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Land for Housing Authority

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The Government announced today (Friday) that it has earmarked about 30 hectares of additional land for allocation to the Housing Authority for construction of public housing up to the year 2000-01. In addition, a further 30 hectares are under active consideration for inclusion in the public housing programme.

A government spokesman said the Government attached great importance to achieving its targets for both rental and home ownership flats for the period 1995-96 to 2000-01.

"In terms of land requirements, we agree that we need to identify further sites for the Housing Authority in order to ensure that our targets can be safely met," the spokesman said.

The Government has decided to earmark administratively six sites for use by the Housing Authority for the purpose of constructing public housing up to March 2001. Three of the sites are new sites not currently in the Public Housing Development Programme (PHDP).

The remainder are sites which are already in the PHDP but where the Government will help accelerate production so as to bring completion dates forward into the 1995-96 to 2000-01 timeframe.

"In addition, we have identified seven other sites which planning or other constraints make it impossible to earmark now for the Housing Authority's use. We will use our best endeavours to see whether all or part of these sites can be made available to the Housing Authority in due course," the spokesman said.

The spokesman said in order to ensure that as much as possible is done to expedite the statutory or administrative procedures to which these sites may be subject, a special committee on land for public housing has been set up.

It is chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Housing, with senior representatives from the Housing Branch, the Planning, Environment and Lands Branch, the Housing Department, the Planning Department and the Lands Department as members.

"If necessary, problems affecting a particular site will also be brought to the attention of the Housing Project Action Team chaired by the Secretary for Housing to accelerate development," he added.

The spokesman said the Government would now proceed to determine appropriate housing production targets for the public and private sectors, and associated land requirements, up to the year 2005-06.

To make this possible, there is a need to complete an overall review of the Long Term Housing Strategy, covering key aspects of government housing policy.

"LegCo members are already being consulted by the Secretary for Housing for their initial views," the spokesman said.

"In parallel, the Working Group on Housing Demand will continue to refine its assumptions so that the implications of any proposed policy changes for housing production targets for the public and private sectors and associated land requirements can be properly assessed," he added.

The spokesman noted that the Government's conclusions in respect of its Long Term Housing Strategy, together with the methodology and the assumptions used by the Working Group on Housing Demand, would be included in a public consultation document to be published in mid 1996.

Following are two lists of sites earmarked for and under consideration for allocation to the Housing Authority:

Sites earmarked for allocation to the Housing Authority
for construction of public housing up to the year 2000-01

Site	Site area (ha)
I. New sites not within PHDP	
1. Yuen Chau Kok, Shatin	9.6
2. Blackdown Barracks, Choi Hung	7.2
3. Fortune Street Playground, Cheung Sha Wan	2.3
Sub-total	19.1

II. Sites already within PHDP to be accelerated for completion by March 2001

4. Tiu Keng Leng, Tseung Kwan O Area 74, Phases 1 and 2	4.2
5. Tin Shui Wai Reserve Zone Area 111B	2.9
6. Tin Shui Wai Reserve Zone Area 105, Phases 1 and 2	4.6
Sub-total	11.7
Total	30.8

Sites under consideration

Site	Site area (ha)
I. New sites, the use of which has to be finalised	
1. Diamond Hill	4.0
2. Ho Man Tin	3.8
Sub-total	7.8
II. New sites confirmed for public housing to be accelerated (now outside PHDP)	
3. Inverness Road, Kowloon City	1.7
4. Tung Tau Cottage Area, eastern site, Kowloon City	1.5
5. Tung Tau Cottage Area, western site, Kowloon City	0.8
Sub-total	4.0

III. Sites already within PHDP to be accelerated

6. Lung Tin Tsuen, Yuen Long Area 13	12.3
7. Tiu Keng Leng, Tseung Kwan O Area 73A&B	7.5

Sub-total	19.8
Total	31.6
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End

Government committed to human rights enhancement

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The Hong Kong Government has put the enhancement of human rights at the centre of its policy initiatives and is firmly committed to the vision that human rights are people's fundamental rights bestowed by virtue of their existence, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, said tonight (Friday).

Addressing the Amnesty International forum, Mr Suen said the right to life, to liberty and security, to freedom of thought and expression, to equality before the law and equal protection under the law are fundamental rights and not gifts of governments or any organisations.

Elaborating in his speech "Human rights: achievements and the way ahead", Mr Suen said: " We have a respectable record but cannot afford to be complacent."

Mr Suen said the Administration, apart from recognising the role and contribution of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as a driving force behind human rights development in Hong Kong, had taken its reporting to international human rights bodies very seriously.

He said the Home Affairs Branch was co-ordinating action in the territory on the matters raised by the United Nations Human Rights Committee and intended to offer the Legislative Council, NGOs and the public an opportunity in early 1996 to give their views on the issues to be covered in a special report on Hong Kong under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The report, to be submitted by the United Kingdom to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in May next year, will cover developments in respect of the issues raised in the Committee's concluding observations issued on November 3 including, most importantly, the obligation to submit periodic reports under Article 40 of ICCPR, he said.

Turning to the protection of human rights in the territory, Mr Suen said it was provided by the rule of law, a truly independent judiciary, a free and active press, a fairly elected Legislature, open and accountable government, effective and reliable complaints channels and the Bill of Rights Ordinance (BORO).

He said: "The rule of law in Hong Kong means that the powers of the Government are subject to the law and may be challenged in the courts. Everyone is subject to the law and everyone is equal before the law.

