasons for not so doing.

Furthermore, the Court of Appeal will be empowered to award costs to a defendant where it substitutes a sentence that is substantially at variance with that passed by the court below.

In the Magistrates Court, costs will be set at a ceiling of \$15,000 unless they are agreed by the prosecution and the defence or the magistrate orders that they be assessed. Courts at all levels will be given a discretion to award costs in favour of a defendant where he is charged with multiple offences but acquitted of one or more offences.

On the issue of prosecution costs, the spokesman pointed out that the Bill provides for costs to be ordered in favour of the prosecution in summary proceedings, indictable proceedings, and where a judge or the Court of Appeal dismisses an unmeritorious appeal lodged by a defendant. Costs limit in the Magistrates Court will also be increased to \$15,000, and if costs exceed that amount, they are to be assessed by an official of the court, unless agreed upon by the prosecution and the defence.

The liability for costs of a legally-aided defendant will not exceed his contribution paid or payable to the Director of Legal Aid towards the costs of his defence, the spokesman added.

The spokesman noted that at present, there are no provisions governing wasted costs in criminal cases, so that where loss or expense is caused to any person by the unjustified conduct of criminal litigation by either side's lawyer, there is no remedy.

For the maintenance of reasonable efficiency and competence of legal or other representatives and their employees, the Bill gives the court a discretion to order wasted costs against them.

To allay concern on the part of the legal profession that the interests of the legal representative may not be adequately protected, the Bill provides that no wasted costs order shall be made unless the legal or other representative concerned has been given a reasonable opportunity to appear before the court to show cause why the order should not be made.

Other provisions of the Bill allow for appeal against orders for costs, application for the costs to be assessed, and review of cost assessments, as well as the making of rules and orders by the Chief Justice.

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New package of drug education talks for secondary schools

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Teenage students will find out the truth about the harmful effects of drugs from real life cases featured in two new sets of videotapes and slides.

Produced for secondary students, the videos/slides form a major part of a 45-minute drug education talk conducted by the Narcotics Division, which also includes an introduction and a question session.

Revision of the audio visual aids, to replace a slide show which had been in use since 1989, are among the recommendations made by a working group set up in August 1994 to review and identify improvements to the school talks.

The chairman of the working group, Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (Narcotics), Mrs Sarah Kwok, said the revised school talks had avoided the didactic teaching approach and placed an emphasis on real life situation to create an impact on students.

"The videos feature the true revelation of a young ex-drug addict and stories adapted from real cases. We want to show the students what it is like after they become hooked on drugs, without exaggerating or underplaying it.

"All the cast in the videos are teenagers who speak the same language as their peers. In this way, we hope to get the message to students more easily," she said.

Mrs Kwok added that the revision also divided the talk into two versions for senior and junior forms respectively to address their different needs.

The video for the junior forms, entitled "My turn to have a say", is a 10-minute drama featuring a student who refuses to experiment with drugs after witnessing how drug misuse ruins the lives of his friends.

The version for the senior forms, "I have regrets to youth", provides stimuli to students to reflect over the issue by depicting four episodes, each adapted from a real story, to illustrate the reasons for taking drugs by youngsters and the harmful effects.

Both videos, prepared in collaboration with the Information Services Department, are also intertwined with interviews with a psychiatrist and a social worker.

The working group, comprising representatives of the Narcotics Division and Education Department, secondary school principals and social workers, has put forward a series of improvements to the contents and the format of the school talk.

One of the changes is to invite schools to organise supplementary activities before and after the school talk.

"The working group is of the view that the anti-drug message can be enhanced and supplemented by activities conducted in a classroom setting where the teacher is familiar with the students," Mrs Kwok said, stressing that drug education was not a one-off activity.

"Guidelines and reference materials have been prepared for schools to implement these activities, such as group discussion and role-playing," she added.

The principal of Shun Tak Fraternal Association Tam Pak Yu College, Mr Tsui Hin-ching, said he was most impressed by the real-case approach of the videotapes in introducing the consequences of drug abuse.

"All the characters in the films can be found around youngsters themselves. It can make them believe that what happens in the film could have happened to them," he said after viewing the new videotapes.

"The film also introduces some refusal skills which are useful and practical to students.

"I think the film will be more appealing to students as it avoids providing a large amount of information and the didactic teaching approach," Mr Tsui said.

All recommendations have been put into place starting this school year. So far, the Narcotics Division has received an enthusiastic response of 92 replies for arrangement of 152 talks.

