



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SPEECH BY FINANCIAL SECRETARY AT ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN LEGCO
ON HK'S ECONOMIC STABILITY AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

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MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LOCAL STOCK MARKET OVER THE PAST WEEK OR SO, AND THE DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA WHICH UNDERLIES THE MARKET'S DROP, HAS UNDERSTANDABLY SPARKED NERVOUSNESS AND CONCERN.

BUT THE FALL SHOULD BE SEEN AGAINST A RISE OF SOME 40 PERCENT OF THE HANG SENG INDEX OVER THE LAST YEAR. THE INDEX HAD BEEN GROWING RAPIDLY THIS YEAR AND HIT AN ALL-TIME HIGH OF 6447 POINTS ON 12 NOVEMBER. THE MARKET IS STILL WELL AHEAD OF ITS JANUARY-FEBRUARY LEVEL THIS YEAR. OUR INDEX HAS ALWAYS BEEN FAIRLY VOLATILE. INVESTORS SHOULD BE CALM AND MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PROPORTION.

IT IS IMPORTANT MORE GENERALLY THAT WE KEEP MATTERS IN PERSPECTIVE. AS A SPEAKER HAS ALREADY SAID, THE FUNDAMENTALS UNDERLYING OUR ECONOMY CONTINUE TO BE STRONG AND SOUND. OUR CONTINUING GROWTH IS FIRMLY BASED, BRINGING INCREASING PROSPERITY TO OUR COMMUNITY. WHILST MUCH OF THE REST OF THE WORLD SUFFERS THE MISERIES AND PERSONAL HARDSHIPS OF RECESSION AND UNEMPLOYMENT, WE IN HONG KONG ARE THRIVING. WE ARE CONFIDENT OF ACHIEVING A FIVE PERCENT GROWTH IN REAL TERMS FOR OUR ECONOMY THIS YEAR, AND INDEED, AN AVERAGE OF 5% GROWTH RIGHT UP TO 1997. THIS ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE GROWTH IS SHARED BY MANY ECONOMISTS AND OTHER EXPERTS. INDEED, THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK FORECASTS OUR GROWTH TO BE SOMEWHAT HIGHER, AT 6% FOR THIS AND THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

THIS GROWTH IS INCREASING THE WELL-BEING OF OUR COMMUNITY. OUR PER CAPITA GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT IS NOW OVER US\$16,000 - THE THIRD HIGHEST IN ASIA AFTER JAPAN AND THE OIL STATE OF BRUNEI. OUR TOTAL EXPORTS HAVE CONTINUED TO GROW STRONGLY. AND PROSPECTS ARE GENERALLY BRIGHT, WITH RISING INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE, AND MORE HOPE TOO OF AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN THE US. CHINA OF COURSE CONTINUES TO BE A KEY FACTOR BOTH AS A GROWING MARKET AND AS AN EXPANDING PRODUCTION BASE FOR HONG KONG INVESTORS. THE RESULT HAS BEEN A MARKED INCREASE IN OUR RETAINED IMPORTS, REFLECTING BUOYANT DOMESTIC DEMAND.

WE HAVE MUCH TO BE PROUD OF. LET US NOT FORGET THAT THIS SMALL PLACE IS THE TENTH LARGEST TRADING ENTITY AND NUMBER ONE CONTAINER PORT IN THE WORLD. OUR AIRPORT IS THE FOURTH BUSIEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON EARTH. AND WE EVEN USE MORE MOBILE TELEPHONES PER HEAD THAN I BELIEVE ANYWHERE ELSE! WE HAVE ENJOYED SPECTACULAR ECONOMIC GROWTH OVER THE YEARS - GROWTH WHICH HAS IN TURN GREATLY BENEFITTED HONG KONG PEOPLE.

/MR DEPUTY

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MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT, HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY IS ROOTED IN A STABLE COMMUNITY WHOSE PEOPLE IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH ITS WAY OF LIFE AND WHO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE CONDUCT OF ITS AFFAIRS. WE ARE INVESTING HEAVILY IN OUR COMMUNITY, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR FUTURE - FROM UPGRADING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE (THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME BEING A CASE IN POINT), TO IMPROVING HEALTH CARE, WIDER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES, MORE SUPPORT FOR THE DISADVANTAGED AND CLEANING UP OUR ENVIRONMENT. THE PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNOR IN THIS COUNCIL ON 7 OCTOBER FORM A DISTINCT PART OF THIS LONG-TERM INVESTMENT - AN INVESTMENT THAT WILL ENABLE MORE HONG KONG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC LIFE AND HAVE A GREATER SAY IN MANAGING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. AND TO HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT "ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS" CAN REALLY BE MADE TO WORK.

THESE ARE MODEST CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO TAKE A MODEST FURTHER STEP TOWARDS MORE DEMOCRACY WHILST BEING FULLY COMPATIBLE WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW. WE ARE NOT SEEKING CONFRONTATION. ON THE CONTRARY, WE ARE TRYING TO ENSURE A STABLE AND PROSPEROUS TRANSITION.

SOME CRITICISE OUR PROPOSALS AS RUNNING COUNTER TO THE BASIC LAW - OR THE SPIRIT OF THE BASIC LAW - AND THEREFORE AS BEING NOT CONDUCIVE TO STABILITY AND PROSPERITY. THE FACTS, HOWEVER, SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. WHAT WE HAVE PROPOSED IS ENTIRELY WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE BASIC LAW. IT IS A FACT THAT THE BASIC LAW DOES NOT PROVIDE ALL THE ANSWERS ON HOW THE L995 ELECTIONS ARE TO BE CONDUCTED. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS SILENT ON HOW THE NINE ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES ARE TO BE DELINEATED. IT HAS NOT SPECIFIED THE COMPOSITION OF THE FIRST ELECTION COMMITTEE. SO SUCH POINTS HAVE TO BE FLESHED OUT, AND OUR PROPOSALS SEEK TO DO PRECISELY THAT. IN FORMULATING THE PROPOSALS, WE HAVE TAKEN CARE TO FOLLOW THE PRINCIPLES OF GRADUAL AND ORDERLY PROGRESS, AND OF OPENNESS AND DEMOCRACY ENshrINED IN THE BASIC LAW.

LET ME REITERATE WHAT THE GOVERNOR HAS SAID REPEATEDLY: OUR PROPOSALS ARE PROPOSALS, NOT DECISIONS. THEY ARE INTENDED FOR DISCUSSION BOTH WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND WITH CHINA. WE WELCOME SPECIFIC ALTERNATIVES WHICH CAN MEET THE THREE CRITERIA OF OPENNESS, FAIRNESS, AND ACCEPTABILITY TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS ARE NOW EMERGING, INCLUDING SOME BY MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL. I WOULD ASSURE YOU THAT THEY WILL BE STUDIED WITH THE GREATEST CARE - BY THIS ADMINISTRATION, BUT HOPEFULLY ALSO BY THE WIDER COMMUNITY TOO - LEADING TO RATIONAL DEBATE.

/IT IS

IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT ON A MATTER AS IMPORTANT AS THIS, THERE SHOULD BE DIFFERENT OPINIONS IN THE COMMUNITY. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD SEEK TO RECONCILE THESE DIVERGENT VIEWS THROUGH DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED IN A CALM, RESPONSIBLE AND RATIONAL MANNER. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT INCREASING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WILL COME TO REALIZE THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG ARE SOPHISTICATED, MATURE AND SENSIBLE ENOUGH TO LOOK AFTER A RATHER GREATER SHARE OF THEIR OWN DESTINY. AND THAT THEY WILL DO SO IN A WAY WHICH THREATENS NO ONE, BUT THAT DOES ENSURE THAT HONG KONG BECOMES MORE STABLE, MORE PROSPEROUS, AND MORE CAPABLE OF MAKING A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENTS IN CHINA AND IN THE REGION.

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT ARE VITAL TO OUR FUTURE WELL-BEING. NEW AND CONSTRUCTIVE ENERGIES ARE UNLEASHED IN A SOCIETY WHERE THE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PUBLIC TO HAVE A GREATER SAY IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR AFFAIRS CAN BE MET. AND CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE IS INCREASED. I HOPE MEMBERS, AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, AND INDEED ALL THOSE INVOLVED, WILL LOOK AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS DISPASSIONATELY AND WITH A LONG-TERM VISION, AND WORK TOGETHER CALMLY AND RATIONALLY.

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INQUIRY PROPOSED OVER PROSECUTION WITNESSES

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARED TO RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY IN THE LIGHT OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE ACQUITTAL WITHOUT TRIAL OF THE DEFENDANT IN A RECENT MURDER CASE.

THIS WAS ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE COMMISSION IS PROPOSED TO BE SET UP UNDER THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ORDINANCE.

