



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM KICKS OFF WELL: CS

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (FRIDAY) THAT A PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM LAUNCHED SINCE MAY LAST YEAR HAD HELPED TO ACHIEVE A BETTER SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

"OF COURSE, THERE IS MUCH MORE TO BE DONE AND WE MUST RETAIN ENTHUSIASM TO SEE THE PROGRAMME THROUGH," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE WAS SPEAKING ON "PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM: WHERE THE IRON RICE BOWL MEETS THE BOTTOM LINE" AT A LUNCHEON HOSTED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF KOWLOON NORTH.

AN EFFICIENCY UNIT WAS SET UP IN SIR DAVID'S OFFICE IN MAY LAST YEAR WITH A REMIT TO DEVISE AND PROMOTE A PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM.

THE UNIT HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE 14 BRANCHES IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT AND THE 70-ODD DEPARTMENTS ON INITIATIVES UNDER TWO MAIN HEADINGS - IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND INTRODUCING PERFORMANCE PLEDGES.

"WE ARE TRYING TO GIVE YOU, THE PUBLIC, A BIGGER BANG FOR YOUR BUCK," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE SAID POLICY SECRETARIES WERE BEING GIVEN THE NECESSARY AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGE THEIR BUSINESSES TO PRODUCE RESULTS ON TIME AND WITHIN BUDGET.

THROUGH A SYSTEM OF PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT THE CIVIL SERVICE IS INCREASING THE EMPHASIS ON PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT, QUALITY OF SERVICE, VALUE FOR MONEY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, HE ADDED.

"THE CIVIL SERVICE IS, OF COURSE, THE LARGEST SERVICE-PROVIDER HERE IN HONG KONG. OUR SERVICES ARE USED BY EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THE SIX MILLION PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE 30 PERFORMANCE PLEDGES ALREADY MADE BY DEPARTMENTS HAD SIGNIFICANTLY AND IMMEDIATELY INCREASED TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

CUSTOMER LIAISON GROUPS ARE BEING INTRODUCED INTO CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS SUCH AS THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT AND THE POST OFFICE TO EFFECTIVELY CHANNEL CUSTOMERS' INPUT INTO THE DEPARTMENT'S WORK.

"THE CUSTOMER LIAISON GROUP IS A NEW CONCEPT IN GOVERNMENT. IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS HOW IT IS WORKING, BUT I AM PLEASED THAT INITIAL FEEDBACK IS THAT DEPARTMENTS AND CUSTOMERS ALIKE FOUND THEM REALLY HELPFUL."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY ALSO SAID CUSTOMER SURVEYS WERE USED MORE OFTEN THAN BEFORE. "IT'S EARLY DAYS, BUT INITIAL RESULTS ARE ENCOURAGING."

/SIR DAVID

SIR DAVID BELIEVES THAT "OUR SERVING THE COMMUNITY THEME" HAS PROVIDED A FRAMEWORK AGAINST WHICH TO JUDGE CIVIL SERVICE'S EFFORTS AND TO JUDGE WHAT CHANGES MAY BE REQUIRED IN ITS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

"IN THE ABSENCE OF A BOTTOM LINE TO DRIVE OUR PERFORMANCE IT HAS GIVEN DEPARTMENTS, AND INCREASINGLY IT SHOULD GIVE INDIVIDUAL CIVIL SERVANTS, A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION AND PURPOSE AS THEY DEVELOP THEIR OWN MANY INITIATIVES," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID HONG KONG WAS INDEED WELL SERVED BY ITS CIVIL SERVICE.

"WE HAVE EMBRACED TECHNOLOGY TO PROMOTE AN EFFICIENT, QUALITY SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC."

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO SPEND OVER HALF A BILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR ON COMPUTER PROJECTS. OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS MAJOR PROJECTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE EDUCATION, POLICE, INLAND REVENUE AND IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENTS.

"WE, THE GOVERNMENT, ARE A LARGE ORGANISATION - EASILY THE BIGGEST EMPLOYER IN HONG KONG - BUT WE ARE BY NO MEANS CUMBERSOME.

