



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
GARDEN ROAD, 5th-8th FLOORS, MURRAY BUILDING,
HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

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I write to thank you for your support over the past years in subscribing to the Daily Information Bulletin (DIB).

In the meantime, I am glad to inform you that DIB has now been uploaded onto the Hong Kong Government Home Page on the Internet (<http://www.info.gov.hk/isd/news/index.htm>) from April 1, 1997.

This arrangement has ensured that existing DIB subscribers as well as the general public can have quicker access to the press releases issued daily by the Hong Kong Government through the Information Superhighway.

Following the upgrading of services, the DIB will no longer be printed in hard copies and distributed by post to subscribers with effect from May 1, 1997.

This decision will do good to the community at large in terms of environmental protection as 3.1 million sheets of A4-size paper will be saved each year, not to mention the saving of postage and large quantity of ink for printing.

If you wish to have the DIB sent directly to your Internet e-mail account, please complete and return the attached slip to GIS, 8th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong, before May 1, 1997 or by fax through 2845 9078. You can, of course, provide your e-mail account to us through our Internet mail account : isdnews@isd.gcn.gov.hk.

It is the policy of this department that we should aim at running a paperless office in the long run, but if you have difficulties in the new arrangements, please contact the undersigned at 2842 8738.

Robert Yip
(Robert YIP)

for Director of Information Services

Return Slip

To : GIS, 8th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong
(Attn : Robert Yip)

I would like to receive the Daily Information Bulletin
through my Internet e-mail account _____
from May 1, 1997.



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Friday, April 4, 1997

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Hong Kong - New Zealand air talks concluded	1
Impact on HK on revocation of China's MFN status in the US	2
Fight Crime Committee members re-appointed	3
Updated legislation proposed for AMS and CAS	4
Response to report on correctional institutions	5
Control of dust emissions from construction works	7
Environmental asbestos to be controlled	8
Board amends draft Ngau Chi Wan Outline Zoning Plan	9
Proposed road works for Ng Tung River	10
Flyover along Wong Chuk Hang Road being planned	11
Tsing Yi North Coastal Road proposed	12
Amendment to Chuen Lung road improvement works proposed	13
Drug proceeds confiscated	14
Historic boats for sale	15
Fire safety advice for grave-sweepers	16
No clinic service on Ching Ming Festival	17

Hong Kong - New Zealand air talks concluded

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The Hong Kong and New Zealand Governments have recently concluded new air traffic arrangements that provide for a balanced exchange of traffic rights for the airlines of both places.

Flexible and expansionary, the new arrangements reflect the needs of the market and open up opportunities for growth in tourism, a spokesman for the Economic Services Branch said, adding in particular that the arrangements provide the airlines in HK and New Zealand with new fifth freedom points in Australia, offering travellers the ability to stop over there on their trips from Hong Kong to New Zealand, and vice versa.

The business traveller will also stand to benefit. Cathay Pacific, for instance, currently operates only five non-stop services per week between Hong Kong and Auckland. Under the new arrangements, however, the company could plan to gradually increase this to a daily flight by early 1998.

Together with Air New Zealand, Cathay Pacific carried a total of 200,000 passengers in 1996, an increase of 23 per cent over 1995.

According to the Hong Kong Tourists Association, 32,900 Hong Kong residents visited New Zealand in 1996, an increase of about 12 per cent over 1995. On the other hand, 58,000 New Zealand residents visited the territory in 1996, an increase of about 16 per cent over 1995.

The Hong Kong - New Zealand air traffic arrangements were concluded in talks between the two sides in Wellington, New Zealand, on February 20 - 21 this year but have only just been brought into effect because of the New Zealand Government's requirement to first complete its necessary procedures.

This round of meeting followed several others stretching over four years. The new air traffic arrangements were negotiated under the umbrella of the Hong Kong/New Zealand Air Services Agreement signed in February 1991.

End

Impact on HK on revocation of China's MFN status in the US

* * * * *

The Government has completed a broad assessment of the potential impact on Hong Kong's economy if China lost its Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status in the United States.