SIR DAVID SAID THE ADMINISTRATION WAS PREPARED TO GIVE ANY SUCH COMMISSION ITS FULL CO-OPERATION IN THE INQUIRY.

THE SPECIFIC CONCERNS RELATE TO THE REFUSAL OF THE KEY WITNESS TO TESTIFY IN COURT, AND THE DECISION TO OFFER NO EVIDENCE IN THAT CASE.

A MAIN GENERAL CONCERN IS WHETHER PROSECUTION WITNESSES ARE GIVEN ADEQUATE PROTECTION WHERE THIS IS APPROPRIATE.

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INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE CIVIL SERVICE EFFICIENCY

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) OUTLINED INITIATIVES THAT SEEK TO CHANGE THE ATTITUDE AND APPROACH TO THE SPENDING OF PUBLIC MONEY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG HONG-YUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR DAVID SAID THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO ENABLE CIVIL SERVANTS TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND GIVE A BETTER SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE EFFICIENCY UNIT WAS ESTABLISHED IN MAY TO GIVE ADDED IMPETUS TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM PROGRAMME.

SINCE THEN THE UNIT HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE FOLLOWING THREE AREAS:

* PERFORMANCE PLEDGES INITIATIVE:

THE PLEDGES WILL ENABLE THE PUBLIC TO UNDERSTAND MORE CLEARLY THE LEVELS AND QUALITY OF SERVICE THEY ARE ENTITLED TO EXPECT AND ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO MONITOR THAT IT IS MEETING THE TARGETS.

THE FIRST SEVEN PLEDGES WILL BE MADE BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

* DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURED PROGRAMMES:

THESE WILL HELP TO DEFINE CLEARLY A DEPARTMENT'S ACTIVITIES AND ENABLE COSTS TO BE ALLOCATED TO EACH ACTIVITY.

THE UNIT IS SEEKING TO INTRODUCE THESE, WITH PERFORMANCE MEASURES, ACROSS THE MAIN APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS BY APRIL NEXT YEAR.

THIS INITIATIVE WILL FACILITATE THE FURTHER DEVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY TO POLICY SECRETARIES AND TO DEPARTMENTS, THUS ENABLING THEM TO BE MORE PRO-ACTIVE WHEN EXAMINING THE BENEFITS OBTAINED FROM A GIVEN LEVEL OF RESOURCES;

* DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT LEGISLATION FOR TRADING FUNDS:

A TRADING FUND WILL PROVIDE CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS WITH GREATER FLEXIBILITY TO BRING ABOUT EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS.

THE TRADING FUNDS BILL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 18.

IN ADDITION, SIR DAVID SAID THE MANAGEMENT SERVICES GRADE WOULD CONTINUE TO CARRY OUT VALUE FOR MONEY AND TOP-DOWN REVIEWS IN DEPARTMENTS.

THIS WILL HELP ACHIEVE SPECIFIC SAVINGS ON RECURRENT EXPENDITURE, HE SAID.

OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS 73 VALUE FOR MONEY STUDIES AND 16 TOP-DOWN REVIEWS HAVE LED TO SAVINGS OF SOME 2,900 POSTS.

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LAWS IN FORCE SHALL BE MAINTAINED

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THE JOINT DECLARATION MAKES CLEAR THAT AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION, THE LAWS PREVIOUSLY IN FORCE IN HONG KONG, WHICH INCLUDE THE LAW OF CONTRACT, SHALL BE MAINTAINED, SAVE FOR ANY THAT CONTRAVENE THE BASIC LAW AND SUBJECT TO ANY AMENDMENT BY THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION LEGISLATURE.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AS HE REPLIED TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG.

ACCORDING TO THE BASIC LAW, CONTRACTS WHICH ARE VALID UNDER HONG KONG'S EXISTING LAWS WILL CONTINUE TO BE VALID AND RECOGNISED AND PROTECTED BY THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION, PROVIDED THAT THEY DO NOT CONTRAVENE THE BASIC LAW, MR MATHEWS SAID.

"FOLLOWING AN UNDERSTANDING REACHED AT THE 17TH MEETING OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP IN DECEMBER 1990, WE HAVE DISCUSSED MAJOR GOVERNMENT FRANCHISES STRADDLING 1997 IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP.

"THESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN PRODUCTIVE AND WE ARE GLAD TO NOTE THAT THE CHINESE SIDE INTEND IN FUTURE TO TAKE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO POST-1997 INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

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MORE POLICE ON BEAT TO FIGHT CRIME

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED PUTTING MORE POLICEMEN ONTO THE STREETS WAS MORE EFFECTIVE TO FIGHT AND PREVENT CRIME.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MR ASPREY SAID IN GENERAL, NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE UNITS WERE THUS NOT MANNED ON A CONTINUAL BASIS.

"POLICE OFFICERS HOWEVER, DO FREQUENTLY VISIT NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE UNITS WHILE ON PATROL DUTY," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE MANPOWER SITUATION OF THE POLICE HAD BEEN IMPROVING STEADILY SINCE AUGUST.

"THE FORCE CONTINUES TO BE ABLE TO PUT EXTRA POLICEMEN ONTO THE STREETS," HE ADDED.

IN LINE WITH THIS POLICY, A MAXIMUM OF 850 AUXILIARY POLICE OFFICERS EACH DAY ARE DEPLOYED TO VARIOUS POLICE FORMATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY TO COMPLEMENT REGULAR POLICE PATROLS AND OPERATIONS.

"DEPLOYMENT IS CONCENTRATED IN AREAS MORE PRONE TO CRIME," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTED CRIME CASES IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES WAS 14,160 IN 1990, 13,327 IN 1991 AND 5,867 IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS THIS YEAR.

THESE COMPARE WITH THE TERRITORIAL TOTALS OF 88,300 IN 1990, 88,659 IN 1991 AND 40,621 IN THE FIRST HALF-YEAR OF THIS YEAR.

NOTING THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IN HONG KONG RESIDES IN PUBLIC HOUSING, MR ASPREY SAID THE RATIO WAS NOT REFLECTED IN THE NUMBER OF CRIMES REPORTED TO THE POLICE.

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COMPLAINTS AGAINST PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND DOCTORS CLOSELY MONITORED

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COMPLAINTS LODGED BY PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES ON PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND DOCTORS ARE DEALT WITH AT SEVERAL LEVELS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING, MRS WONG SAID AT THE HOSPITAL LEVEL, PUBLIC COMPLAINTS WERE HANDLED BY THE HOSPITAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT WHO WERE ASSISTED BY A PATIENT RELATIONS OFFICER.

AT THE HEAD OFFICE LEVEL, APPEAL CASES AND REFERRALS FROM OMELCO OR THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED BY A PUBLIC COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE SET UP UNDER THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY BOARD.

THIS COMMITTEE IS CHAIRED BY A CIVILIAN AND COMPRISING MAINLY NON-OFFICIALS.

ITS MEMBERSHIP HAS RECENTLY BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE TWO MEMBERS OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY BOARD TO ENSURE THAT COMPLAINTS ARE INVESTIGATED IN AN OPEN AND OBJECTIVE MANNER.

MRS WONG SAID THE TRENDS OF COMPLAINTS RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL HOSPITALS OR SPECIALTIES WOULD BE MONITORED BY THE PATIENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE COMPRISING A MAJORITY OF NON-OFFICIALS SO AS TO DETECT ANY UNDERLYING PROBLEMS.

THE HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH WILL SCRUTINISE THE QUARTERLY REPORTS PREPARED BY THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IN CASE OF COMPLAINTS OR EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE ALSO VISIT PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS EVERY MONTH AND OTHER HOSPITALS EVERY THREE MONTHS. "THEIR COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS WILL BE TAKEN UP BY HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AND MONITORED BY THE HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH FOR NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS," MRS WONG ADDED.

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CALL TO DEVELOP PATIENT-ORIENTED CULTURE

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THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, CALLED ON PROVIDERS OF MEDICAL SERVICES IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO DEVELOP A MORE PATIENT-ORIENTED CULTURE SO AS TO PROVIDE IMPROVED SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY.

SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE A START BY UNDERTAKING TO REDUCE WAITING TIMES AT ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNITS AND AT GENERAL CLINICS.

"WE ARE ALSO TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE MEDICAL RECORD-KEEPING AND EXTEND THE LABELLING OF PRESCRIBED DRUGS TO ALL PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND SPECIALIST CLINICS," SHE ADDED.

MRS WONG WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION ON PATIENTS' RIGHTS BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SHE TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THERE WAS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE ENSHRINED IN THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY ORDINANCE THAT NO PERSON SHOULD BE PREVENTED, THROUGH LACK OF MEANS, FROM OBTAINING ADEQUATE MEDICAL TREATMENT IN HONG KONG.

