



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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RULE OF LAW TO CONTINUE AFTER 1997

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THE LEGAL SYSTEM WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE FORCE TO THE RULE OF LAW AFTER 1997, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID TODAY (SUNDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE JAYCEES INAUGURAL BALL TONIGHT, MR MATHEWS SAID THE RULE OF LAW LIES AT THE HEART OF HONG KONG'S LEGAL SYSTEM AND THE CONTINUATION OF THAT SYSTEM WAS GUARANTEED BY THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW.

HE ALSO TOLD MEMBERS OF JAYCEES THAT THE LEGAL SYSTEM WAS BASED ON THE RULE OF LAW OPERATED BY AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND INDEPENDENT LAWYERS WITH PROSECUTION DECISIONS MADE FREE FROM POLITICAL PRESSURE.

HE SAID: "IT IS OUR JUDGES AND MAGISTRACIES WHO DISPENSE JUSTICE IN HONG KONG IN A FAIR AND EVEN-HANDED WAY, FREE FROM POLITICAL PRESSURE OR INTERFERENCE.

"ALTHOUGH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT, IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF OUR SYSTEM THAT WHEN DECISIONS TO PROSECUTE OR NOT TO PROSECUTE ARE MADE THEY ARE MADE QUITE INDEPENDENTLY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND EQUALLY FREE FROM POLITICAL PRESSURE OR INTERFERENCE."

AS FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION, HE SAID: "BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS IN HONG KONG ARE MEMBERS OF INDEPENDENT AND SELF-REGULATING BODIES THAT LAY DOWN FOR THEMSELVES RULES TO REGULATE THE HIGH STANDARD AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY THAT THE COMMUNITY RIGHTLY EXPECTS OF THEM."

NOTING THAT THERE WOULD BE CHANGES IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM AFTER 1997 TO REFLECT THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY AND TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ALSO ASSURED HIS AUDIENCE THAT THE CHANGES WOULD NOT ALTER IN ANY FUNDAMENTAL WAY THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM.

HE SAID EXPECTED CHANGES INCLUDED MORE USE OF CHINESE IN COURTS, TRANSLATION OF ALL ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS INTO CHINESE, LOCALISATION OF LAWS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF ARRANGEMENTS TO REGULATE LEGAL RELATIONS BETWEEN HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION REGION AND THE REST OF CHINA.

MR MATHEWS SAID: "SOME CHINESE IS ALREADY USED IN SOME OF OUR MAGISTRATE COURTS BUT WE MUST WORK TOWARDS A SITUATION WHERE THOSE APPEAR BEFORE THE COURTS CAN HAVE THEIR CASES HEARD IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE VAST BULK OF THE POPULATION IN HONG KONG.

AS FOR THE TRANSLATION OF ORDINANCES AND REGULATION INTO CHINESE AND LOCALISATION OF LAWS, HE NOTED THAT THE TASKS WERE WELL UNDERWAY AND THE TARGET WAS TO HAVE THEM COMPLETED BEFORE 1997.

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ORO ANNOUNCES PERFORMANCE PLEDGES

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THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE (ORO) TODAY (SUNDAY) ANNOUNCED ITS PERFORMANCE PLEDGE ON SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC.

AN ORO SPOKESMAN SAID THE OFFICE WOULD MONITOR PERFORMANCES AGAINST STANDARD RESPONSE TIMES.

"THE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING AN EFFICIENT, COURTEOUS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC IN A PLEASANT AND BUSINESS-LIKE ENVIRONMENT," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

ORO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ORDERLY ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSOLVENT ESTATES OF:

- * COMPANIES ORDERED TO BE WOUND UP BY THE COURT UNDER THE WINDING-UP PROVISIONS OF THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE; AND
- * INDIVIDUALS OR PARTNERS ADJUDICATED BANKRUPT BY THE COURT UNDER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE.

THE SERVICES PROVIDED INCLUDE ENQUIRY SERVICES AND APPLICATIONS FOR SEARCHES; LODGING PROOFS OF DEBT IN PERSON; REQUEST FOR COPIES OF STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS; AND COLLECTION OF DIVIDENDS IN APPROPRIATE CASES.