The Acting Secretary for Trade and Industry, Mr Tam Wing-pong, revealed today (Friday) that should China's MFN status be revoked, Hong Kong might suffer a reduction by 32 to 45 per cent (or HK\$73 to 103 billion) worth of re-exports from China to the US.

Together with other related trade flows, there might be a reduction of 6 to 8 per cent (or HK\$174 to 246 billion) worth of Hong Kong's overall trade, a loss of around HK\$24 to 34 billion in income and around 61,000 to 86,000 jobs as a direct impact.

The Government's estimates also show that Hong Kong's GDP growth rate might be curtailed by 2.0 to 2.8 percentage points (or by around two-fifths to three-fifths from its trend rate of 5 per cent in real terms) in the year when the effect of loss of MFN is fully felt.

"There would be a further loss in income and jobs if China cut back on its imports from the US as a result," Mr Tam said. "Manufacturing investments and other production arrangements by Hong Kong and foreign companies in China would also be adversely affected."

Mr Tam is also concerned that Hong Kong's role as a gateway to China would be undermined, thereby affecting longer term growth potential and business confidence in Hong Kong.

On the outlook of MFN renewal this year, Mr Tam envisaged that there would be a lively debate in the US Congress.

"The situation is complex this year as Hong Kong's transition will likely be in the limelight when Congress debates on China's MFN renewal," Mr Tam said. "The climate is also affected by the overall Sino-US relations, but we shall argue strongly that the MFN issue should not be linked with non-trade issues.

"1997 is a more critical year for Hong Kong's development than any since the annual MFN renewal debate began. A steady economy is vital for our successful transition. We will do our utmost to get our message across," Mr Tam added.

End

Fight Crime Committee members re-appointed

* * * * *

The Government today (Friday) announced the re-appointment of three existing members to the Fight Crime Committee.

They are: Dame Rosanna Wong, Ms Alice Yuk Tak-fun and Ms Sansan Ching Teh-chi.

The three members are re-appointed for a period of two years from April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1999.

Following is the membership list of the Fight Crime Committee:

Chairman	:	Chief Secretary
Deputy Chairman	:	Attorney General
Members	:	Dame Rosanna Wong
		Mrs Miriam Lau
		Mr James To
		Ms Alice Yuk Tak-fun
		Mr Robert George Kotewall
		Mr Hui Yung-chung
		Mr Edward Pong
		Ms Sansan Ching Teh-chi
		Secretary for Security
		Secretary for Home Affairs
		Secretary for Health and Welfare
		Secretary for Education and Manpower
		Commissioner of Police
		Commissioner of Correctional Services

End

Updated legislation proposed for AMS and CAS

* * * * *

The Government has proposed updated legislation for the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) and the Civil Aid Service (CAS) to better reflect their modern functions, a Government spokesman said today (Friday).

The Auxiliary Medical Service Bill and the Civil Aid Service Bill, both gazetted today, will provide for the establishment of the AMS and the CAS to replace the Auxiliary Medical Service Unit and the Civil Aid Services Unit established in 1950 and 1952 respectively under the Essential Services Corps Ordinance.

The spokesman said that the main objective of the Ordinance, enacted in 1949, and its subsidiary legislation was to establish units of trained people capable of assisting in the Government's response to natural disasters or other emergencies.

"At its inception, the AMS was intended essentially as a stand-by medical unit for emergencies while the CAS mainly carried out civil defence duties," he said.

The spokesman pointed out that with the passage of time, the Units had expanded their activities into non-disaster related areas. They provide supplementary resources to augment the regular forces, both in times of emergency and in other situations.

The Essential Services (Auxiliary Medical Services) Corps Regulations and the Essential Services (Civil Aid Services) Corps Regulations, which neither describe the current operational functions of the Services nor provide for the training and other activities of their members and cadets, are found to be too generalised for today's requirements.

"We therefore propose to introduce separate and updated legislation for the Services," the spokesman said.