THIS MEANS THAT SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE ON THE BASIS OF CLINICAL NEED IRRESPECTIVE OF ONE'S ABILITY TO PAY.

"THIS IS SAFEGUARDED BY GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF PROVIDING HEAVILY SUBSIDISED HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES, UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE AND GENERALLY AFFORDABLE," SHE SAID.

ADDITIONALLY, ALL PRIVATE HOSPITALS AND CLINICS ARE SUBJECT TO REGISTRATION UNDER SECTION 3 OF THE HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES AND MATERNITY HOMES REGISTRATION ORDINANCE AND SECTION 5 OF THE MEDICAL CLINICS ORDINANCE.

TO FURTHER PROTECT PATIENTS' INTEREST, MRS WONG SAID THE QUALITY AND STANDARD OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS WERE SET BY THEIR RESPECTIVE REGISTRATION ORDINANCES AND THE RELEVANT CODES OF PRACTICE.

THESE ARE REGULATED AND ENFORCED BY THE RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL BOARDS AND COUNCILS, TO WHOM THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ARE ACCOUNTABLE AS REGARDS MATTERS OF ETHICS, GOOD PRACTICE AND DISCIPLINE.

THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ALSO PERFORMS ITS FUNCTION OF PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS OF MEDICAL SERVICES IN MANY WAYS.

FOR EXAMPLE, IT COLLECTS AND DISSEMINATES INFORMATION, ANSWERS ENQUIRIES ON THE RIGHTS OF PATIENTS AND REDRESS CHANNELS, PUBLISHES ARTICLES ON GENERAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL MATTERS IN ITS MONTHLY MAGAZINE, ADVISES ON CODES OF PRACTICE AND ON WAYS TO PROTECT CONSUMERS, AND REFERS COMPLAINTS RELATING TO MEDICAL SERVICES TO THE RELEVANT BOARDS, COUNCILS AND AUTHORITIES FOR ACTION.

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REVIEW OF STRATEGIC COMMODITIES SCHEDULE COMPLETED

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THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE HAS JUST COMPLETED A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE SCHEDULE TO THE IMPORT AND EXPORT (STRATEGIC COMMODITIES) REGULATIONS WITH THE AIM OF REFLECTING IN HONG KONG LEGISLATION THE CHANGES AGREED BY THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR MULTILATERAL EXPORT CONTROLS (COCOM).

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAU SAID THE NECESSARY AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEDULE, WHICH WOULD BE PROMULGATED SHORTLY, WOULD APPLY TO CHINA AS WELL AS OTHER EXPORT DESTINATIONS.

THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS EXPORT CONTROL ON HIGH-TECH PRODUCTS THROUGH THE IMPORT AND EXPORT ORDINANCE.

MR CHAU SAID CONTROL WAS EXERCISED IN LINE WITH VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL SECURITY EXPORT CONTROL REGIMES, INCLUDING THAT OF COCOM.

THE LIST OF CONTROLLED COMMODITIES IS PUBLISHED AS A SCHEDULE TO THE IMPORT AND EXPORT (STRATEGIC COMMODITIES) REGULATIONS.

"THE SCHEDULE IS REGULARLY UPDATED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE," MR CHAU SAID.

COCOM LAST YEAR AGREED ON MAJOR REVISIONS TO ITS EMBARGO LISTS.

THESE INVOLVED SIGNIFICANT LIBERALISATION IN MANY AREAS, WITH THE NUMBER OF DUAL-USE ITEMS UNDER CONTROL BEING MUCH REDUCED.

"MAJOR REVISIONS TO THE SCHEDULE NECESSARILY TAKE TIME BECAUSE OF THE COMPLEXITY AND TECHNICAL NATURE OF THE CONTROL LISTS.

"HOWEVER, APART FROM MAJOR REVISIONS, CHANGES INTRODUCED IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY EXPORT CONTROL REGIMES ARE IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE," MR CHAU SAID.

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HE SAID THE LEGAL PROCEDURES WERE DESIGNED WITH THIS IN MIND.

THE IMPORT AND EXPORT (STRATEGIC COMMODITIES) REGULATIONS PROVIDE THAT THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE MAY, BY ORDER PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE, PROMULGATE AMENDMENTS TO THE LIST OF CONTROLLED COMMODITIES.

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DRIVERS DETERRED FROM SLOW-DRIVE DEMONSTRATIONS

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WHEN GROUPS OF DRIVERS INTEND TO AIR GRIEVANCES BY DRIVING SLOWLY OR PARKING IN PROHIBITED AREAS, THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE THE ORGANISERS TO SETTLE THEIR PROBLEMS THROUGH DISCUSSION WITHOUT CAUSING INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON VINCENT CHENG HOI-CHUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

IF DRIVERS TAKE PART IN SLOW-DRIVES IN LARGE NUMBERS, THE POLICE WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO MINIMISE THE DISRUPTION CAUSED, MR ASPREY SAID.

THEY WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT THE EVENT DOES NOT POSE A DANGER TO OTHER ROAD USERS OR THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL.

THEY WILL DO THIS BY CONTAINING THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES INVOLVED, AND BY DIVERTING THEM TO LOCALITIES WHERE THERE WILL BE LESS IMPACT ON TRAFFIC.

"THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE CONTAIN POWERS TO ENABLE THE POLICE TO DEAL WITH SUCH SITUATIONS EFFECTIVELY," MR ASPREY SAID.

PART III OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE, WHICH DEALS WITH THE CONTROL OF MEETINGS, PROCESSIONS AND GATHERINGS, IS BEING REVIEWED TO ENSURE THAT ITS PROVISIONS ARE EFFECTIVE AND IN LINE WITH PRESENT DAY CIRCUMSTANCES.

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HIGH PRIORITY TO CURB LOANSHARKING ACTIVITIES

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THE POLICE GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO THE PREVENTION AND INVESTIGATION OF LOANSHARKING ACTIVITIES.

AND A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO ENHANCE POLICE POWERS TO CURB SUCH ACTIVITIES AND OTHER ASSOCIATED CRIMINAL ACTS OF DEBT COLLECTION IS IN THE PIPELINE.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LI KA-CHEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY SAID MANY LOANSHARKING ACTIVITIES WERE OPERATED BY ORGANISED CRIME SYNDICATES.

THUS A SECTION OF THE MONEY LENDERS ORDINANCE IS INCLUDED IN THE ORGANISED AND SERIOUS CRIMES BILL SO THAT THE ENHANCED SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE POWERS PROPOSED IN THE BILL CAN APPLY TO THIS OFFENCE.

THE INCLUSION MAY ALSO ENABLE THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONFISCATE THE PROCEEDS OF A CONVICTED OF THIS OFFENCE AND CAN ALLOW THE PROSECUTION TO PRESENT INFORMATION TO THE COURT TO ARGUE FOR A HEAVIER SENTENCE.

MR ASPREY SAID PUBLICITY EMPHASISED THE ADVICE TO THE PUBLIC NOT TO BORROW MONEY FROM LOANSHARKS.

THE POLICE ALSO ENCOURAGE THE PUBLIC TO REPORT SUSPECTED LOANSHARKING ACTIVITIES AND TO BE WILLING TO GIVE EVIDENCE IN COURT AGAINST OFFENDERS.

"THE POLICE INVESTIGATE THOROUGHLY ALL REPORTS ON ASSOCIATED CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES TO DEMAND DEBTS," HE SAID.

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MEASURES TO REDUCE NOISE LEVELS

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PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO REDUCE THE STIPULATED NOISE LEVELS UNDER THE NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE TO CONTROL INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL NOISES IN ANTICIPATION OF A RISING PUBLIC EXPECTATION OF A QUIETER ENVIRONMENT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID THE REVISED ACCEPTABLE NOISE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN THE TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM UNDER THE ORDINANCE WERE INTRODUCED ON NOVEMBER 1 THIS YEAR.

IN 1990 AND 1991, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND THE POLICE RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 8,835 COMPLAINTS ON NOISE NUISANCE, OF WHICH 4,002 WERE ON INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL NOISE.

MR EASON SAID ACTION IN THE FORMS OF ADVICE, WARNING OR THE SERVICE OF NOISE ABATEMENT NOTICES WAS REQUIRED IN 1,515 OR 38 PER CENT OF THE 4,002 CASES BECAUSE THE NOISE LEVELS EXCEEDED THE STIPULATED LIMITS.

THE REMAINING 2,487 OR 62 PER CENT WERE FOUND TO BE WITHIN THE NOISE LIMITS.