THE NEW ORO'S PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND TARGETS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

* GENERAL ENQUIRIES

IN PERSON AT PUBLIC RECEPTION COUNTER	10 MINUTES
BY MAIL	WITHIN 10 DAYS OR AN INTERIM REPLY WILL BE GIVEN ON TECHNICAL MATTERS

* APPLICATIONS FOR BANKRUPTCY SEARCHES AND WINDING-UP SEARCHES

IN PERSON	ONE WORKING DAY
BY MAIL	THREE WORKING DAYS FROM RECEIPT

* APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF NON-BANKRUPTCY

THREE WORKING DAYS FROM RECEIPT

* PROOFS OF DEBT

WHERE LODGED IN PERSON	FIVE TO 10 MINUTES
OBTAINING ASSISTANCE OF OFFICERS TO COMPLETE A PROOF OF DEBT	15 TO 30 MINUTES

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* REQUEST FOR COPIES OF STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS, IF THEY HAVE BEEN PRESENTED, SUBJECT TO PAYMENT OF PHOTOCOPYING FEES THREE WORKING DAYS

* COLLECTION OF DIVIDENDS IN APPROPRIATE CASES

IN PERSON

NORMAL - CHECK ID AND DIVIDEND SCHEDULE 20 MINUTES

LATE PAYMENT AFTER SIX MONTHS - COMPLICATED (MANUAL CHEQUE) 35 MINUTES

CHANGE NAME OF PAYEE ON CHEQUE 40 MINUTES

BY MAIL FIVE WORKING DAYS

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE OFFICE WOULD ALSO FORM A LIAISON GROUP THAT COMPRISED MAJOR CLIENTS TO HELP IN MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE PLEDGES AND TO ENSURE CUSTOMER INPUT INTO THE SERVICES.

HE SAID THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER WOULD PUBLISH PERFORMANCE RESULTS AGAINST STANDARD RESPONSE TIMES EVERY YEAR.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO COMMENT AND SUGGEST ON THE WAY TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE SERVICES. THEY SHOULD CONTACT THE DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARY, OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE, 10TH FLOOR, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 66 QUEENSWAY, OR ON TEL 867 2651 OR BY FAX 869 0423.

COPIES OF THE PAMPHLET LISTING OUT THE OFFICE'S PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND TARGETS ARE AVAILABLE FREE AT THE OFFICE, 10TH FLOOR, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

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PROPER LOADING OF CONTAINER VEHICLES URGED

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, MR RAFAEL HUI, URGED CONTAINER TRACTOR OPERATORS TO LOAD CONTAINERS PROPERLY TO ENSURE SAFETY ON ROADS.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE "ARTICULATED VEHICLE SAFETY CAMPAIGN CARNIVAL" TODAY (SUNDAY), MR HUI POINTED OUT THAT AN OVERLOADED GOODS VEHICLE, OR A GOODS VEHICLE WITH GOODS NOT PROPERLY AND EVENLY POSITIONED, COULD CAUSE ACCIDENT EASILY WHEN RUNNING ON THE ROADS.

MR HUI SAID PROPER LOADING WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO CONTAINER VEHICLES.

/"BEFORE STARTING

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"BEFORE STARTING HIS JOURNEY, THE DRIVER SHOULD KNOW THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF THE CONSIGNMENT AND THE WEIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL PIECES OF GOODS, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT WHEN PART OF THE GOODS ARE UNLOADED ON THE WAY, THE STABILITY OF THE VEHICLE WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE CHANGE OF AXLE LOADING," HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT GOODS INSIDE THE CONTAINER SHOULD BE POSITIONED AND SECURED PROPERLY, SO AS TO AVOID THEM SHIFTING ABOUT INSIDE THE CONTAINER THUS JEOPARDISING THE STABILITY OF THE VEHICLE.

MR HUI SAID DRIVERS SHOULD MAKE USE OF THE MORE THAN 70 PRIVATE WEIGH STATIONS TO FIND OUT THE LOADING WEIGHT OF EACH AXLE, IN ORDER TO AVOID AXLE OVERLOADING WHICH WOULD IN TURN AFFECT THE BRAKING SYSTEM.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL OPEN A NEW WEIGH STATION IN TAI LAM CHUNG BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR TO SERVE THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES.

ON TRAINING OF CONTAINER VEHICLE DRIVERS, MR HUI SAID IN ORDER TO MONITOR MORE SYSTEMATICALLY THE TRAINING AND EXAMINATION OF THESE DRIVERS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPROVED AN APPLICATION FOR A TEMPORARY SITE IN TSEUNG KWAN O NEW TOWN FOR THE SETTING UP OF THE FIRST ARTICULATED VEHICLE DRIVING SCHOOL.

THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL SET UP A DRIVER TESTING CENTRE INSIDE THE SCHOOL, SPECIFICALLY FOR TESTING OF ARTICULATED VEHICLE DRIVERS.

THE SCHOOL IS EXPECTED TO BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR.

IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ENSURE THAT ALL GOODS VEHICLES ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED THROUGH THE GOODS VEHICLE ANNUAL INSPECTION SCHEME TO ENHANCE SAFETY.

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FURTHER PROMOTION OF ACP CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

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TO PROMOTE CONSTRUCTION SAFETY AT AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME (ACP) SITES, POSTERS HAVE BEEN PUT UP AT THE TSUEN WAN AND SAM TSENG PUBLIC PIERS WHERE HUNDREDS OF WORKERS TAKE THEIR FERRIES TO THE SITES EVERYDAY.