"Our laws are interpreted and applied by an independent judiciary. Prominent in this process is the Bill of Rights Ordinance, which gives effect in local law to the provisions of the ICCPR as applied to Hong Kong.

"Our citizens can, and do, take the Government to Court when they consider that we have infringed their rights. Clearly, this path of redress should not be constrained by financial considerations.

"Therefore, we have given the Director of Legal Aid discretion to waive the financial eligibility test for people wishing to pursue cases under the BORO."

Mr Suen added that BORO had been the yardstick in the ongoing review of legislation which was to ensure that legal restrictions on people's rights and freedom were reasonable, necessary and proportional to the problems they sought to address.

"So far we have enacted 36 amending ordinances to ensure that we will continue to enjoy a free society where the rights of the individual, press freedom and freedom of expression are guaranteed. We will continue to review our laws.

"The general public has come to accept the BORO as a fundamental and essential guarantee of human rights, and as part of the fabric of the laws of Hong Kong.

"The Preliminary Working Committee's proposals in respect of BORO have, therefore, aroused strong public concern.

"We have, and will continue to explain to the Chinese Government the misconceived nature of these proposals and the importance of preserving the Bill of Rights Ordinance as the cornerstone of human rights protection in Hong Kong."

Mr Suen also paid tribute to the first fully elected Legislature which he noted now acted with a mandate from the largest and most broadly based electorate in the territory's history.

On the Government's commitment to greater openness and accountability, Mr Suen said the Code on Access to Information introduced earlier this year was a major step forward.

In the belief that more open and accountable government is a better government, the Administration has formulated the Code which was intended to make available to the public as much information as possible to enhance understanding of the formulation and implementation of public policies.

"Some two-thirds of the Government is now covered by the Code and we intend to extend it to the remainder before the end of 1996."

As to the protection of personal privacy, Mr Suen said the Government would establish the Privacy Commission to promote and enforce compliance with the newly enacted Data Protection (Privacy) Ordinance.

On the issue of equal opportunities, Mr Suen said the territory had not been left on the sidelines amid an increasing level of interest on the topic world-wide.

"But it is not in our nature to rush headlong into changes simply because they are fashionable or politically expedient.

"We need first to be sure that injustices exist, that government action, whether administrative, educational, or legal, is the appropriate remedy and, if so, where the balance should be struck in meeting different aspirations of the community."

He said the Administration had proposed and LegCo had enacted in 1995 the Sex Discrimination Ordinance and the Disability Discrimination Ordinance after studies and public consultations revealed a clear and unambiguous need and demand for legislation against these practices.

On top of these first steps, he added, the Government was now studying discrimination on the grounds of age, family status and sexual preference.

"We will consult the public on the extent of the problems identified in these areas and how to solve them. In this way, we aim to tackle discrimination through means best suited to the circumstances, norms and needs of our society."

At the international level, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was recently extended to the territory which obliges Hong Kong to respect and protect children's rights.

Another recent "extension" was the Convention Against Torture which obliged the territory to outlaw and combat torture. Efforts in this area had been further strengthened by the enactment of the Crimes (Torture) Ordinance which prohibited torture, he said.

On channels to handle complaints, Mr Suen said the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints (COMAC) and other more specialised channels had served Hong Kong well and were constantly under review.

"Access to COMAC used to be by referral; now it is direct. Measures have also been taken to improve the system of handling of complaints against the police and action is in hand to make the Independent Police Complaints Council a statutory body," he said.

In spite of all these positive government measures to preserve and further human rights, Mr Suen said, it was still imperative for people to remain vigilant and assert their rights.

"Knowledge is a pre-requisite of such vigilance: people must be aware of what their rights are - and why they should care about them - before they can be effective watchdogs in their own best interests.

"That is why we have devoted substantial resources and effort to human rights education and established a special education unit to support the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education in its efforts to promote public awareness," he said.

In conclusion, Mr Suen said all these measures, taken together, had laid a solid and reliable foundation for human rights protection in Hong Kong.

"Now we must build on this foundation, in the same spirit in which it was laid. The rule of law will remain our guiding principle. We will not allow the independence of judiciary to be fettered," he said.

As set out clearly in the Policy Commitments, the Government would continue to co-ordinate the review of legislation to ensure its compliance with BORO, Mr Suen said.

"We will expedite action in establishing the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to ensure that our discrimination legislation and data protection legislation are fully implemented," he said.

End

Unemployment and underemployment statistics

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period August to October 1995 was 3.6%, and the underemployment rate was 2.3%, according to the latest labour force statistics released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The provisional seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period September to November 1995 remained at 3.6%, while the provisional underemployment rate was slightly lower, at 2.2%.

Commenting on the latest figures, a government spokesman said while the unemployment rate was still relatively high, the labour market situation seemed to have remained generally stable.

"Unemployment in the restaurants, and community, social and personal services sectors declined, offsetting the rise in unemployment in the construction and transport sectors. Unemployment in the manufacturing sector remained broadly stable. "As to underemployment, there was some reduction mainly in construction," the spokesman said.

The spokesman also noted that total employment continued to show a notable increase, by 2.4% in the three months ending October 1995 over a year earlier. But total labour supply rose even faster, by 3.9% over the same period.