MR EASON SAID THERE WAS AT PRESENT NO SPECIFIC STATUTORY CONTROL ON TRAFFIC NOISE APART FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO FIX EXHAUST SILENCERS UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC (CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF VEHICLES) REGULATION.

HOWEVER, THE COUNCIL WOULD DEBATE ON A BILL TO AMEND THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE TO ENABLE TRAFFIC TO BE CONTROLLED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES TO ALLEVIATE TRAFFIC NOISE IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS TODAY, HE ADDED.

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APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR IMPORTED WORKERS SIMPLIFIED

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THE PROCEDURES TAKEN IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR IMPORTED LABOUR AND IN RENEWING SUCH APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN SIMPLIFIED AND STREAMLINED WHEREVER POSSIBLE, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMBINED IN ONE FORM THE APPLICATIONS FOR QUOTAS TO IMPORT WORKERS WITH THE NOTIFICATION OF VACANCIES WHICH APPLICANTS ARE REQUIRED, AS A CONDITION OF THE GENERAL LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME, TO THE LABOUR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO STUDYING THE FEASIBILITY OF ALLOWING IMPORTED WORKERS ALREADY WORKING IN HONG KONG, AND WHO ARE RE-EMPLOYED BY THEIR EXISTING EMPLOYERS WHO ARE ALLOCATED WITH FRESH QUOTAS, TO COMPLETE THEIR RE-ENTRY PROCESS IN HONG KONG BEFORE TAKING THEIR HOME LEAVE.

"WHETHER OR NOT THESE WORKERS CAN DO SO WOULD DEPEND ON THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES FROM WHICH THEY CAME TO HONG KONG," MR CHAN SAID.

"A GAP IN PRODUCTION IS UNAVOIDABLE SINCE EMPLOYERS ARE OBLIGED TO ARRANGE FOR IMPORTED WORKERS TO RETURN TO THEIR PLACE OF ORIGIN ON THE EXPIRY OF AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT."

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAN POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE GENERAL LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME ANNOUNCED ON NOVEMBER 18 THIS YEAR, EMPLOYERS WERE GIVEN THREE WEEKS TO SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS.

THE APPLICATIONS WILL BE VETTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT VISA CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE BEFORE SUBMISSION TO THE STEERING GROUP ON IMPORTATION OF LABOUR FOR APPROVAL, WHICH WILL NORMALLY TAKE FIVE TO SIX WEEKS.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE ALLOWED FOUR MONTHS IN WHICH TO RECRUIT WORKERS.

/MR CHAN

MR CHAN ALSO NOTED THAT THE RECRUITED WORKERS WOULD NORMALLY SUBMIT FORMAL VISA APPLICATIONS TO THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION THROUGH THE NEAREST BRITISH VISA POST.

IN THE CASE OF NATIONALS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC), THE APPLICATIONS WILL BE SUBMITTED VIA THE PRC'S VISA OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN HONG KONG.

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SCHOOLS ISSUED WITH TEXTBOOK GUIDELINES
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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REGULARLY REMINDS SCHOOLS OF THE NEED TO MINIMISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID.

THE ADVICE WAS LAST UPDATED IN APRIL THIS YEAR AFTER THE ICAC'S CORRUPTION PREVENTION DEPARTMENT HAD CONDUCTED AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF TEXTBOOK SELECTION PROCESSES BY SCHOOLS, HE ADDED.

MR CHAN SAID: "IF THESE GUIDELINES ARE ADHERED TO, TEXTBOOKS WOULD BE SELECTED BY COLLECTIVE DECISION, BASED ON THE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS, WITH DEVIATIONS BACKED UP BY DOCUMENTED REASONS TO PROTECT AGAINST ALLEGATIONS OF UNFAIRNESS OR IMPROPRIETY.

"HEADMASTERS CONSIDER THESE GUIDELINES TO BE CLEAR AND HELPFUL. MOREOVER, ICAC STAFF REGULARLY VISIT SCHOOLS TO EXPLAIN THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE AND TO OFFER ADVICE AS APPROPRIATE."

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MAN SAI-CHEONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAN SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD ISSUED GUIDELINES ON THE SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS TO SCHOOLS.

THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT TEXTBOOKS SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED UNNECESSARILY TO AVOID UNDUE FINANCIAL BURDEN UPON PARENTS AND THAT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE ONLY IF THE CURRENT TEXTBOOKS ARE JUDGED TO BE UNSUITABLE.

ANY PROPOSAL TO REPLACE A BOOK ON THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDED LISTS BY ANOTHER BOOK WHICH IS NOT ON THOSE LISTS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY GOOD EDUCATIONAL REASONS.

TO HELP PARENTS DECIDE WHETHER TO BUY NEW OR SECOND-HAND BOOKS, SCHOOLS SHOULD GIVE FULL DETAILS OF ALL TEXTBOOKS REQUIRED FOR THE NEW TERM IN THEIR BOOK LISTS; AND THE SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL IS A MATTER REQUIRING CARE AND THOUGHT.

"THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE THE SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE PUPILS.

"WORKBOOKS, SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES AND TESTS WHICH BEAR LITTLE OR NO RELEVANCE TO THE CURRICULUM AND TEACHING PROGRAMMES SHOULD NOT BE RECOMMENDED FOR USE," MR CHAN SAID.

HE ALSO TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT IN RESPONSE TO A RECENT EDUCATION DEPARTMENT INITIATIVE, PUBLISHERS HAD AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING:

* A TITLE ONCE PUT ON THE RECOMMENDED LISTS WILL NOT NORMALLY BE REVIEWED AGAIN FOR THREE YEARS, EXCEPT FOR JUSTIFIABLE REASONS;

* REVISIONS TO AND NEW EDITIONS OF RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR REVIEW;

* ANY REPRINTS INVOLVING MINOR AMENDMENTS OTHER THAN TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS MUST HAVE THE DEPARTMENT'S PRIOR AGREEMENT; AND

* TITLES INVOLVING UNNECESSARY AMENDMENTS WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE RECOMMENDED LISTS.

MR CHAN BELIEVED THAT THESE MEASURES, TOGETHER WITH THE GUIDELINES ISSUED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, WERE SUFFICIENT TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF PARENTS.

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POLICE STEP UP COVERAGE ON SOUTH LANTAU

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POLICE COVERAGE ON LAND AND SEA HAS BEEN STEPPED UP TO PREVENT CRIME IN VARIOUS VILLAGES IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF LANTAU, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TO PROVIDE A PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO ANY FURTHER OUTBREAK OF CRIME IN THE AREA, HE SAID A CO-ORDINATED OPERATIONAL PLAN INVOLVING LOCAL POLICE CRIME UNITS, NEIGHBOURING DIVISIONS OF MARINE POLICE AND THE POLICE TACTICAL UNIT HAD BEEN FORMULATED.

FROM JULY 1 TO DECEMBER 1, TWO CASES OF THEFT, 14 BURGLARIES AND FOUR ROBBERIES WERE REPORTED IN THE AREA.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU WONG-FAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ASPREY SAID THESE OFFENCES WERE SUSPECTED TO HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY CRIMINALS WHO ARRIVED BY SEA.

THE LATEST REPORT OF A BURGLARY WAS MADE ON OCTOBER 5. THE SITUATION OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET.

"THE POLICE CONDUCTED FULL INVESTIGATIONS IN ALL THESE REPORTED CASES. NO ARRESTS HAVE YET BEEN MADE BUT ENQUIRIES CONTINUE," MR ASPREY SAID.

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TRADE DOCUMENTARY CREDITS FIGURES NOT NEEDED

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND AT THIS STAGE TO REQUEST AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE STATISTICS ON DOCUMENTARY CREDITS FOR IMPORTS AND EXPORTS WITH A VIEW TO COMPLEMENTING THE ORDERS-ON-HAND STATISTICS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ROGER LUK KOON-HOO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN SO FAR SUCH STATISTICS CAN BE REGARDED AS INDICATORS OF HONG KONG'S GENERAL ECONOMIC AND TRADE CONDITIONS, THE AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS ARE ALREADY SUPPLYING TO THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ON LOANS TO FINANCE HONG KONG'S VISIBLE TRADE AND TO THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

MR CHAU SAID SUMMARY FIGURES ON THESE LOANS WERE PUBLISHED PERIODICALLY.

THESE FIGURES HAVE A WIDER COVERAGE THAN THOSE ON DOCUMENTARY CREDITS FOR IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, HE SAID.

ALSO, THE REPORTING OF THE FIGURES ON DOCUMENTARY CREDITS FOR IMPORTS AND EXPORTS WOULD MEAN ADDITIONAL WORK FOR THE AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS, HE ADDED.