The major provisions of the two Bills will provide for:

- * the constitution and functions of the Services;
- * the calling out of the Services and the performance of voluntary duties;
- * disciplinary matters, including discharge of members and handling of complaints; and

- * the establishment of the AMS Cadet Corps and the CAS Cadet Corps.

The Bills are expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council on April 9 this year.

End

Response to report on correctional institutions

* * * * *

In response to press enquiries on the preliminary findings released by Sir Stephen Tumim and Ms Joanne Mariner of the Human Rights Monitor and Human Rights Watch/Asia after visiting some of Hong Kong's correctional institutions, a Government spokesman said today (Friday) that the authorities look forward to studying their full report when it is available.

"Their views and recommendations will be considered carefully and followed up where appropriate," he said.

The spokesman said that the Government was pleased that Sir Stephen had commended the tidiness, cleanliness, and discipline of our correctional institutions and the professionalism of our correctional services staff.

"However, we feel there should be no room for complacency," he said.

On the criticisms of conditions in the High Island Detention Centre for Vietnamese migrants (VMs), the spokesman pointed out that VM detention centres were fundamentally different from prisons.

"The VMs in the camp enjoy more freedom than prisoners. They have more room to move about and are not subject to the same standards of discipline as prisoners.

"Unlike prisoners, the VM families live together in the camp and there are many young children among them. But we note Sir Stephen's and Ms Mariner's comments on the hygiene conditions in the camp, and we will look into this issue. Our aim is to provide a decent and humane living environment, while recognising that conditions in the camps will always be fairly basic."

The spokesman stressed that "the future of the VMs does not lie in the camps. It lies in Vietnam, where we hope they will return as soon as possible. We will continue to do all in our power to convince them to do so.

"It remains the firm objective of the Hong Kong Government to repatriate the VMs as soon as possible and to close the camps for good," he said.

The spokesman said that the Government acknowledged the overcrowding problem in the territory's correctional institutions and that it had been taking steps to ease overcrowding through a number of redevelopment projects.

"We are also identifying sites for new prisons. However, building new prisons takes time," he said.

The Government has been carrying out redevelopment projects to increase penal capacities. These include:

- * A VM detention centre at Chi Ma Wan has been recently converted into a drug addiction treatment centre;
- * Works are under way to convert the ex-military camp in Lo Wu into a minimum-security prison, ready by mid-1997;
- * An annex to the Tung Tau Correctional Institution is under construction and is expected to be completed in late 1997;
- * A new medium-security prison in Stanley is under construction and is scheduled for completion in 1998; and
- * The Government is working on a proposal to expand the Tai Lam Correctional Institution.

"Altogether, these projects will generate about 1,400 additional penal places. In the long run, however, we need to build new prisons to solve the problem of overcrowding. We are conducting a territory-wide search to identify suitable sites for such prisons," the spokesman said.

End

Control of dust emissions from construction works

* * * * *

The Government is to introduce legislation to further control dust emissions from construction works with effect from June 1997.

The new requirements, which will prevent and minimise dust emission contributing to high ambient levels of an air pollutant called Total Suspended Particulates, are set out in the Air Pollution Control (Construction Dust) Regulation gazetted today (Friday).

A spokesman for the Planning, Environment and Lands Branch said that at present, an Air Pollution Abatement Notice under the Air Pollution Ordinance is served on the contractor if it is established that dust emission from the site is causing nuisance to its neighbourhood.

"As this approach can only deal with a problem after its occurrence, it is therefore proposed to introduce a regulation to require the use of dust control measures as a standard practice at construction sites to prevent the dust emission," the spokesman said.

Construction site contractors will be required under the Regulation to implement specified dust control measures. These include installation and proper operation of dust control systems, enclosing dusty materials and stockpiles or spraying them with water or dust suppression chemicals, treating unpaved surfaces, and implementing good on-site housekeeping measures.

Any person who fails to comply with the relevant dust control requirements will be liable to a maximum penalty of \$100,000 and imprisonment for three months. A daily fine of \$10,000 may also be imposed if the offence is a continuing one.