During the period August to October 1995, the number of unemployed persons with previous jobs was estimated at 98,700. Another 17,200 unemployed persons were first-time job-seekers. The number of underemployed persons was estimated at 72,800.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for August to October 1995 covered a quarterly sample of some 18,000 households or 61,600 persons, selected scientifically to represent the land-based civilian non-institutional population in Hong Kong.

Data were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the households sampled.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

'Seasonally adjusted' refers to adjustment for seasonal variations in the proportion of first-time job-seekers in the labour force.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the report on the General Household Survey which is published four times a year.

The next report covering the quarter ending September 1995 will be on sale at the Government Publications Centre at ground floor, Low Block, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, by the end of December.

End

Comprehensive approach in dealing with cancer important: SHW

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A comprehensive approach in dealing with cancer, the number one killer disease that takes away more than 9,000 lives in Hong Kong every year, should be adopted, the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, said.

In this respect, she added, emphasis should be placed on prevention, early detection and treatment, as well as palliative care pending a breakthrough in medical research that would eliminate this cause of misfortune.

Mrs Fok was speaking at the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Hong Kong Anti-Cancer Society at the Nam Long Hospital today (Friday).

Noting that the promotion of a healthy lifestyle was primary in preventing cancer, Mrs Fok said: "The Government in May this year set up the Health Care and Promotion Fund, with an injection of $80 million.

"The Fund provides financial support to health care promotion projects that encourage people to change their lifestyle towards a state of optimal health."

Early detection is also important in reducing the mortality and morbidity of cancer patients.

Since the Department of Health opened its first woman health centre in May last year, breast cancer screening and cervical cancer screening were provided to over 3,000 and 3,500 women respectively.

"Thanks to these screening programmes, 24 women have been identified to be in the early stages of these forms of cancer and are now receiving appropriate treatment," Mrs Fok said, adding that a further 69 cases of suspected cancer were being investigated.

Another centre will be opened in Chai Wan early next year, and a third planned for the New Territories in 1997.

The Secretary also paid tribute to the Society for imparting knowledge on cancer to the community. These include educational talks in schools and community centres, and a weekly column on cancer in a local newspaper.

In addition, it has joined hands with the Hospital Authority in promoting hospice care through the organising of a three-week programme - Hospice Awareness 1995.

Furthermore, a three-month open house programme launched by Nam Long Hospital, is still on-going and provides the public an opportunity to get to know more about hospice care.

End

New elderly home in Eastern District opens

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Hong Kong people with the improvement of health and welfare services now enjoy a life expectancy which is longer than almost anywhere else in the world.

This was stated by Mrs Lavender Patten when she officiated at the opening ceremony of the Women's Welfare Club (Eastern District) Hong Kong Ng Siu Mui Home cum Care and Attention Unit for the Elderly at Yiu Tung Estate, Shau Ki Wan today (Friday).

Noting that this had led to a growing demand for services for the elderly, Mrs Patten said the government's goal in supporting the provision of these services was to improve the quality of life for elderly people, who had contributed much to Hong Kong's success over the years, so that they could now enjoy a comfortable and dignified old age.

"Government seeks to achieve this by offering a range of community support and residential care services to meet the ever-changing needs of elderly people.

"This goal could not, however, be achieved without the staunch support and long-term commitment of voluntary groups like the Women's Welfare Club (Eastern District) Hong Kong," Mrs Patten said.

The new elderly home, the second of its kind operated by the club, provides residential and care services to 105 elderly people.

Also present at the ceremony today were the Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly and Medical Social Services), Mrs Anna Mak; Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare), Mrs Patricia Chu; the District Officer of Eastern, Mr Lui Hau-tuen; and the Chairman of the Women's Welfare Club (Eastern District) Hong Kong, Ms Christina Ting.

End

Memorandum with Chinese Academy of Sciences signed

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The Director-General of Industry, Mrs Regina Ip, today (Friday) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) on technology collaboration on applied research and development between Hong Kong and China.

The signing took place at the Industry Department with the Director of Bureau of Applied Research and Development, Mr Huang Tieshan, and was witnessed by a delegation from the Academy headed by the Vice President, Professor Yan Yi-xun.

Under MOU, the Academy will provide support for the Co-operative Applied Research and Development Scheme (CARDS) by facilitating its research units and researchers to co-operate with recipient companies under the Scheme.

Administered by the Applied Research Council, CARDS was launched in June to promote applied R and D activities in Hong Kong by providing funding support for worthwhile projects undertaken by Hong Kong manufacturers utilising the technological research expertise of Hong Kong and China.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mrs Ip said the signing of MOU "signifies an important step forward in technology collaboration and exchanges between China and Hong Kong".

"It will foster closer links and co-operation between the Industry Department and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in developing R and D and high technology, in a bid to commercialise technological achievements," Mrs Ip said.

"To adjust to changing market conditions, the manufacturing industry in Hong Kong has been moving towards the high-tech and high value-added direction in recent years.

"In order for Hong Kong to remain competitive in world markets, the manufacturing sector has an urgent need to engage in more applied R and D work."

The Chinese Academy of Sciences, China's highest research centre for natural sciences, has over 50,000 scientists and technologists, and attained outstanding achievements in the area of scientific and technological research. Hong Kong manufacturers who had applied for funds under CARDS would have much to benefit from the assistance of the researchers of CAS, the Director-General said.

In less than half a year since its inception, funds have been approved for three projects, all of which involve the participation of research institutes in China, and one of them is a research institute of CAS.

End

15 people receive bravery award

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Fifteen people were today (Friday) commended by the Director of Marine, Mr Ian Dale, for their brave acts of saving lives of the others from the sea.