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ACTION IN HAND TO ABATE VESSEL NOISE

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A NUMBER OF MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO ABATE NOISE CAUSED BY VESSELS USING WATERS NEAR RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN NORTH TSING YI AND WEST TSUEN WAN.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHAN WAI-YIP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

APART FROM MORE EMPHASIS ON SUMMONS ACTION BY THE POLICE, MR EASON SAID THE MARINE DEPARTMENT WAS ADVISING TUG OPERATORS TO AVOID MAKING UNNECESSARY NOISE, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT.

THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT OFFICE WAS ARRANGING A MEETING WITH THE RELEVANT TRADE ASSOCIATIONS TO URGE SELF-DISCIPLINE AMONG THEIR MEMBERS WHEN USING LOUD-HAILERS.

"CONSIDERATION IS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO TIGHTENING UP CONTROL ON THE USE OF LOUD-HAILERS AND LOUDSPEAKERS AT NIGHT, AND TO REQUIRING THAT THE OWNERS OF VESSELS INSTALL MORE SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT," MR EASON SAID.

HE SAID OF THE 44 COMPLAINTS OF NOISE FROM VESSELS RECEIVED THE PAST YEAR, SIX WERE FROM RESIDENTS OF NORTH TSING YI AND WEST TSUEN WAN.

"THREE SUMMONSES HAVE BEEN ISSUED AND ONE PROSECUTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITH A FINE OF \$5,000 BEING IMPOSED," MR EASON SAID.

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FIXED PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL PARKING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO DEAL WITH ILLEGAL PARKING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES MORE EFFECTIVELY WAS INTRODUCED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID THE BILL WOULD EMPOWER THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO MAKE BY-LAWS FOR THE ISSUE OF FIXED PENALTY PARKING TICKETS TO CONTROL PARKING OFFENCES ON ESTATE ROADS.

"UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) ORDINANCE, THE FIXED PENALTY TICKET SYSTEM HAS PROVED TO BE A VERY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO DETER INDISCRIMINATE PARKING ON PUBLIC ROADS," MR EASON SAID.

"THE HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE A SIMILAR SYSTEM FOR MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER ESTATE ROADS."

THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO ENABLE THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO DELEGATE SOME OF ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS TO OTHER PERSONS IN RELATION TO THE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF COMMERCIAL FACILITIES AND CAR PARKS.

HOWEVER, THE POWERS TO PROSECUTE OFFENDING MOTORISTS AND TO ISSUE FIXED PENALTY PARKING TICKETS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE EXERCISED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, MR EASON SAID.

FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF DOUBT, THE BILL WOULD ALSO GIVE EXPRESS POWER TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO APPOINT TRIBUNALS FROM A PANEL TO HEAR TENANCY APPEALS, HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL RADIO EQUIPMENT EFFECTIVE

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LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST THE INSTALLATION OF ILLEGAL RADIOCOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT IN TAXIS IS ALREADY EFFECTIVE, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE FREQUENCY OF SPOT CHECKS CARRIED OUT BY THE POST OFFICE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE POLICE WILL BE STEPPED UP FURTHER AS RESOURCES PERMIT," SHE SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM, MRS CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS REVIEWING THE LEVEL OF FINES THROUGHOUT THE TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE.

THE ADMINISTRATION INTENDS TO PUT FORWARD DRAFT LEGISLATION WHICH PROPOSES AN INCREASE IN FINES OF UP TO 10 TIMES, SHE ADDED.

AT PRESENT, THE ORDINANCE PROVIDES FOR A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$5,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR TWO YEARS FOR THE ILLEGAL POSSESSION OR USE OF RADIOCOMMUNICATION APPARATUS.

IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, 395 CASES INVOLVING THE INSTALLATION OF ILLEGAL RADIOCOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT IN TAXIS HAVE BEEN DETECTED.

TO DATE THERE HAVE BEEN 295 PROSECUTIONS IN RESPECT OF THESE CASES, ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

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INSURANCE PREMIUMS SHOULD BE SET BY MARKET FORCES
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BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAVE FELT THAT THE PROPER LEVEL OF MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE PREMIUMS SHOULD BEST BE ACHIEVED THROUGH MARKET FORCES, THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOTORISTS MAY COMPARE THE POLICIES AND TERMS OFFERED BY ANY OF THE 86 COMPANIES THAT ARE AUTHORISED TO WRITE MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE BEFORE CHOOSING THE ONE THAT IS BEST SUITED TO THEIR NEEDS, HE SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SIU-TONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR NENDICK SAID THERE WERE ALSO MANY INSURANCE BROKERS WHO CAN GIVE PROFESSIONAL ADVICE.

"THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR INSURANCE COMPANIES, AND CONTINUE TO KEEP ITS ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING THEM UNDER REVIEW," HE SAID.

THE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS ARE DIRECTED AT ENSURING THAT INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE CONTROLLED AND MANAGED BY FIT AND PROPER PERSONS AND ARE FINANCIALLY CAPABLE OF MEETING THEIR LIABILITIES.

THE STATUTORY POWERS GRANTED TO THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION AND TO IMPOSE REQUIREMENTS SPECIFICALLY PREVENT HIM FROM REQUIRING AN INSURER TO AMEND THE PREMIUMS PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF ANY POLICY OR CLASS OF POLICY.

MR NENDICK ADVISED CONSUMERS WHO FEEL THAT THE GENERAL POLICY TERMS AND LEVELS OF PREMIA OFFERED WERE TOO HIGH TO APPROACH THE CONSUMER COUNCIL.

IF THE COMPLAINT RELATES TO AN INSURANCE CLAIM, THE INSURANCE CLAIMS COMPLAINTS BUREAU, WHICH, IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDUSTRY'S CODES OF PRACTICE, ADJUDICATES COMPLAINTS RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE CLAIMS OF UP TO \$250,000, CAN BE APPROACHED.

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WOMEN'S COMMISSION UNDER CONSIDERATION

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THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD BEEN EXAMINING THE PROPOSAL FOR A WOMEN'S COMMISSION.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON FUNG KIN-KEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SZE SAID DECISION ON THE MATTER WOULD BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY.

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CDI DEVELOPS COHERENT CURRICULUM

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THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (CDI) SEEKS TO DEVELOP A COHERENT, BROAD AND BALANCED SCHOOL CURRICULUM FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG, MR CHAN SAID THE CDI ALSO ENDEAVOURED TO KEEP THE CURRICULUM UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW, ENGAGE IN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION, DEVELOP RESOURCE MATERIALS, TRAIN TEACHERS AND TENDER ADVICE BOTH GENERALLY AND IN SPECIFIC CASES.

IN ADDITION TO ITS ON-GOING TASKS, MR CHAN NOTED, THE CDI HAD COMPLETED THE BULK OF ITS WORK SCHEDULES FOR 1992/93.

AT THIS STAGE, THE SPECIFIC WORK SCHEDULES DRAWN UP BY THE CDI FOR 1993/94 ARE:

* TO CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOUR NEW CURRICULUM PROJECTS RECOMMENDED IN EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO. 4 (ECR4), THAT IS, FURTHER INTEGRATION OF SUBJECTS AT PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY LEVELS, INTRODUCTION OF A MODULAR CURRICULUM AT JUNIOR SECONDARY LEVEL, DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULA FOR BOTH ENDS OF THE ABILITY RANGE, AND THE FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING A MASTERY LEARNING PROGRAMME;

* TO FINALISE THE CURRICULUM GUIDES FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF COMMENTS FROM SCHOOLS;

* TO REVIEW THE GUIDE TO THE CURRICULUM FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN;

* TO FURTHER DEVELOP, EVALUATE AND REVIEW THE TARGET AND TARGET-RELATED ASSESSMENT (TTRA) LEARNING TARGETS, PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES AND TO EXTEND THEM TO PRIMARY 1 - 3; AND

* TO BROADEN THE EXPERTISE OF THE CDI BY RECRUITING MORE NON-CIVIL SERVANTS.

/MR CHAN

MR CHAN SAID IN DRAWING UP ITS WORK SCHEDULES, THE CDI HAD BEEN GUIDED BY THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (CDC) AND THE PRIORITIES SPECIFIED IN ECR4.

HE SAID ABOUT 1,000 PERSONS WERE INVOLVED DIRECTLY IN THE WORK OF THE CDC WHICH OPERATED THROUGH A SYSTEM OF CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEES AND SUBJECT COMMITTEES.

"BESIDES EXPERTISE WITHIN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THEY COMPRISE HEADS OF SCHOOLS, PRACTISING TEACHERS, ACADEMICS FROM TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE HONG KONG EXAMINATION AUTHORITY, PARENTS AND EMPLOYERS," MR CHAN SAID.