Additionally, construction activities will be categorised as notifiable works, regulatory works and excluded works according to their scale and dust emission potential. To better control the notifiable work such as reclamation, site formation, and building demolition, contractors carrying out these works are required to notify the Environmental Protection Department prior to commencement of the works.

Any person who operates a notifiable work without notifying the Environmental Protection Department in advance will also be liable to a fine of \$50,000.

However, exemption will be given to emergency works required where human life or building safety is immediately threatened, or for emergency repair of utility services.

The spokesman added, "To minimise unexpected cost incurred from the new requirements, a one-year exemption period from the commencement date of the Regulation will be applied to existing works, including committed works for which contracts have been signed."

The Regulation was endorsed by the Advisory Council on the Environment. Consultation with construction related trade associations, utility companies and environmental groups were also conducted who find the proposed measures acceptable.

End

Environmental asbestos to be controlled

* * * * *

The control of environmental asbestos under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance will take full effect on June 19, 1997.

Under the new ordinance gazetted today (Friday), only registered asbestos professionals can carry out any work involving asbestos.

Explaining details of the new control, Acting Assistant Director of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), Mr Leung Pak-ming, said that premises owners planning to carry out asbestos work must notify the Department.

"They have to submit an asbestos investigation report and an asbestos abatement plan at least 28 days before the work commences," he said.

Mr Leung said that the inhalation of airborne asbestos fibres could lead to serious illnesses, such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

"The control programme is to protect the community from the risk," he pointed out.

"The duty of the registered asbestos professionals is to ensure that asbestos work is carried out conforming to the requirements and procedures described in the code of practice published under the law," he said.

The new provisions will empower the EPD to issue a notice to require measures to be taken to prevent the release of asbestos, and to stop immediately any activity which is found releasing asbestos to the environment.

Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for one year.

Registers of asbestos laboratories and professionals, including consultants, contractors and supervisors are now available for inspection free of charge during office hours at the EPD, 33th Floor, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai.

Members of the public can call EPD on 2594 6232 for further enquiries on the new air pollution control ordinance.

End

Board amends draft Ngau Chi Wan Outline Zoning Plan

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The Town Planning Board announced today (Friday) an amendment to the draft Ngau Chi Wan Outline Zoning Plan.

The amendment involves the rezoning of a 2.27 hectare-site at King Tung Street in Hammer Hill from 'Government/Institution/Community' to 'Residential (Group A)' to facilitate the development of a Private Sector Participation Scheme housing project.

The amendment plan (No. S/K12/7) is available for public inspection until April 25 during office hours at:

- * Planning Department,
16th Floor, Murray Building,
Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- * Kowloon District Planning Office,
11th Floor, Leighton Centre, 77 Leighton Road,
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong; and
- * Wong Tai Sin District Office,
Fourth Floor, San Po Kong Government Offices Building,
King Fuk Street, San Po Kong, Kowloon.

Any person affected by the amendment may submit written objection to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board, c/o Planning Department, 13th Floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong, before April 25.

Copies of the draft plan are available for sale at the Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, 14th Floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong and the Kowloon Map Sales Office, Ground Floor, 382 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

End

Proposed road works for Ng Tung River

* * * * *

The Drainage Services Department has proposed the construction of access roads between the existing public roads and rural tracks near Ng Tung River and the proposed river channels in northeast New Territories.

The access roads, to be constructed as part of the Rural Drainage Rehabilitation Scheme, will be used for maintenance purpose.

Some existing roads, pedestrian bridges and tracks will be closed, demolished and reprovisioned. During the construction, alternative access will be maintained to minimise impact to pedestrians.

Details of the proposed works were published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

Copy of the proposed plans can be seen at the Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Central and Western District Office, the District Lands Office/North and the North District Office.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, should write to the Secretary for Transport at the Second Floor, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong, before June 3, 1997.

End

Flyover along Wong Chuk Hang Road being planned

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The Highways Department proposes today (Friday) to construct a dual two-lane flyover along Wong Chuk Hang Road over its junction with Nam Long Shan Road.