"I SAY WITH ALL MODESTY THAT WE COULD NOT HAVE ACHIEVED EVERYTHING WE HAVE IN HONG KONG IF WE HAD NOT HAD A GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS QUICK ON ITS FEET."

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SELECTION OF SUBSCRIPTION TV AND ATV/TVB PROGRAMMES

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WITH THE PLANNED LAUNCH OF THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE ON OCTOBER 31, THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY HAS APPROVED AN INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION NETWORK AND THE COMMUNAL AERIAL BROADCAST DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS IN BUILDINGS.

THIS ARRANGEMENT ENABLES BOTH OFF-AIR AND SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION BROADCASTS TO BE DELIVERED TO CONSUMERS FROM THE EXISTING WALL SOCKETS ALREADY INSTALLED IN THEIR HOMES.

IN THE APPROVED ARRANGEMENT, THE EXISTING FOUR OFF-AIR TELEVISION BROADCASTS FROM ATV AND TVB WILL CONTINUE TO BE DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO VIEWERS' TELEVISION SETS.

IN ADDITION THEY WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE FIRST FOUR CHANNELS OF THE DECODERS OF THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE.

THIS MEANS VIEWERS TAKING THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE WILL HAVE THE CHOICE OF SELECTING THE ATV/TVB TELEVISION BROADCASTS THROUGH THE CHANNEL SELECTOR OF THE TELEVISION SET AS USUAL OR THEY MAY SELECT THE ATV/TVB PROGRAMMES USING THE CONTROL UNIT OF THE DECODER SUPPLIED BY WHARF CABLE.

/VIEWERS WHO

VIEWERS WHO DO NOT TAKE THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE WILL NOT BE AFFECTED. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO SELECT THE ATV/TVB BROADCASTS USING THE CHANNEL SELECTORS OF THEIR TELEVISION SETS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE OFFICE OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY SAID: "THE INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENT WILL MEAN THAT THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE CAN BE PROVIDED TO CONSUMERS IN THE SHORTEST TIME AND WITHOUT THE INCONVENIENCE OF HAVING TO INSTALL SEPERATE ENTRY CABLES INTO THEIR HOMES."

THE ARRANGEMENT ENABLES VIEWERS TO SELECT EITHER ATV/TVB BROADCASTS OR THE SUBSCRIPTION CHANNELS USING THE SAME REMOTE CONTROL OF THE DECODER AND OFFERS ADDITIONAL CONVENIENCE TO THE CONSUMERS.

AS VIEWERS NORMALLY PROGRAMME THE ATV/TVB BROADCASTS IN CHANNELS 1 TO 4 ON THEIR TELEVISION SETS, WHARF CABLE IS REQUIRED TO RESERVE CHANNELS 1 TO 4 ON THE DECODERS FOR THE OFF-AIR BROADCASTS, SO THAT THE CHANNEL NUMBERS WILL BE THE SAME ON THE TELEVISION SETS AND WHARF CABLE'S DECODERS. THIS WILL AVOID CONFUSION TO THE VIEWERS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE ARRANGEMENT IS FLEXIBLE AND ALLOWS CONSUMERS TO CHOOSE HOW THEY SELECT TELEVISION PROGRAMMES."

"WHARF CABLE WILL CONCLUDE INDIVIDUAL INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENTS WITH THE BUILDING OWNERS INCORPORATIONS OR MANAGEMENT BASED ON THE APPROVED ARRANGEMENT," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IF THE MAJORITY OF THE TENANTS IN A BUILDING FIND THAT THEY PREFER NOT TO HAVE THE ATV/TVB BROADCASTS SELECTABLE FROM THE DECODERS OF THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE, THEY CAN REQUEST THROUGH THE BUILDING OWNERS INCORPORATION OR MANAGEMENT TO HAVE THE OPTION OF SELECTING THE ATV/TVB BROADCASTS REMOVED FROM THE DECODERS.

IN SUCH A CASE, ONLY THE EXISTING CAPABILITY OF SELECTING THE ATV/TVB BROADCASTS THROUGH THE SELECTORS OF THE TELEVISION SETS WILL REMAIN FOR THAT BUILDING.