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NO PLAN TO REDUCE CHLORINE CONTENT OF POTABLE WATER
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THERE IS NO PLAN TO REDUCE THE CHLORINE CONTENT OF POTABLE WATER WHICH IS VERY MUCH LOWER THAN THE LEVEL THAT WILL CAUSE ADVERSE EFFECTS TO HEALTH.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BLAKE SAID THE AVERAGE FREE RESIDUAL CHLORINE CONTENT OF THE FINAL TREATED WATER UPON LEAVING TREATMENT WORKS WAS 0.9MG/L.

THIS MIGHT VARY TO CATER FOR VARIATIONS IN WATER QUALITY, SEASONAL VARIATIONS AND OTHER SPECIAL SITUATIONS.

AS INDICATED BY PREVIOUS SAMPLES TAKEN, THE AVERAGE RESIDUAL CHLORINE CONTENT AT THE TAP LEVEL IS NORMALLY WITHIN 0.2 TO 0.5 MG/L WHICH IS THE DESIRABLE CHLORINE CONCENTRATION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, HE SAID.

MR BLAKE SAID THERE WAS NO NEED TO TAKE ANY ACTION AT THIS STAGE TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON WAYS TO REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF CHLORINE IN POTABLE WATER ON THEIR HEALTH.

"THIS SUBJECT, HOWEVER, WILL BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW, IN THE LIGHT OF THE FINDINGS OF LATEST RESEARCHES," HE ADDED.

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MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL ON WASTEWATER DISCHARGE

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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO IMPROVE LEGAL CONTROL ON WATER POLLUTION WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID THE BILL WOULD ENABLE THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO REQUIRE THE CONNECTION OF WASTEWATER TO PUBLIC SEWERAGE.

"UNDER REGULATIONS TO BE MADE UNDER THE BILL, THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MAY SERVE NOTICE AND REQUIRE PROPERTY OWNERS TO CONVEY THEIR WASTEWATER TO A TERMINAL MANHOLE," MR EASON SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT MAY THEN CONNECT UP THE TERMINAL MANHOLE TO NEW PUBLIC SEWERAGE.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO REQUIRE OWNERS OF PRIVATE WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES TO ENSURE PROPER OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THEIR FACILITIES.

"TO PROTECT OUR SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE FURTHER, A SEPARATE OFFENCE WILL BE CREATED FOR DISCHARGING POISONOUS AND NOXIOUS MATTERS INTO COMMUAL SEWERS OR DRAINS," MR EASON SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MOTION TO FURTHER DEAL WITH SMUGGLING PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION TO EXTEND SECTION 18(3) AND PARTS VIIA AND VIIB OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE FOR A FURTHER ONE YEAR TO DEAL WITH A SMUGGLING PROBLEM.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID SECTION 18(3) REMOVED THE LIMIT OF TWO MONTHS DURING WHICH AN IMMIGRATION OFFICER MIGHT REMOVE A PERSON REFUSED PERMISSION TO LAND IN HONG KONG, IF IT APPEARED TO THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION THAT THAT PERSON WAS PREVIOUSLY RESIDENT IN VIETNAM.

HE SAID THIS SUBSECTION HAD BEEN RE-ENACTED ANNUALLY AND WOULD EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31 THIS YEAR UNLESS EXTENDED BY RESOLUTION OF THIS COUNCIL.

MR ASPREY SAID PARTS VIIA AND VIIB OF THE ORDINANCE WERE ENACTED IN 1979 TO PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE SANCTIONS AGAINST THE TRAFFICKING IN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

UNDER THESE PROVISIONS, ANY PERSON WHO HELPED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ENTER HONG KONG COMMITTED AN OFFENCE.

"OFFENDERS ARE LIABLE ON CONVICTION TO A FINE OF UP TO \$5 MILLION AND TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

"THE SHIPS AND OTHER PROPERTY INVOLVED ARE LIABLE TO FORFEITURE," MR ASPREY SAID.

HE SAID THESE TWO PARTS HAD ALSO BEEN RE-ENACTED ANNUALLY AND WOULD EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31 UNLESS EXTENDED.

"I BELIEVE THAT THESE PROVISIONS ARE STILL NECESSARY," MR ASPREY SAID.

HE SAID IN THE FIRST 11 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, ONLY 12 ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM VIETNAM HAD COME TO HONG KONG.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD THE NUMBER RETURNING TO VIETNAM UNDER THE ORDERLY RETURN PROGRAMME AND THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY PROGRAMME WAS IN AVERAGE OVER 1,000 A MONTH.

BUT IT WILL BE SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME BEFORE ALL MIGRANTS, OF WHOM THERE REMAIN OVER 43,000, ARE REPATRIATED, HE SAID.

THEREFORE, THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO RETAIN SECTION 18(3).

MR ASPREY SAID ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM CHINA ALSO REMAINED A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM.

IN THE FIRST 11 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THERE WERE 32,427 ARRESTS: NEARLY 40 PER CENT UP ON THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

HE SAID THE MAIN CAUSE HAD BEEN THE ILLUSION OF JOBS ON THE NEW AIRPORT SITE AND OTHER MAJOR PROJECTS, ENCOURAGED AS ALWAYS BY DELIBERATE MISREPRESENTATION AND FALSE RUMOURS SPREAD BY THE "SNAKEHEADS" WHO TRAFFICKED IN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

"IT IS NECESSARY TO RETAIN STRONG SANCTIONS PROVIDED BY PARTS VIIA AND VIIB OF THE ORDINANCE AGAINST THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN THIS TRADE," MR ASPREY SAID.

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MOTION ON HOUSING SUBSIDY POLICY PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION URGING THE REVOCATION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S HOUSING SUBSIDY POLICY AFTER A TWO-AND-A-HALF HOUR DEBATE AT ITS WEEKLY MEETING.

TWENTY-FOUR MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION PROPOSED BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

IN ADDITION, 18 MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE ECONOMIC STABILITY AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG.

THE DEBATE WAS RAISED BY THE HON MARTIN LEE. THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, WINDED UP THE DEBATE.

/ALSO PASSED

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ALSO PASSED WAS A MOTION MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE.

TWO BILLS WERE PASSED AT THE MEETING. THEY WERE EXCHANGE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1992.

TWO BILLS - HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 - WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

THE HON JAMES TO WITHDREW A MOTION ON THE PROTECTION OF PROSECUTION WITNESSES.

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UNCONDITIONAL MFN RENEWAL VITAL TO HK, CHINA

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IT IS IN HONG KONG'S INTERESTS AS WELL AS IN CHINA'S INTERESTS THAT MOST FAVOURED NATION (MFN) STATUS FOR CHINA IS RENEWED UNCONDITIONALLY, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT, THE GOVERNOR SAID HE WOULD NEED TO CAMPAIGN VIGOROUSLY AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY FOR THE UNCONDITIONAL RENEWAL.

"I SAID THAT I INTENDED TO DO THAT IN THE PAST AND I SHALL CERTAINLY BE DOING IT IN THE FUTURE AND I HOPE TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WHEN I DO THAT IN WASHINGTON AND ELSEWHERE," HE ADDED.

HE SAID AT A MEETING WITH THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONALS FEDERATION EARLIER TODAY THEY TOTALLY AGREED ON THE IMPERATIVE IMPORTANCE FOR HONG KONG OF UNCONDITIONAL RENEWAL OF MFN FOR CHINA.

ASKED ABOUT U.S. PRESIDENT-ELECT MR CLINTON'S REMARKS THIS MORNING, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT OTHER PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD ARE INTERESTED IN HOW WE SUCCEED IN IMPLEMENTING THE JOINT DECLARATION BECAUSE HONG KONG IS A GREAT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

"THERE ARE 250,000 EXPATRIATES LIVING IN HONG KONG. HONG KONG IS A PART OF THE WORLD THAT EVERYBODY LOOKS TO AND EVERYBODY WILL BE INTERESTED IN HOW WE SUCCEED IN IMPLEMENTING THE JOINT DECLARATION AND GUARANTEEING FOR THE FUTURE NOT ONLY HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY, BUT ALSO HONG KONG'S WAY OF LIFE."

ASKED HOW HE WOULD DISCUSS HIS PROPOSALS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "WHEN I WAS IN PEKING THE FOREIGN MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT THE JLG (JOINT LIAISON GROUP) WAS ONE OF THE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH WE COULD CONTINUE TO TALK ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ABOUT OTHER MATTERS, AND THAT IS OF COURSE STILL THE POSITION.

"I'VE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT I'M PREPARED TO GO ANYWHERE AND TALK TO ANYBODY ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT WHAT IS OF COURSE ALWAYS DIFFICULT IS TO BE IN A SITUATION IN WHICH THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT PUTS FORWARD PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION BUT OTHERS ARE LESS WILLING TO DO SO."