The proposed flyover is planned to cater for the traffic demand arising from various committed developments in Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen and Ap Lei Cháu and to relieve the heavy traffic flow at the junction between Wong Chuk Hang Road and Nam Long Shan Road.

The proposed works will include :

- (i) construction of a dual 2-lane flyover of about 550 metres;
- (ii) widening of a section of Wong Chuk Hang Road including the reconstruction of the existing carriageways of Wong Chuk Hang Road; and
- (iii) reconstruction of part of Nam Long Shan Road, Yip Kan Street and Yip Hing Street associated with the widening of Wong Chuk Hang Road;
- (iv) reconstruction of the existing footway along Wong Chuk Hang Road part of which will be closed and converted to form part of the carriageway of Wong Chuk Hang Road and part of which will remain as footway, and reconstruction of the existing footway of Nam Long Shan Road, Yip Kan Street and Yip Hing Street;
- (v) closure and demolition of the existing footbridge across Wong Chuk Hang Road at its junction with Nam Long Shan Road; and
- (vi) ancillary works including drainage and sewerage works and landscape works.

Construction is expected to start in mid 1998 for completion in mid 2000.

Details of the proposed works were published in today's Government Gazette.

A plan showing the extent of the proposed works together with a scheme description can be seen during office hours at the following government offices:

- * Public Enquiry Services Centre, Central and Western District Office, Ground Floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- * District Lands Office, Hong Kong South, 20th Floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong; and
- * Southern District Office, Shop 25, Mei Fung Court, Aberdeen Centre, Aberdeen, Hong Kong.

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 at the Second Floor, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Lower Albert Road, Central on or before June 3, 1997.

End

Tsing Yi North Coastal Road proposed

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The Highways Department proposes today (Friday) to construct a new road on North Tsing Yi Island, which will form part of the principal access to the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

The project will comprise:

- (i) the construction of a 2.2-kilometre dual two-lane road connecting Tsing Tuen Road at Tam Kon Shan Interchange with future road network on north-west Tsing Yi at the interchange linking Route 3 and Lantau Link;
- (ii) construction of two slip roads and two link roads to connect with Tam Kon Shan Interchange and Tam Kon Shan Road respectively to cater for the traffic demand from Tsing Yi Island.
- (iii) ancillary works including earthworks, drainage, landscaping works, construction of retaining walls, subways, footpaths and erection of noise barrier and noise semi-enclosure.

Works are anticipated to start in early 1999 for completion in early 2002.

Details of the proposed works were published in today's Government Gazette.

The plans and scheme for the proposed road may be suspected during office hours at:

- (a) Public Enquiry Services Centre, Central and Western District Office, Ground Floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- (b) District Lands Office, Kwai Tsing, 10th and 11th Floors, Tsuen Wan Station Multi-storey Carpark Building, 174-208 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories; or
- (c) Kwai Tsing District Office, Public Enquiry Services Centre, Second Floor, Kwai Hing Government Offices Building, 166-174 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Chung, New Territories.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address his objection in writing on or before June 3, 1997 to the Secretary for Transport at the Second Floor, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong.

End

Amendment to Chuen Lung road improvement works proposed

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The Government proposes today (Friday) to amend a previously gazetted road scheme at Chuen Lung to cope with the recently proposed Chuen Lung Village Expansion Area.

The proposed amendment works will include realigning part of the road of the original scheme and introducing two emergency vehicular accesses, footpaths, a car park and a lay-by.

Details of the proposal were published in today's Government Gazette.

The plans and amended scheme may be inspected during office hours at:

- (a) Public Enquiry Services Centre, Central and Western District Office,
Ground Floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road,
Central, Hong Kong;
- (b) District Lands Office, Tsuen Wan,
10th Floor, Tsuen Wan Station Multi-storey Carpark Building,
174-208 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan,
New Territories; or
- (c) Tsuen Wan District Office, 1st Floor,
Tsuen Wan Station Multi-storey Carpark Building,
174-208 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan,
New Territories.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address his objection in writing on or before June 3, 1997 to the Secretary for Transport at the Second Floor, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong.