"We try to entertain all requests which is a major step forward as previously, we visited secondary schools on a three-year cycle," Mrs Kwok said.

In 1994, the Narcotics Division's school talks team visited 94 secondary schools, giving 122 talks to about 54,000 students.

Similar talks are also being given to parents and primary six students.

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Review on implementation of Charter for Youth

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A conference to review the implementation of the Charter for Youth promulgated two years ago will be held on November 11 (Saturday).

Speaking at a press conference today (Friday) to announce details of the event, the chairman of the Preparatory Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Charter for Youth, Mr Eric Li, said some 400 participants from organisation subscribers, young people and youth workers would meet to share their experience in fulfilling the provisions of the Charter.

"Organisation subscribers to the Charter have earlier in the year elected among themselves to form a Preparatory Committee to prepare for the review. The Commission on Youth, as a subscriber to the Charter, has rendered full support to the Preparatory Committee," he said.

"It is hoped that through this experience-sharing exercise, subscribers would come up with innovative ideas to further promote and realise the spirit of the Charter. I also hope that we can help set the society's priority and direction of youth development in the next year," he added.

The conference, to be held from 8.45 am to 1 pm at Theatre One of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, will include keynote speeches, panel/group discussions and a reporting session.

"The panel/group discussions will focus on issues in four main areas reflected in the provisions of the Charter for Youth, namely family and youth; health and welfare; development and participation; and rights of youth.

"A compendium of review reports prepared by the subscribers will also be tabled for discussion at the conference," Mr Li said.

The Commission on Youth promulgated the Charter for Youth in July 1993. The Charter enunciates the principles and ideals on youth development and provides a point of reference for policy-makers, youth service providers and other parties involved in promoting the welfare of youth.

The Charter operates on a system of subscription with organisations and individuals interested in promoting the development of youth becoming subscribers on a voluntary basis.

"By the end of September 1995, about 350 organisations and 2,000 individuals have become subscribers to the Charter. It is never late to join." Mr Li said

The act of subscribing indicates the subscriber's desire to uphold the ideals in the Charter and it is also a promise to further the well-being of youths, in accordance with the spirit of the Charter.

Enquiries about the review conference can be directed to the Secretariat of the Commission on Youth on 2835 1929.

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Consultancy study on software industry completed

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There is a potential for Hong Kong's software industry to grow, according to a consultancy study on the trade, the Chairman of the Information Technology Committee (ITC) of the Industry and Technology Development Council (ITDC), Mr K K Yeung, said today (Friday).

Speaking at a press conference announcing the findings of the study, Mr Yeung said: "This is reflected in the fact that the present contribution of Hong Kong's software industry to GDP is only 0.044 per cent while the corresponding figure in US is 0.75 per cent, which is 17 times bigger.

"On the other hand, however, the local vanguard industries like banking, non-banking financial services, transportation, wholesale and retail together form a very sophisticated user base that demands persistent improvement in process and operating efficiency, underlining the importance of and demand for information technology.

"When compared with its other Asian competitors, Hong Kong has stronger market linkage to these sophisticated users and is therefore better positioned to take advantage of this market," he said.

Mr Yeung said the consultants had pointed out that while there were many opportunities for targeting the vanguard industries both locally and regionally for further development, the "packaged software" sector had greater potential for growth than the traditional custom software and software distribution which Hong Kong was currently good at.

"Hong Kong industrialists should begin to prepare for the coming of the era of packaged software," he said.

Commissioned in March last year, the consultancy study aims to foster the growth of the local software industry and to enhance its competitiveness by identifying obstacles to development and the means of overcoming them.

Mr Yeung said the consultants had made 17 recommendations - nine for Phase I study and eight for Phase II study - to the Government.

"Having considered these recommendations carefully, the ITC has accepted most of them and would pursue a number of the proposed initiatives," he said.

"For example, the concept of a Software Business Centre will be examined. We are now looking into the mode of operation and the scale of the centre.

"The 'product manager gap' in productising packaged software is a valid concern and ways in closing this gap are being addressed.

"Consideration will be given to recruiting overseas product managers to Hong Kong for transfer of marketing knowledge and arranging forums to share product management knowledge among local software developers.

"The importance of Cyberspace is recognised and ways are being sought to speed up the learning process in the industry.

"For this purpose, a project is now being formulated to help the local software industry to gain more knowledge in the use of Internet and to develop some useful tools and facilities relating to the use of information networks.

"Software quality should also be promoted and the software industry would need to adopt international quality standards to streamline their development process.