Among the 15 recipients of the 1995 Director of Marine's Commendation for Bravery is a 65-year-old employee of China Motor Bus Company, Mr Yuen Yan-ho.

Mr Yuen together with Police Inspector Lo Kwan-tung and Police Constables Chan Chi-ming and Liang Wai-ching, rescued a 60-year-old woman from the sea off North Point Ferry Pier on September 14, 1994.

Mr Yuen, who was working in the bus conductors' office at North Point Ferry Pier, saw the incident. He took a ladder from his office, tied it to a railing and climbed down into the sea in an attempt to rescue the drowning woman.

He managed to grasp the woman with one hand and held onto the ladder with the other hand. Despite the motion of the woman in the rough sea and the onset of fatigue, he held on to her until the arrival of a team of policemen.

On arrival at the scene, Inspector Lo, Constables Chan and Liang, jumped into the sea and together with Mr Yuen, the four kept the woman afloat in rough sea under a strong monsoon until firemen arrived.

The heroic acts of the four together with the 11 others saved a total of 43 lives from the sea.

Twenty-two crew members of a Thai vessel which met her fate and sank about 235 nautical miles south of Hong Kong on November 13, 1995 were saved because of the action taken by a Hong Kong seaman, Captain Wong Chong-lin.

Captain Wong, who was in command of a vessel registered in Singapore, responded to a call from the Hong Kong Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre and rushed his ship to render assistance to the crew in distress.

His selflessness and determination to discharge a seafarer's obligation to save lives at sea have resulted in the rescue of all the 22 crew members of the sunken vessel.

Another police constable was awarded for his swift action which resulted in saving the life of a 15-year-old girl off the Outlying Islands Ferry Pier in Central around 5.15 pm on August 18, 1995.

While Constable Chan Chung-yeung was patrolling with two colleagues in the area, they saw a girl jumping into the sea. Disregarding the busy sea traffic at the time, the choppy and heavily polluted water, Constable Chan jumped into the sea, swam to and secured the girl.

With the assistance of his two colleagues who threw buoys and radioed for further assistance, the girl was eventually rescued from the sea.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony, Mr Dale offered his thanks on behalf of the community to these 15 brave people.

"There are I believe many brave men and women in Hong Kong whose selfless acts are never reported, and thus the community at large has no opportunity to thank them. To those unknown and unnamed courageous people I offer the gratitude of our community," he said.

He appealed to anyone who is aware of a marine rescue incident to report it to the Marine Department.

"If justified those who placed their own lives in danger to help others will be invited to receive bravery award," he said.

The newly-elected Chairman of the Hong Kong Shipowners' Association, Mr George Chao, represented the Hong Kong maritime industry to offer thanks to the recipients.

Mr Chao said that through his involvement with the maritime industry, safety was the most important element of a successful marine business.

"Safety of people who work on ships or at the waterfront and safety of the ship to protect the marine environment," he said.

"But we do not live in a perfect world. Accidents happen, and people's lives are put in jeopardy, despite all our efforts to create a marine environment that has the highest of safety standards.

"It is at these times when we need the help of the brave men and women of our society who put their own safety at risk to aid others," he said.

End

Development of Causeway Bay site clarified

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In response to media and public enquiries on the development of a site at 44 Jardine's Crescent in Causeway Bay which will be put up for public auction next week, a spokesman for the Lands Department said today (Friday):

"In order to facilitate demolition of the existing building and construction works on the site, the Director of Urban Services will, upon request from the purchaser, arrange temporary resite of some fixed pitch hawker stalls in front of the site.

"However, the purchaser is expected to make its own arrangement to obtain vehicular access to the site during construction. The Government will provide assistance, if possible."

"The Fire Services Department may require additional fire service installations such as fast response sprinkler system and pressurised staircase at the existing access to the site. Detailed fire safety requirements will be formulated upon receipt of formal building plans," he added.

The site at 44 Jardine's Crescent, together with another site at Stubbs Road in Wan Chai, will be offered for sale at a public auction on Tuesday (December 19).

End

Owners urged to remove defective advertising signs

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The Buildings Department today (Friday) urged property and shop owners to take the initiative to remove poorly maintained or abandoned advertising signs for public safety.

The Senior Structural Engineer (Dangerous Buildings) of the department, Mr Robinson Chung, made the appeal after a clearance operation this afternoon to remove a number of abandoned advertising signs in Mong Kok.

Mr Chung said the signs were found to be potentially dangerous during a district-wide survey on advertising signs in Mong Kok from September this year.

"So far we have inspected more than 1,600 signs and 45 of them were found to be defective. They will be removed by the Buildings Department's contractors and the removal cost will be recovered from the owners.

"The survey on advertising signs will continue and similar clearance operations will be carried out in other districts," Mr Chung said.

Noting that public safety was the Government's prime concern, Mr Chung pointed out that it was the property or shop owners' responsibility to ensure safety erection and maintenance of advertising signs.

"There are more than 180,000 advertising signs in the territory and the figure increases by about six per cent each year.

"Before putting up overhanging signboards, people should seek professional advice for safe design and maintenance. They must also ensure that the signs are properly maintained after installation," he said.

Members of the public could also make reports to the Buildings Department if they identify any advertising signs which are posing danger to public safety, Mr Chung said.

The 24-hour Building Safety hotline is 2626 1234.