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GROUP TO STUDY WAYS TO IMPROVE TUEN MUN TRAFFIC FLOW
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET UP A GOVERNMENT/DISTRICT BOARDS WORKING GROUP TO STUDY WAYS TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOWS IN THE TUEN MUN-TSUEN WAN CORRIDOR IN THE SHORT TERM, PENDING THE COMPLETION OF THE MAJOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

THE GROUP - THE GOVERNMENT/DISTRICT BOARDS WORKING GROUP ON TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE TUEN MUN-TSUEN WAN CORRIDOR - WILL RECOMMEND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES WITH REFERENCE TO TRAFFIC REGULATION, ROAD MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMING, ACCIDENT MANAGEMENT, VEHICLE BREAKDOWNS AND OTHER INCIDENTS; PUBLIC TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS; HANDLING OF OVERLOADED GOODS VEHICLES; AND DISSEMINATION OF TRAFFIC INFORMATION.

THE GROUP IS CHAIRED BY THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT/NEW TERRITORIES, MR ALAN LUI. MEMBERS INCLUDE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILORS, MEMBERS OF YUEN LONG, TUEN MUN, TSUEN WAN AND KWAI TSING DISTRICT BOARDS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENTS, POLICE, AND THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION.

IT WILL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD CONFERENCE ROOM, SIXTH FLOOR, MONG KOK GOVERNMENT OFFICE, 30 LUEN WAN STREET, KOWLOON AT 2.30 PM.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

THERE WILL BE A FIVE-MINUTE PHOTO CALL BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP STARTS. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP, MR ALAN LUI, WILL BRIEF THE MEDIA AFTER THE MEETING, AROUND 4.30 PM.

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GOVERNOR TOURS WONG TAI SIN
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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, VISITED WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE TOURED THE CHOI CHUK TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LIVING CONDITIONS IN THESE PUBLIC HOUSING RESETTLEMENTS.

A RESIDENT, MR CHENG CHI-YAU, WHO HAD EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS DURING THE GOVERNOR'S EARLIER MEET-THE-PUBLIC SESSION AT THE CITY HALL, WAS INVITED TO JOIN THE TOUR.

THE GOVERNOR LATER WENT TO CHUK YUEN SOUTH ESTATE TO VISIT THE CHINESE YMCA CHUK YUEN CENTRE WHICH OFFERS CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES.

/HE THEN

HE THEN VISITED THE WONG TAI SIN TEMPLE WHERE HE SAW THE MAIN ALTAR HALL AND TOURED THE JOSS STICK ARCADE AND THE ADJACENT GOOD WISH GARDEN.

BEFORE WINDING UP HIS VISIT, HE MET WITH DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AT A TEA RECEPTION IN THE TEMPLE'S FUNG MING HALL.

THE GOVERNOR WAS ACCOMPANIED ON HIS VISIT BY THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MR PAUL WONG, AND THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR ALDAN KWOK.

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SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO GET NEW COMPUTERS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TO BUY 3,465 COMPUTERS COSTING ABOUT \$26 MILLION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

THE 386SX MODELS REPLACING THE OUTDATED ONES HAVE FASTER PROCESSING SPEED, ADVANCED GRAPHICS, LARGER STORAGE AND USER-FRIENDLY SOFTWARE, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR DOMINIC S W WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE CONTRACT-SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE SUPPLY OF MICROCOMPUTER SYSTEMS TO THE DEPARTMENT, MR WONG SAID 315 GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS WOULD EACH BE GIVEN 11 SETS OF IBM MICROCOMPUTERS AND THE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT OF ANOTHER 22 SECONDARY SCHOOLS WOULD ALSO BE UPGRADED.

MR WONG SAID THIS INVESTMENT WAS A HUGE ONE. IT ALSO TIED IN WITH THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS IN WHICH HE SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT INVESTMENT THAT ANY COMMUNITY MADE IN ITS FUTURE WAS WHAT IT SPENT ON IMPROVING THE EDUCATION OF ITS CHILDREN.

THE FIRST PHASE OF INSTALLATION IS TO START SHORTLY AND IS SCHEDULED TO BE OPERATIONAL BY THE END OF THIS MONTH. THE OVERALL INSTALLATION IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR.

ALSO SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY, THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES, MR BILLY LAM, SAID THE CONTRACT HAD BEEN CONCLUDED WITH GREAT SPEED AND EFFICIENCY AND IN A MOST PROFESSIONAL MANNER THROUGH COMPETITIVE BIDDING FROM BOTH LOCAL AND OVERSEAS SUPPLIERS.

"WITH THE GOOD PRICE AND QUALITY PRODUCT WE HAVE ACHIEVED, THIS PURCHASE HAS CERTAINLY, ONCE AGAIN, TESTIFIED TO THE VALUE OF OUR FAIR AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY PUBLIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM," MR LAM SAID.

AS AN ENTITY OF THE AGREEMENT ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT OF GATT, HE SAID IT WAS THE DUTY OF HIS DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THAT A FAIR AND TRANSPARENT SYSTEM WAS OPERATED AND THAT A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD WAS MAINTAINED FOR ALL PLAYERS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR SOURCE OR ORIGIN.

"THE FACT THAT WE BUY OVER 95 PER CENT OF OUR \$3 BILLION ANNUAL SUPPLIES FROM OVER 30 OVERSEAS COUNTRIES IS A GOOD INDICATION OF OUR OPENNESS AND OUR WORLDWIDE EFFORTS IN GETTING 'BEST VALUE FOR MONEY' IN OUR PURCHASES.

"WE HAVE DONE WELL IN THIS ASPECT IN THE PAST, AGAIN IN THIS CASE, AND WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE TO DO SO IN FUTURE," HE SAID.

ACTING DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, MR K H LAU, ALSO SAID THE CONTRACT WOULD BRING ABOUT SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO COMPUTER TEACHING FACILITIES IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT STUDENTS WOULD BENEFIT FROM HAVING THESE NEW MODELS WHICH WERE MORE EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR THEIR COMPUTER STUDIES.

"THE NEW SYSTEMS WILL ALSO PROVIDE A FLEXIBLE PLATFORM TO SUPPORT EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S PLANNED ENHANCEMENTS TO THE SYLLABUS," HE ADDED.

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STUDY TO EXPLORE POTENTIAL OF FIVE GOVT SITES

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THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAS COMMISSIONED A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CARRY OUT A PLANNING STUDY TO EXAMINE THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF FIVE GOVERNMENT SITES.

THE STUDY, ENTITLED "REDEVELOPMENT OF UNDER-DEVELOPED "G" SITES: SCHEME PROPOSAL FOR PRIORITY SITES", WILL TAKE ABOUT SIX MONTHS TO COMPLETE AT A COST OF \$1.9 MILLION, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY REQUIRING MULTI-DISCIPLINARY INPUTS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

IT WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE OPTIMUM REDEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS AND REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES FOR EACH OF THEM, HE SAID.

THE CONTRACT FOR THE STUDY WAS SIGNED TODAY BETWEEN PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT TOWN PLANNER/DISTRICT, MR EDMUND LO, AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE PALMER AND TURNER LIMITED, MR B L COURTENAY.

THE FIVE SITES TO BE COVERED BY THE STUDY ARE:

- * ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND DEPOT IN CAROLINE HILL, CAUSEWAY BAY;
- * GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND STORE DEPOT AT OIL STREET, NORTH POINT;
- * LINGNAN COLLEGE AT STUBBS ROAD, WAN CHAI;
- * GOVERNMENT OFFICE, MAGISTRACY AND CLINIC IN SAN PO KONG; AND
- * GOVERNMENT QUARTERS AT KING'S PARK RISE, HO MAN TIN.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1992

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FIVE COMPANIES RECEIVE GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR INDUSTRY

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FIVE COMPANIES RECEIVED THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR INDUSTRY THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING FOR THEIR EXCELLENCE IN DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF INDUSTRIAL PERFORMANCE.

AT A CEREMONY HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, PRESENTED EACH OF THE WINNING COMPANIES THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD TROPHY AS A PERMANENT MEMENTO OF THEIR EXCELLENCE.

THEY WERE STAR INDUSTRIAL COMPANY LTD IN THE CONSUMER PRODUCT DESIGN CATEGORY; 3C LIMITED IN THE MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT DESIGN CATEGORY; COMPUTER PRODUCTS ASIA-PACIFIC LIMITED IN THE PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY CATEGORIES; FUTURE'S SAFE COMPANY LTD IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE CATEGORY; AND GOLDLION (FAR EAST) LTD IN THE EXPORT MARKETING CATEGORY.

THE WINNERS ARE ALSO ENTITLED TO DISPLAY AN OFFICAL LOGO OF THE AWARD FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.