"In this respect, a project on software process improvement is being undertaken by the Hong Kong Productivity Council with funding from the Industry Department to help the local software companies gain more understanding and experience in adoption of quality practices," said Mr Yeung.

He said ITC would submit its views on the consultants' recommendations and its own recommendations to ITDC later this year and would then proceed to follow up these initiatives by exploiting various means of funding, including the Industrial Support Fund.

A 3-volume report of the consultancy study is now published and copies are now on sale at the Government Publications Centre.

The consultancy study was conducted in two phases.

Phase I study was undertaken by the Hong Kong Productivity Council and International Data Corporation. It takes stock of the local software industry and analyses its relationship and competitive profile among the regional countries, in particular Southern China.

Phase II study was undertaken by Dataquest Incorporated. It analyses the global trends affecting the local software industry including market demands, external factors and technology development.

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New fee proposed for marine fish culture licence

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The Government is proposing to revise the fee for the marine fish culture licence from November 23.

The proposed fee revision is contained in the Marine Fish Culture (Amendment) Regulation 1995 gazetted today (Friday) and the new fee for the grant or renewal of marine fish culture licence will be \$8.8 per square metre.

A Government spokesman said the fee was last revised in October 1994.

"It is government policy that fees should in general be set at levels sufficient to recover the full costs of providing the services," he said.

"The present revision proposed aimed at recovering the full cost at 1995-96 prices," he added.

The proposed new fee would represent less than one per cent of the operation expenses of a typical fish farm. It should not cause hardship to mariculturists nor have adverse implications on the economy.

Mariculturists have been consulted and are contented with the proposed increase in licence fee.

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HIV/AIDS situation in third quarter

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A total of 29 persons were found to be positive for the HIV Antibody Test in the third quarter of 1995, the Department of Health announced today (Friday).

This brings the number of HIV infected persons in Hong Kong to 602.

Thirteen new AIDS cases were reported during the same period.

The total number of confirmed AIDS cases is 161.

Of the 602 HIV-infected, 267 acquired the infection through heterosexual sex and 208 through homosexual or bisexual sex; 12 were injecting drug users; two were mother-to-child transmissions around the time of birth; and 66 acquired the infection through contaminated blood or blood products before 1985 when HIV Antibody Test and safe heat treated clotting concentrates were not available.

As for the remaining 47, the information available was inadequate for classification.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in August

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The value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand for local production in August 1995 increased by 6% over a year earlier, according to the provisional results of a monthly survey released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Comparing August 1995 with August 1994, significant increases in the value of outstanding orders were recorded in the electronic products industry (+18%), the printing and publishing industry (+15%) and the electrical products industry (+13%). A moderate increase in the value of orders was also recorded in the fabricated metal products industry (+7%).

On the other hand, decreases in the value of orders were recorded in the textiles industry (-11%) and the plastic products industry (-10%).

Compared with July 1995, and bearing in mind that this comparison may be affected by seasonal factors, the value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in August 1995 decreased by 2%.

The Monthly Survey of Orders-on-hand covers a sample of some 300 manufacturing firms engaging 50 or more workers.

Manufacturers' orders-on-hand refer to orders and parts of orders received earlier by manufacturers for local production which remain unfilled as at the end of the reference month. Orders received by traders not engaged in production are included if such orders are further placed to manufacturers for production locally. However, orders placed to manufacturing firms for production in China and other places outside Hong Kong are not included in this series of orders-on-hand statistics.

A spokesman of the department pointed out that caution should be exercised in interpreting the manufacturers' orders-on-hand figures in a single month. Instead, the trend movement of the series as displayed over a wider span of time points should be looked at.

The survey report for August 1995, at \$6 a copy, is now available for sale at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway, and at the Census and Statistics Department Publications Unit, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be made to the Industrial Production Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6441.

The following table shows the year-on-year percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in different manufacturing industries.

	Percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in	
	July 1995 over July 1994 (Revised)	August 1995 over August 1994 (Provisional)
All industries covered in the survey	+6	+6
* Wearing apparel	+5	+1
* Textiles	-10	-11
* Electronic products	+19	+18
* Electrical products	+20	+13
* Fabricated metal products	-4	+7
* Plastic products	-13	-10
* Printing and publishing	-4	+15

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Construction output statistics

The gross value of construction work performed, in nominal terms by main contractors, including general and special trade contractors, amounted to \$24.5 billion in the second quarter of 1995, and was 11% higher than a year earlier, according to the results of the Quarterly Survey of Construction Output released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Compared with the first quarter of 1995, the gross value of construction work performed by main contractors in the second quarter of 1995 increased by 7.4%.