End

Order sought to close Kwai Chung building

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The Buildings Department will apply for a closure order from the court tomorrow (Saturday) morning to close a number of units of Kwai Hing Industrial Building which were severely damaged in a No 4 alarm fire yesterday (Thursday).

Speaking after inspecting the damaged units, Senior Structural Engineer (Dangerous Buildings) of the Buildings Department, Mr Lei Kai-ping, said the sixth and above floors of the building will be closed because part of the building structure had been damaged by the blaze.

"We will subsequently serve a repair order on the owners requiring them to carry out the necessary repair work by building professionals.

"The period of the closure will depend on the progress of the repair work," Mr Lei said.

Meanwhile, a government contractor has been employed to remove the loosened window frames and cooling towers supporting racks to prevent them from falling off.

End

Court rules to protect vulnerable witnesses gazetted

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Rules of court made to implement legislation enacted to provide greater protection for vulnerable witnesses when giving evidence in criminal proceedings were gazetted today (Friday).

A Legal Department spokesman said the Live Television Link and Video Recorded Evidence Rules gazetted today were made by the Chief Justice under the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Ordinance 1995 which was passed by the Legislative Council in July this year.

The ordinance introduces four new procedures to enable vulnerable witnesses to give evidence free from intimidation and to allay the trauma and anxiety experienced by them when giving evidence.

The spokesman said the first procedure would enable vulnerable witnesses, with the leave of the court, to give evidence at trial in a room separate from the court room through a live television link.

This would allay their anxiety arising from giving evidence in court and child witnesses, in particular, would be spared the trauma of being close to the alleged abuser again, he said.

To spare the witness of repeating the ordeal of describing the incident, the spokesman said the vulnerable witnesses would also be able to give their account of the incident in informal surroundings when reporting the offence and a video recording of their statement could be accepted as evidence-in-chief in court.

He also noted that a third procedure would prevent child or mentally handicapped witnesses from being required to give evidence in court twice in relation to serious abuses - once at the committal proceedings and again at trial.

"Committal proceedings will not be needed when the Director of Public Prosecution issues a notice of transfer certifying that the evidence is sufficient for the accused to be committed for trial," he said.

He pointed out that in cases where it was unavoidable that a trial could not be heard without delay, or where exposure to a full trial would endanger the physical or mental health of the child and mentally handicapped witnesses, a written deposition taken by a magistrate would be admissible as evidence without further proof.

The spokesman said the rules, among other things, set out the procedure in applying for vulnerable witnesses to give evidence through a live television link, the manner in which the application was to be determined, the procedures on the notification of the decision, as well as restrictions on the persons who might accompany a vulnerable witness.

They also provided for application procedures for video recordings of testimony from vulnerable witnesses, the manner in which the application was to be determined, and the procedures on the notification of the decision, he said.

End

Election report submitted to the Governor

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The Boundary and Election Commission (BEC) today (Friday) submitted its report to the Governor on the Legislative Council elections held on September 17.

BEC is responsible for the supervision and conduct of elections. It is required under the law to submit a report to the Governor within three months of the date of each general or ordinary election.

End

New compensation rates for employees gazetted

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New compensation rates under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO) and Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance (PCO) were gazetted today (Friday) and would take effect on January 1, 1996.

The wage ceiling for calculating compensation for permanent total incapacity and death under ECO will be raised to $18,000.

Accordingly, the maximum amount of compensation payable for permanent total incapacity and death will be $1,728,000 and $1,512,000 respectively.

The minimum compensation will be $262,000 for death and $297,000 for permanent total incapacity. For employees requiring attention, the maximum amount of compensation will be $356,000.

A spokesman for the Labour Department said allowances for victims of work accidents to acquire prostheses or surgical appliances would also be revised. The maximum costs for supplying and fitting such items will be raised to $28,000 and those for repair and renewal to $86,000.

He said for the purpose of calculating compensation, the level of deemed minimum earnings per month would be raised to $2,450.

The minimum surcharge for late payment of compensation assessed or approved by the Commissioner for Labour will be increased to $420 on expiry of the payment period. Where compensation remains unpaid three months after the expiry period, the minimum surcharge will be $840.

"The burial expenses for employees who died at work and the maximum daily reimbursement for medical expenses under the ECO will be revised to $14,000 and $160 respectively," the spokesman said.

The same rates will apply to funeral and medical expenses payable under PCO.

The amount of compensation for care and attention under PCO will be increased to $4,050. The amount of $2,100 included in the formula for calculating the monthly compensation for total incapacity will also be adjusted to $2,570.

Enquiries on employees' compensation can be made on 2717 1771.

End

Tuen Mun Road traffic surveillance system seeks bidders

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The Transport Department today (Friday) invites prequalified tenderers to bid for the Tuen Mun Road Traffic Surveillance and Information System (TMR TSIS) Stage II works.

A spokesman for the department said Stage II works comprised the installation of automatic incident detectors along TMR mainline and electronic message signs on Tuen Mun Road.

In addition, electronic message signs would also be installed on Castle Peak Road near Sham Tseng and Siu Lam Interchanges, and at major roads in Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long districts feeding traffic to Tuen Mun Road.

Stage I works of the TMR TSIS involved the installation of 19 closed circuit television cameras for monitoring traffic conditions along the Tuen Mun Road (TMR) was completed in July.

Transport Department has recently completed the related tender documents for both the construction and subsequent maintenance works of TSIS.

Tender documents will be issued to the prequalified tenderers today for preparation of tender.