THE POSTERS, SHOWING THE MASCOT OF THE ACP CONSTRUCTION SAFETY AWARD SCHEME - MR ACP SAFETY FIRST - IS TO REMIND CONTRACTORS AND WORKERS INVOLVED IN ACP PROJECTS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY AND ITS MANAGEMENT ON SITE.

THE POSTERS TOGETHER WITH OTHER PRINT MATERIAL PROMOTING THE AWARD SCHEME HAVE BEEN WIDELY DISTRIBUTED TO ALL THE ACP PROJECT SITES.

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A RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT IN PUBLIC INTEREST HAS ALSO BEEN PRODUCED AND BROADCAST ON ALL THE LOCAL CHINESE CHANNELS.

LAUNCHED LAST YEAR, THE AWARD SCHEME IS ORGANISED BY THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECT CO-ORDINATION OFFICE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL, THE HONG KONG CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION, THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY, THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND THE MARINE DEPARTMENT.

AN AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY FOR THE 1993 AWARD SCHEME WILL BE HELD NEXT MONTH.

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19 CONSENTS GIVEN TO PRE-SALE OF UNCOMPLETED FLATS

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THE LEGAL ADVISORY AND CONVEYANCING OFFICE OF THE LANDS DEPARTMENT TODAY (SUNDAY) RELEASED DETAILS OF CONSENTS GIVEN IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1993 TO THE FORWARD SALE OF UNITS IN UNCOMPLETED DEVELOPMENTS.

A TOTAL OF 19 CONSENTS WERE GRANTED, INVOLVING 1,260 UNITS ON THE HONG KONG ISLAND AND 1,737 UNITS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THE CONSENTS WERE GIVEN IN RESPECT OF APPLICATIONS MADE UNDER THE LAND AUTHORITY'S CONSENT SCHEME CONTAINED IN LEASE CONDITIONS.

THE SCHEME ALLOWS DEVELOPERS TO SELL FLATS BEFORE BUILDING WORKS ARE COMPLETED.

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METHADONE TREATMENT PROGRAMME BENEFITS EVERYONE

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THE METHADONE PROGRAMME BENEFITS EVERYONE. NOT JUST DRUG ABUSERS, BUT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHICH IS HEALTHIER AND SAFER AS A RESULT.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS, MR ALASDAIR SINCLAIR, WAS SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME AND ANTI-DRUG CARNIVAL HELD AT THE MAPLE STREET PLAYGROUND THIS (SUNDAY) AFTERNOON.

"THE BENEFIT OF THIS TREATMENT IS THAT LIVES ARE STABILISED. THE CRAVING FOR HEROIN IS SUBDUED. QUICK CASH CRIME IS REDUCED," MR SINCLAIR REMARKED.

"THERE IS LESS DRUG DEALING AND LESS DRUG-TAKING, FEWER DISCARDED SYRINGES AND LESS NUISANCE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

"THERE IS

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"THERE IS ALSO LESS DISEASE," HE NOTED.

THE COMMISSIONER STRESSED THE RECENT SELF-INJECTION OF CONTAMINATED PRODUCTS WHICH HAD LED TO AN OUTBREAK OF TETANUS AMONG DRUG ABUSERS AND MANY UNNECESSARY DEATHS.

"BY CONTRAST, METHADONE IS TAKEN ORALLY IN PROPERLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS.

"IT PROVIDES A READILY ACCESSIBLE, LAWFUL AND MEDICALLY SAFE ALTERNATIVE TO THE ILLICIT SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF HEROIN," THE COMMISSIONER SAID.

"IT ALSO HELPS METHADONE PATIENTS TO EARN THEIR LIVING AND CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY," HE ADDED.

CURRENTLY, SOME 9,000 HEROIN ADDICTS WERE REGISTERED AT 23 METHADONE CLINICS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, WHICH THEY ATTENDED DAILY AS OUT-PATIENTS.

TO FIGHT AGAINST THE LONG-STANDING DRUG PROBLEM IN HONG KONG, THE GOVERNMENT STRATEGY WAS TO TARGET BOTH SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

VIGOROUS LAW ENFORCEMENT BY THE POLICE AND THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE RESULTED IN THE SEIZURE OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF ILLICIT DRUGS BEFORE THEY REACHED CUSTOMERS AND HELPED TO STOP PRICES OF DRUGS FROM DROPPING TOO LOW, SAID THE COMMISSIONER.

"BUT SUCH ACTION DOES NOT AND CANNOT CUT OFF THE SUPPLY COMPLETELY.

"IT NEEDS TO BE BALANCED BY STRENUOUS EFFORTS ON THE DEMAND SIDE," HE REMARKED.

"WE ARE WORKING HARD, THROUGH EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY, TO PREVENT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM BEING CAUGHT UP IN THE DEGRADATION AND DANGER OF DRUG ABUSE," MR SINCLAIR PLEDGED.

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