INTRODUCED IN 1989, THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR INDUSTRY IS HELD ANNUALLY WITH COMPANIES TAKING PART IN COMPETITIONS RUN BY DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CATEGORIES.

THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSUMER PRODUCT DESIGN CATEGORY; THE CHINESE MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG FOR THE MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT DESIGN CATEGORY; THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL FOR THE PRODUCTIVITY CATEGORY; THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT FOR THE QUALITY CATEGORY; THE PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE CATEGORY; AND THE HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL FOR THE EXPORT MARKETING CATEGORY.

THE LAST TWO ARE NEW CATEGORIES WHICH HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED THIS YEAR.

IN ADDITION TO THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD TROPHY WHICH WAS AWARDED TO THE MOST OUTSTANDING ENTRY IN EACH CATEGORY, EACH OF THE ORGANISERS ALSO MADE A NUMBER OF AWARDS IN ITS OWN NAME TO THE BEST ENTRIES IN THE AWARD CATEGORY FOR WHICH IT WAS RESPONSIBLE.

OTHER DESERVING ENTRIES WERE ALSO EACH AWARDED A CERTIFICATE OF MERIT.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY, THE GOVERNOR, ACCOMPANIED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRY, MR T H BARMA, TOURED THE EXHIBITION BOOTHS WHERE THE WINNING PRODUCTS OF THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD WERE DISPLAYED.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1992

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NON-GOVT ORGANISATIONS PLAY MAJOR WELFARE ROLE

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NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOS) PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE THAN EVER BEFORE AS THE GOVERNMENT IS SET TO INTRODUCE MAJOR IMPROVEMENT IN WELFARE SERVICES, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

MRS WONG SAID THE GOVERNOR HAD ANNOUNCED IN HIS RECENT POLICY ADDRESS A CAPITAL INJECTION OF \$2.3 BILLION INTO THE LOTTERIES FUND TO MEET THE RECURRENT EXPENDITURE OF NEW WELFARE SERVICES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

"THIS IS INDEED VERY ENCOURAGING AS THE FUNDS ENABLE US TO ACHIEVE KEY TARGETS SET OUT IN THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE AND THE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION," SHE SAID.

THE IMPROVEMENT MEANS SOME 150 PROJECTS, COSTING NEARLY \$140 MILLION FOR 1993/94 ALONE.

"HAVING CHARTED A CLEAR COURSE FOR THE FUTURE AND ACQUIRED THE FUNDS WE NEED, IT IS TIME FOR US TO ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES AND GET DOWN TO THE REAL WORK."

MRS WONG WAS SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE LOCAL CONFERENCE ON THE ROLE OF NGOS ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

NOTING THE "VERY LONG" HISTORY OF NGOS IN HONG KONG, SHE RECALLED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND NGOS BEGAN TO DEVELOP PARTNERSHIP DURING THE 1950S AND EARLY 1960S WHEN HONG KONG FACED MANY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

THE PARTNERSHIP BECAME INCREASINGLY CLOSE AND COMPLEX IN THE 1970S WHEN HONG KONG SAW A STEADY DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AN INCREASINGLY COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES.

THE 1973 WHITE PAPER ON "SOCIAL WELFARE IN HONG KONG - THE WAY AHEAD" FORMALLY RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF A VIGOROUS AND PROGRESSIVE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND EMPHASISED THE PRINCIPLE OF CO-OPERATION ON A "PARTNERSHIP" BASIS.

NOT ONLY DID NGOS RECEIVE SUBVENTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT, MRS WONG SAID, BUT THEY WERE ALSO INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THE PLANNING OF WELFARE SERVICES.

THIS RELATIONSHIP ENTERED INTO A NEW STAGE WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW SUBVENTION SYSTEM IN 1980, UNDER WHICH NECESSARY FINANCIAL RESOURCES WERE GIVEN TO NGOS INVOLVED IN THE PROVISION OF SPECIFIED SERVICES.

MRS WONG SAID: "WITH THE ASSISTANCE FROM NGOS, THE POLICY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS CAN NOW BE MET MORE EFFECTIVELY."

THE SETTING UP OF SERVICE STANDARDS AND REGULAR REVIEWS FURTHER PROVIDE CHANNELS FOR COMMUNICATION.

/"THE CHANGE

"THE CHANGE HAS GREATLY STRENGTHENED THE ROLE OF NGOS AS SERVICE PROVIDERS. IT ALSO REFLECTS THE JOINT RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN PROVIDING HIGH STANDARD WELFARE SERVICES TO THE HONG KONG PEOPLE."

MRS WONG SAID AFTER ALMOST FOUR DECADES OF DEVELOPMENT, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND NGOS AT PRESENT REST ON A FOUNDATION OF TRUST AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

"IT IS NOW AN INDISPENSABLE SERVICE PROVIDER AND A CLOSE PARTNER WITH THE GOVERNMENT," SHE ADDED.

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CFPA APPROVES GRANTS TO LOCAL ARTS GROUPS

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TWO PERFORMING ARTS GROUPS IN THE DRAMA FIELD WHICH HAVE SUCCESSFULLY OBTAINED BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP HAVE BEEN AWARDED A TOTAL OF \$93,000 BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS (CFPA) UNDER THE MATCHING GRANT SCHEME DURING THE PAST TWO MONTHS.

THEY ARE CARLSBERG WANCHAI THEATRE, SPONSORED BY CARLSBERG BREWERY HONG KONG LTD AND AMERICIAN COMMUNITY THEATRE, SPONSORED BY DHL INTERNATIONAL (HK) LTD, CROWN PACIFIC LTD AND POLYGRAM RECORDS LTD.

THE CFPA HAS ALSO APPROVED 19 PROJECT GRANTS TOTTALLING \$902,370 TO 16 PERFORMING ARTS ORGANISATIONS.

THEY ARE ZUNI ICOSAHEDRON, THE GAY STEPPERS DANCE TROUPE AND THE CONSENSUS TROUPE IN THE DANCE FIELD.

GRANTS HAVE BEEN APPROVED, IN THE DRAMA FIELD, TO THE PERFORMERS, 105 DRAMA SOCIETY, RED CALF DRAMA CLUB, THE ART KILN MISSION, HONG KONG BAPTIST COLLEGE, FOCUS THEATRE WORKSHOP, ENERGETIC FAMILY, HONG KONG CHRISTIAN YOUTH THEATRE AND ZUNI ICOSAHEDRON.

IN ADDITION, HONG KONG ARTS RESOURCE AND INFORMATION CENTRE HAS BEEN AWARDED A GRANT TO PUBLISH THE CFPA AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ORIGINAL SCRIPTS COLLECTION (1991).

IN THE MUSIC FIELD ARE RAINBOW ASSOCIATION OF VOCAL MUSIC, TIEN MA CHORUS AND HONG KONG SINFONIETTA.

IN THE CHINESE OPERA FIELD, A GRANT HAS BEEN AWARDED TO HONG KONG CANTONESE OPERA DEVELOPMENT LTD FOR A PROJECT TO PROMOTE CANTONESE OPERA AT KO SHAN THEATRE.

APPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT AND MATCHING GRANTS CAN BE MADE ANY TIME IN THE YEAR.

THE APPLICANT MUST BE AN APPROVED CHARITABLE INSTITUTION OR A REGISTERED NON-PROFIT-MAKING ORGANISATION.

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THREE SALARIES COMMISSION MEMBERS REAPPOINTED

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ANNOUNCED THE REAPPOINTMENT OF PROFESSOR ROBERT I TRICKER, DR WILFRED CHAN SIU-YUEN AND MR ANDREW K W SO, TO THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE.

THE PERIOD OF REAPPOINTMENT OF PROFESSOR TRICKER AND DR CHAN WILL BE FROM JANUARY 1, 1993 TO DECEMBER 31, 1993 WHILE THAT FOR MR SO FROM JANUARY 24, 1993 TO JANUARY 23, 1994.

THE STANDING COMMISSION ADVISES THE GOVERNMENT ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE GOVERNING PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF THE NON-DIRECTORATE CIVIL SERVICE OTHER THAN THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,500
REVERSAL OF LAF	NIL
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	1,500
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	+29
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,529
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 113.8 **0.1* 9.12.92

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.12 PCT	15 MONTHS	2402	5.50	100.68	4.96
1 MONTH	3.71 PCT	18 MONTHS	2405	5.50	100.58	5.14
3 MONTHS	3.92 PCT	21 MONTHS	2408	4.375	98.66	5.28
6 MONTHS	3.98 PCT	24 MONTHS	2411	4.625	98.71	5.40
12 MONTHS	4.64 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 6,900MN

CLOSED 9 DECEMBER 1992

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