The works are expected to commence in April 1996 for completion in late 1997.

The construction works for the project will be supervised by Delcan International Corporation in association with Parsons Brinckerhoff (Asia) Ltd, the consultant engineers for Highway Surveillance and Systems Division of the Transport Department.

End

Draft maps for proposed marine parks gazetted

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The Country and Marine Parks Authority has prepared draft maps of two proposed marine parks and a proposed marine reserve.

The proposed marine parks are at Hoi Ha Wan and Yan Chau Tong while the proposed marine reserve is at Cape D'Aguilar on Hong Kong Island.

A notice was published in the Government Gazette today (Friday) informing the public that the draft maps are ready for public inspection for a period of 60 days.

They can be seen at the Land Registry; the District Lands Office, Hong Kong South; the New Territories Land Registries at Tai Po, Tuen Mun and North; the Agriculture and Fisheries Department; the Marine Department and various public enquiry service centres of District Offices.

The draft maps are also available for sale at $35 for each uncoloured copy from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, Room 1452, 14th floor, Canton Road Government Offices, 393 Canton Road, Kowloon.

Any person who wishes to object to the draft maps may within 60 days from the date of gazetting, send a written statement of his objection to the Country and Marine Parks Authority at the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, 12th floor, 393 Canton Road, Kowloon, stating the nature of and reasons for the objection, and if the objection would be removed by an alteration to the draft map, any alteration proposed.

Hoi Ha Wan is a sheltered bay situated at the northern coastline of Sai Kung Peninsula. The proposed marine park covers an area of about 260 hectares. Wan Tsai Peninsula to its east and the three islands in the middle have already been gazetted on December 1, 1995 for designation as part of the Sai Kung West Country Park.

Being a sheltered bay and not open to oceanic waters and not affected by pollution, Hoi Ha Wan provides a good environment for the corals to flourish. Thirty-nine out of the 49 recorded local stony coral species can be found there, and several species new to scientists have been recorded in the area.

The proposed Yan Chau Tong Marine Park covers a total sea area of about 680 hectares. A wide variety of landforms can be found within the area, creating diversified beach types ranging from mudflat to rocky shores.

Features of particular ecological importance include a diversity of stony corals, and the marine eel grass which is rare in the tropics can be found in the area.

In addition, a large standing crop of Halophila ovata was newly recorded at Lai Chi Wo occupying an area of about 1,000 square metres, which is the largest coverage in the territory.

The proposed marine reserve at Cape D'Aguilar covers a sea area of about 20 hectares. Because of its high biological, geomorphological and geological interests, it has been listed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest since 1990.

The coastal flora and fauna of the site are rich and their zonations are typical. The natural habitat provides valuable opportunities for educational studies and scientific research.

End

Tenders for supply of Chinese word processing software

* * * * *

The Government is inviting tenders for the supply of microcomputer systems for Chinese word processing (CWP) and related services to various departments.

Announcing this today (Friday), a spokesman for the Chinese Language Division (CLD) said the procurement of the personal computers and CWP software was to implement recommendations of the Working Group on the Use of Chinese in the Civil Service which had identified a package of proactive measures to encourage the greater use of Chinese throughout the civil service.

This tendering exercise is part of the $112.8 million procurement and training project which has been approved by the Finance Committee in October.

"The supply of the PCs and the software is to meet the increasing demand for secretarial and technical support in Chinese word processing as more Chinese is used.

"Along with the availability of equipment, the project aims at providing training for some 13,000 general grades staff to use CWP. It will begin in the next financial year and takes about three years to complete," the spokesman said.

CLD, which is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the project, will become an independent department next April with a new title - the Official Languages Agency.

The tender notice was published in the Gazette today.

End

Drainage improvement works in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long

* * * * *

The Government intends to carry out drainage improvement works in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long to protect villages in the two areas from flooding.

In Tuen Mun, works will start in February next year to construct a reinforced concrete rectangular channel measuring 640 metres long and 4.5 metres wide.

The project, when completed in early 1998, will provide a long-term solution to flooding in Tsing Chuen Wai area.

Drainage works will also be carried out in Kam Tin, Yuen Long to alleviate flooding problems in Shui Tau Tsuen and Kam Hing Wai villages.

Two open channels with lengths of 480 metres and 160 metres respectively and another 140 metres long overflow twin channel will be constructed.

There will be an ancillary 3.5-metre wide vehicular access road and two 1.6-metre wide footpaths, one on each side of the channel, to facilitate maintenance works.

The 480-metre open channel will run along the western periphery of Shui Tau Tsuen to collect stormwater runoff. It will be joined by another shorter open channel from the east before discharging into the Kam Tin River.

From further upstream, the overflow twin channel will run along the northern periphery of Kam Hing Wai and will eventually be connected to the 160-metre long open channel.

Works will commence in early 1996 and scheduled for completion in mid-1998.

To enable these drainage works to be carried out, two notices were published in the Government Gazette today (Friday), announcing government plans to resume 41 private agricultural lots with a total area of 27,075.1 square metres in Yuen Long and 43 private agricultural lots with a total area of 6,859.1 square metres in Tuen Mun.

Details of the lots affected are contained in the two Gazette notices.

Plans for the Tuen Mun project can be seen at the Tuen Mun District Lands Office, sixth floor, Tuen Mun Government Offices, 1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories.