End

Drug proceeds confiscated

* * * * *

After a series of investigation by the Financial Investigation Group of the Customs Drug Investigation Bureau, a total of \$426,000 of drug proceeds in two drug trafficking cases was ordered by the courts to be confiscated in the past two days.

The first case was heard on Wednesday (April 2), in which a sum of \$326,000 of the drug proceeds was ordered by the High Court to be confiscated from a member of an international drug syndicate. The order was granted under the Drug Trafficking (Recovery of Proceeds) (Designated Countries and Territories) Order 1991.

The confiscation was the result of a lengthy joint investigation into the international drug syndicate by the Customs Financial Investigation Group and the US law enforcement agencies. After a series of investigations, a member of the syndicate was arrested in Hong Kong and extradited to the US for trial.

In the second case, which was heard yesterday, a sum of \$100,000 believed to be the drug proceeds of illicit sale of psychotropic drugs was confiscated from a dispensary operator.

The dispensary operator was arrested by officers of the Customs Drug Investigation Group on January 18, 1995 in connection with a seizure of 100,000 tablets of psychotropic drugs found in his dispensary and a public housing unit in Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon. He was convicted of various drugs offences and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

"This is the first case to confiscate the drug proceeds of a dispensary operator under the Drug Trafficking (Recovery of Proceeds) Ordinance," a spokesman of the Customs and Excise Department said.

End

Historic boats for sale

* * * * *

An attractive piece of colonial history goes up for sale in the near future - the last boat to be sold by the departing British administration.

The barge, Plassey, currently used by Commander British Forces, is expected to arouse much interest from collectors and mariners alike, as it will be possibly the last item to be sold by the British Garrison.

Also up for sale are two "welfare" junks owned by British Forces Hong Kong. For many years, these have given much pleasure to Garrison personnel, who have chosen to spend their leisure hours on the waters around the Territory. Now, with the drawdown of the Garrison in preparation for the handover of sovereignty, these junks are being offered for sale, together with a range of other boats, ranging from ferries to harbour launches.

They are being sold on behalf of the Garrison by JCM Disposals, to whom enquiries should be addressed. The telephone number of the company is 2337 4863.

End

Fire safety advice for grave-sweepers

* * * * *

The Agriculture and Fisheries Department today (Friday) urged the public to take extra care in handling fire when they visit their ancestral graves in the countryside during the Ching Ming festival period.

The department's Country Park Protection Officer, Mr Edmond Lam pointed out that most of the countryside fires were caused by human negligence and could have been prevented if people observed a few simple rules.

These rules include:

- * Use hand or hand tools to clear grasses or weeds adjacent to the graves instead of using fire;
- * Burn worshipping items like candles, joss sticks and "paper money" in metal containers;
- * Do not leave lighted worshipping items unattended; and
- * Make sure all burning items are extinguished before leaving grave sites.

Mr Lam said the department would provide metal containers at strategic locations inside country park areas for their use.

He also reminded picnickers to light fires only at designated barbecue sites.

Illegal lighting of fires inside country parks may lead to a maximum fine of \$5,000 and one year's imprisonment, he added.

End

No clinic service on Ching Ming Festival

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The Department of Health today (Friday) announced that there would be no out-patient clinic service tomorrow (Saturday), which is the Ching Ming Festival.

However, the eight general out-patient clinics will be open from 9 am to 1 pm on Sunday (April 6).

The eight clinics are Violet Peel Health Centre and Shau Kei Wan Jockey Club Clinic on Hong Kong Island; Kwun Tong Jockey Club Health Centre, Robert Black Health Centre, and Yau Ma Tei Jockey Club Clinic in Kowloon; and Lady Trench Polyclinic, Shek Wu Hui Jockey Club clinic and Yuen Long Jockey Club Health Centre in the New Territories.

End