Provisional estimate of the gross value of construction work performed, measured at constant (1990) market prices in the second quarter of 1995 was 1.3% higher than in the second quarter of 1994.

The gross value of construction work performed at private sector sites in the second quarter of 1995 totalled \$8.8 billion, and was 3.1% lower than in the second quarter of 1994.

Over the same period, the gross value of construction work performed at constant (1990) market prices dropped by 8.7%. This was partly related to the completion of a number of major private sector projects. On the other hand, the gross value of construction work performed at public sector sites, at \$9.6 billion, remained on a strong uptrend.

It showed a substantial increase of 48.2% over the second quarter of 1994, reflecting the further intensification of work on the major infrastructural projects. The corresponding increase when measured at constant (1990) market prices was 40%.

The gross value of construction work performed by general contractors at locations other than construction sites was \$3.9 billion, which was 9.1% lower than in the second quarter of 1994.

When measured at constant (1990) market prices, the corresponding decrease was 19.6%. The types of work covered included minor new construction and renovation work at erected buildings and structures.

The gross value of construction activities performed by special trade contractors at locations other than construction sites, comprising mainly electrical and mechanical fitting work, totalled \$2.2 billion, and was 0.9% lower than in the second quarter of 1994.

When measured at constant (1990) market prices, the gross value of construction work performed by these contractors was 17.6% lower than in the second quarter of 1994.

Analysed by end-use, transport projects, which covered airport construction projects, for the first time accounted for the greatest portion of the gross value of construction work performed at construction sites. The gross value of construction work performed for these projects was \$5.6 billion, representing an increase of 29.6 over the second quarter of 1994.

Residential building projects (including commercial/residential (composite) buildings) formed the second largest category of construction site work.

The gross value of construction work performed for these projects was \$5 billion. This was 2.4% higher than in the second quarter of 1994.

Commercial building projects constituted the third largest category of construction site work. The gross value of construction work performed for these projects totalled \$2 billion, which was 10% lower than in the second quarter of 1994.

The gross values of construction work at constant (1990) market prices are derived by deflating the nominal values with appropriate price indices to the price level of 1990.

Owing to the widespread sub-contracting practices in the construction industry, a construction establishment can be a main contractor for one contract and a sub-contractor for another contract at the same time.

The gross value of construction work performed by main contractors, including both general and special trade contractors, covers only those projects in which the construction establishment takes the role of a main contractor, but not projects in which it takes only the role of a sub-contractor.

However, sub-contractors' contribution to projects should have been included in the gross value of construction work performed by main contractors for whom they worked.

More detailed statistics on construction output are given in the "Report on the Quarterly Survey of Construction Output, 2nd Quarter 1995".

The report is now on sale at \$11 a copy at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, or at the Census and Statistics Department Publications Unit, Wanchai Tower, 19th floor, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai. Regular subscription may also be arranged.

Enquiries about the survey may be directed to the Building, Construction and Real Estate Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6426.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

New licensing examination of Medical Council

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The Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK) today (Friday) announced that with effect from August 1 next year, all medical graduates wishing to register as a medical practitioner with the Council will be required to pass the Council's Licensing Examination and undergo a successful period of pre-registration practical training.

A spokesman for MCHK explained that the new scheme was being introduced as a result of the amendment to the Medical Registration Ordinance, which was passed through the legislature on July 28.

He said the scheme would affect in particular medical practitioners from the United Kingdom and certain recognised Commonwealth countries such as Australia and Singapore. The latter are, at present, exempted from having to take MCHK's Licentiate Examination.

Local graduates of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong would be exempted from having to take the Licensing Examination, he added.

He said the new Licensing Examination would be modelled on the existing Licentiate Examination with some modifications to bring in an uniform standard applicable to all candidates, irrespective of their original place of training.

The new examination is made up of three parts:

- * Part I will be expanded to consist of a total of 180 to 240 multiple choice questions, to be answered in two papers; and is intended to test the candidate's knowledge not only in the various fields of medicine but also in basic sciences and medical ethic.
- * Part II will retain its present format and is designed to ensure that the candidate's command of English is adequate for professional purpose.
- * Part III will be revised to a clinical examination so as to test the candidate's ability to apply professional knowledge to clinical problems in various aspects of medical practice.

Those candidates who have passed in all three parts of the examination will also need to successfully complete 12 months of internship training in Hong Kong before they are qualified for registration with MCHK as medical practitioners.