Plans for the Yuen Long project can be seen at the Yuen Long District Lands Office, ninth floor, Yuen Long Government Offices and Tai Kiu Market, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, New Territories.

End

Footbridge across Lung Poon Street
* * * * *

The Highways Department proposes to construct a covered footbridge across Lung Poon Street connecting the existing footbridge across Fung Tak Road.

It will also link the future elevated walkway leading to Diamond Hill MTR Station and the adjacent future public transport interchange/commercial development.

The footbridge includes a main span across Lung Poon Street with an associated ramp and a staircase.

The project is scheduled to commence in November next year for completion in about 12 months. The extent of the works is described in a notice published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

The notice (in both English and Chinese) can be seen on notice boards posted near the site.

The plan and scheme of the works may be inspected by members of the public free of charge at the following offices:

* Public Enquiry Service Centre
Central and Western District Office,
ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road,
Central, Hong Kong;

* District Lands Office, Kowloon East, 10th Floor,
Yau Ma Tei Car Park Building,
250 Shanghai Street, Kowloon; and

* Wong Tai Sin District Office,
San Po Kong Government Offices Building,
fourth floor, King Fuk Street, San Po Kong,
Kowloon.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address his objection in writing to the Secretary for Transport, Central Government Offices, East Wing, second floor, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong on or before February 13, 1996.

End

Prequalification of tenderers for road improvement works

* * * * *

The Government is inviting interested contractors to apply for prequalification for improvement works to Castle Peak Road from Siu Lam to So Kwun Tan.

The works comprise widening of the existing 7.3-metre wide carriageway of the 2.5-kilometre long road section to a dual two-lane carriageway and other associated works.

They also include the demolition and reprovision of a vehicular bridge across So Kwun Wat River and the construction of a footbridge over Castle Peak Road near Fiona Garden.

Details of the prequalification invitation are published in today's (Friday) Gazette.

Prequalification documents can be obtained from the Senior Engineer/New Territories 1, Major Works Project Management Office, Highways Department, third floor, Ho Man Tin Government Offices, 88 Chung Hau Street, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon.

Completed applications should be submitted as directed not later than noon, February 26, 1996.

End

New pier for Ma Wan Marine Traffic Control station

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The Government intends to construct a pier and a catwalk at the east of Gemini Point in Tsuen Wan to provide berthing facility for the patrol launches of the Marine Department's Marine Traffic Control Station at Ma Wan.

At the same time, the existing pier at Gemini Point will be demolished.

Work will commence in March next year and scheduled for completion in January 1997.

The work will be carried out within an area of about 4,400 square metres of foreshore and sea-bed. Details are contained in a notice published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

Any person who considers that his interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and sea-bed involved will be injuriously affected may submit a written claim for compensation to the Director of Lands on or before December 15, 1996.

The submission should state the sum of money he is willing to accept in full and final settlement of the claim and particulars to substantiate the claim.

The notice, in both English and Chinese, together with related plans can be seen at and copies can be purchased on order at the Lands Department, Survey and Mapping Office, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong.

The notice is also available for public inspection at the Tsuen Wan District Office, first floor, Tsuen Wan Station Multi-storey Carpark Building, 174-208 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

End

Sale of land by Letter A/B or cash tender

* * * * *

The Lands Department is inviting tenders by Letter A/B or by cash for three lots of land in the New Territories for non-industrial and residential purposes.

Two sites with an area of 8,000 square metres and 21,160 square metres respectively are located in Area 47A in Fanling. Both are for non-industrial use excluding godown, hotel, petrol filling station and any offensive trade.

The third site, located at Area 108 in Ma On Shan, covers an area of 25,825 square metres for private residential purposes.

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

Application forms, applications notices and conditions of grant may be obtained from, and sale plans inspected at, the Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong; the Kowloon District Lands Offices, Yau Ma Tei Car Park Building, 10th floor, 250 Shanghai street, Kowloon; and the District Lands Offices of Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Tai Po, North, Sai Kung and Islands.

Applications must be made on the designated application form, addressed to the Director of Lands and placed in the Public Works Tender Box at the lift lobby, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, before noon on Friday, January 12, 1996.

Late applications will not be accepted.

End

Villages expansion and improvement works for Sha Tin

* * * * *

The Government intends to carry out expansion and improvement works at three villages in Sha Tin.

On completion, a total of 11.86 hectares of land will be made available at the villages of Ngau Pei Sha, Chap Wai Kon and To Shek, a government spokesman said today (Friday).

"The land will be used for open spaces, car or lorry parking spaces, footpaths, emergency vehicular access, three refuse collection points, two electricity sub-stations and 126 small house sites.

"The small house sites will be available for direct grant to eligible villagers in accordance with the Small House Policy to relieve the congested housing situation in the three villages," he added.

The spokesman explained that to ensure compatibility with the development of the Sha Tin new town, a comprehensive village layout for the three villages was designed and subsequently approved in January 1991.

Work will commence in June next year and scheduled for completion in 18 months.

To enable the works to be carried out, a notice was published in the Government Gazette today announcing government plans to resume 226 private agricultural lots with a total area of 31,232.6 square metres and one building lot of 40.5 square metres in area.

Details of the lots affected are contained in the Gazette notice.

Plans can be seen at the Sha Tin District Lands Office, 2 Tung Lo Wan Hill Road, Sha Tin, New Territories.

End

Tenders invited for mainlaying in Fo Tan and Ma Liu Shui

* * * * *

The Water Supplies Department is inviting tenders for mainlaying works in Fo Tan and the Ma Liu Shui section of Tai Po Road to improve water supply to the northern areas of Sha Tin.