Further details of the application procedures for the new Licensing Examination will be announced early next year, where applications will then be invited.

The spokesman also pointed out that as a result of the implementation of the new scheme, any candidate who would participate in the Council's current Licentiate Examination in early next year but subsequently failed in any part thereof would have to start afresh from Part I of the new Licensing Examination.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Tenders invited for drainage works

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The Drainage Services Department is inviting tenders for drainage maintenance works in northern New Territories.

The works include the maintenance and improvement of all existing public sewers, storm water drains, pumping stations, flood storage ponds and sewage treatment facilities in Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Tai Po and North Districts.

The contract also covers the construction of minor sewers, drains and drainage structures and plants in these areas.

The contract will begin in January next year and last for 24 months.

A notice of the tender invitation was gazetted today (Friday).

Tender forms and further particulars may be obtained from the office of the Chief Engineer, Mainland North Division, Drainage Services Department, 14th floor, Kowloon Government Offices, 405 Nathan Road, Yau Ma Tei.

The tender closing date is noon on November 10.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Tenders invited for works at Stanley Prison

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The Architectural Services Department is inviting tenders for construction and alteration works at Stanley Prison.

The contract will include the construction of a three-storey hospital block and two single-storey dining halls complete with ancillary buildings, associated external and drainage works.

It will also include alteration and extension works to the existing Main Gatelodge to enlarge the reception and visiting areas.

Details of the tender are contained in the Government Gazette published today (Friday).

Tender forms and further particulars can be obtained from the Architectural Services Department, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Tenders must be clearly marked and addressed to the Chairman of the Central Tender Board and placed in the Government Secretariat Tender Box at the lift lobby, lower ground floor, Central Government Offices, East Wing, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong before noon on November 17 (Friday).

Late tenders will not be accepted.

Only contractors on the Approved Contractors for Public Works List I Group C for Building Works & List II for Building Works will be permitted to tender.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Tenders invited for port works maintenance

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The Civil Engineering Department (CED) is inviting tenders for the maintenance and repairs to seawalls, piers and other port works for 1996 and 1997.

The works include dredging and maintenance and repairs to seawalls, piers and other marine structures, together with the construction of new minor marine works.

The contract covers a period of 24 months starting from early January 1996.

The Port Works Division of the Civil Engineering Office of CED will design and supervise the works.

Forms of tender and further particulars may be obtained from the Chief Engineer, Port Works Division, Civil Engineering Office, CED, fifth floor, Civil Engineering Building, 101 Princess Margaret Road, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon.

Tender offers will close at noon on November 10.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Prequalification of chemical suppliers

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The Drainage Services Department is inviting prequalification submissions for the supply and delivery of chemicals to the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works.

The chemicals comprise ferric salt (ferric chloride or ferric sulphate) and polymer, and the quantity required is estimated to be on average 51,700 kilograms (dry weight) and 1,700 kilograms per day respectively. The contract also includes associated technical support services such as health and safety training, product application training, product performance evaluation and chemical spills response.

The contract period will be between three and five years.

A notice inviting prequalification submissions was gazetted today (Friday).

Pre-qualification documents may be obtained from Montgomery Watsons Hong Kong Limited, 1911 Windsor House, 311 Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay.

Completed prequalification submissions should be submitted before noon on December 8.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Fresh water cut in Central

Fresh water supply to some premises in Central will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Monday (October 23) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains leakage detection.

The suspension will affect all premises in Pier Road, 7-90 Connaught Road Central, 54-78 and 11-195 Des Voeux Road Central, 67-85 Queen's Road Central and Central Market, Douglas Street, 2-4 and 11-31 Pottinger Street, Man Yee Lane, Queen Victoria Street, 17-19 Jubilee Street, 48-52 Gilman Street and Rumsey Street multi-storey car park.

End/Friday, October 20, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
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Opening balance in the account	2,728	0930	+451
Closing balance in the account	3,115	1000	+451
Change attributable to :		1100	+443
Money market activity	+440	1200	+440
LAF today	-53	1500	+440
		1600	+440

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 121.9 *-0.1* 20.10.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.53	2 years	2708	6.06	100.45	5.87
1 month	5.56	3 years	3807	6.16	100.24	6.15
3 months	5.60	5 years	5009	6.95	100.95	6.83
6 months	5.62	5 years	M501	7.90	102.99	7.25
12 months	5.65					

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$14,211 million

Closed October 20, 1995

End/Friday, October 20, 1995