The works include the laying of about two kilometres of water mains with a diameter of 400 to 600 millimetres.

Work will commence in March next year for completion in about 11 months.

Tender forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Water Supplies Department, 44th floor, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Tenders must be clearly marked and addressed to the Chairman of the Public Works Tender Board. It must be placed in the Public Works Tender Box at the lift lobby, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong before noon on Friday, January 12, 1996.

Late tenders will not be accepted.

End

Engineering works for Tung Chung new town

* * * * *

The Government intends to carry out engineering works in Tung Chung as part of the new town development.

The works, which will include the construction of new roads, footbridges and drainage systems, will provide necessary support to the future public and private developments in Tung Chung, the ninth new town development in Hong Kong.

Works will commence in the middle of next year and scheduled for completion in 30 months.

To enable the works to be carried out, a total of 363 private agricultural lots totalling 75,002.2 square metres and another 161.8 square metres of a private building lot will need to be resumed.

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

Plans can be seen at the Lands Department, New Airport Section (New Territories Office), 22nd floor, Tsuen Wan Government Offices, 38 Sai Lau Kok Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

End

Flood protection scheme in north NT

* * * * *

The Government intends to carry out engineering works to protect Tsung Pak Long and Tai Tau Leng villages in north New Territories from flooding.

The flood protection scheme includes the construction of new embankments and flood protection retaining walls along Sutlej River near the two villages.

A government spokesman said the existing embankment along the southern side of Sutlej River, adjacent to the two villages, was low.

"During and after heavy rainfalls, the water level of the river rose above the embankment causing flooding to these two low-lying villages," he added.

The scheme will be implemented in two phases. Phase I involves the laying of a box culvert along the access road to Tsung Pak Long, the construction of a retaining wall at the southern embankment of the existing Sutlej River channel and the reprovisioning of a covered footbridge across Sutlej River.

Phase II involves the construction of open channels, an earth embankment, a storage pond and a storm-water pumping station, minor drainage improvement works and reprovisioning of footpaths.

Works on Phase I will start shortly and Phase II in June next year with the completion of the project expected in June 1998.

To enable works to be carried out, a notice was published in the Government Gazette today (Friday) announcing government plans to resume 77 private agricultural lots with a total area of 33,516.1 square metres.

Details of the lots affected are contained in the Gazette.

Relevant plans can be seen at the North District Lands Office, sixth floor, North District Government Offices Building, 3 Pik Fung Road, Fanling, New Territories.

End

Land resumption for open space development

* * * * *

A total of about 4,400 square metres of land will be resumed in Diamond Hill for open space development.

The resumption will involve both government and private land, a government spokesman said today (Friday).

"In total, 70 families comprising 200 persons will be affected. They will be given a three months' notice of the resumption as from today.

"Those eligible occupiers will be rehoused and offered ex-gratia domestic removal allowances in accordance with the current policy, while compensation to owners of private land affected will be assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Crown Lands Resumption Ordinance or based on ex-gratia rate of compensation according to current policy," he said.

Details of the lots affected are contained in a notice published in the Government Gazette today.

Anybody who wishes to see the plan can approach the Central and Western District Office, Public Enquiry Service Centre, ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central.

End

Sewerage improvement works for east Kowloon

* * * * *

The Drainage Services Department will start works in March next year on improving the sewerage system in the industrial areas of San Po Kong and Kwun Tong.

The works involve replacing the existing sewers and reconnect expedient connections.

The improvement project also include the construction of about 12.4 kilometres of sewers of diameters from 225 mm to 1,350 mm.

The works, to be completed in about 22 months, will significantly reduce water pollution in the areas and improve the overall efficiency of the sewerage system of east Kowloon. A notice of inviting tenders for the works was gazetted today (Friday).

Tender forms and further particulars may be obtained from the office of the Consultant Engineers, Montgomery Watson Hong Kong Limited, 1911 Windsor House, 311 Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay.

The tender closing date is noon on January 5, 1996.

End

Fresh water cut in NT and Hong Kong South

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Sheung Shui and Yuen Long in the New Territories; and Southern District on Hong Kong Island will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm next Monday (December 18) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water main works.

In Sheung Shui, the suspension will affect Pak Wo Road and Pak Fuk Tsuen Road.

In Yuen Long, premises along Castle Peak Road between Fui Sha Wai and Hung Shui Kiu, Tan Kwai Tsuen Road, Tan Kwai Tsuen, Tai To Tsuen and Fui Sha Wai will be affected.

In Southern District, the affected area will include Big Wave Bay Village, Big Wave Bay Road, Nos 1-21 Shek O Road, Shek O Village, Shek O New Village and Shek O Headland.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

* * * * *

	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	2,120	0930	-689
Closing balance in the account	2,298	1000	-689
Change attributable to :		1100	-689
Money market activity	-704	1200	-689
LAF today	+882	1500	-689
		1600	-704

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 122.6 *+0.0* 15.12.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.85	2 years	2711	5.60	99.94	5.71
1 month	5.84	3 years	3810	6.15	100.72	5.96
3 months	5.68	5 years	5009	6.95	102.47	6.44
6 months	5.62	7 years	7211	6.82	100.45	6.85
12 months	5.60	5 years	M502	7.30	102.25	6.86

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - $7,161 million

Closed December 15, 1995

End