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FURTHER CONTROL ON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PROPOSED

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THE QUARANTINE AND PREVENTION OF DISEASE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 WHICH AIMS TO IMPROVE THE SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, IS GAZETTED TODAY (FRIDAY).

THE BILL PROPOSES:

- * TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF QUARANTINABLE DISEASE TO INCLUDE ONLY THREE DISEASES, NAMELY CHOLERA, PLAGUE AND YELLOW FEVER;

/* TO REVISE

- * TO REVISE THE LIST OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES TO INCLUDE 26 DISEASES ALTOGETHER;
- * TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF FINES BY FIVE TIMES UNDER THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE;
- * TO EMPOWER THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH TO AMEND NOTIFICATION OF DISEASE FORMS PRESCRIBED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL; AND
- * TO EMPOWER THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE TO VARY THE FEES PRESCRIBED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE QUARANTINE AND PREVENTION OF DISEASE ORDINANCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION ALREADY PROVIDED A LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

"APART FROM BRINGING THE LEGISLATION IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS, THE MEASURES PROPOSED IN THE BILL WILL FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES," HE ADDED.

THE BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR FIRST AND SECOND READING ON NOVEMBER 10.

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CJ URGES WIDER USE OF CHINESE IN MAGISTRATES' COURTS

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AS THE NUMBER OF CHINESE-SPEAKING MAGISTRATES GROWS AND HAS NOW REACHED 53 PER CENT, AND AS THERE ARE MORE CHINESE-SPEAKING SOLICITORS AND BARRISTERS, THE WIDER USE OF CHINESE IN THE MAGISTRATES' COURTS IS FEASIBLE GIVEN THE WILL.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE, SIR TI LIANG YANG, TODAY (FRIDAY).

ADDRESSING THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE DUTY LAWYER SERVICE, SIR TI LIANG SAID THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE USE OF CHINESE IN THE MAGISTRATES' COURTS WAS ALREADY WELL IN PLACE.

"THE USE OF CHINESE IS DICTATED BY THE NUMBER OF MAGISTRATES AND LAWYERS WHO ARE ABLE AND WILLING TO USE THE LANGUAGE," HE NOTED.

"HOWEVER, THE MERE FACT THAT A PERSON IS OF CHINESE RACE DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE IS ABLE TO SPEAK CHINESE.

"THE MERE FACT THAT HE IS ABLE TO USE CHINESE IN HIS DAILY LIFE DOES NOT MEAN HE IS ABLE TO USE CHINESE IN HIS LEGAL OR JUDICIAL WORK," HE ADDED.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE STRESSED THAT THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES TO OVERCOME.

PART OF THE DIFFICULTIES ARE CONCERNED WITH ATTITUDES, WITH OUR MENTAL APPROACH, AND WHETHER THERE IS A WILL.

THE OTHER DIFFICULTIES ARE RELATED TO THE WAY LAWYERS WERE TRAINED, USUALLY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, SO THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED TO THINK AND PONDER IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, USING ENGLISH TERMINOLOGY AND THE ENGLISH WAY OF PUTTING A SENTENCE OR QUESTION TOGETHER, HE EXPLAINED.

EARLIER, SIR TI LIANG POINTED OUT THAT BY ARTICLE 9 OF THE BASIC LAW, IN ADDITION TO THE CHINESE LANGUAGE, ENGLISH MAY ALSO BE USED AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE BY THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES, LEGISLATURE AND JUDICIARY OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION.

ACCORDING TO A STRICT INTERPRETATION, THEN, CHINESE SHOULD BE THE PREDOMINANT LANGUAGE OF THE COURTS AFTER JULY 1, 1997, AND ENGLISH BE THE ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE.

"IT IS, HOWEVER, MY PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING THAT CHINA IS SYMPATHETIC TO OUR PRACTICAL LIMITATIONS, AND REALISE THAT THE EXPANSION OF THE USE OF THE CHINESE LANGUAGE MUST BE GRADUAL AND WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF JUSTICE TO ALL PARTIES," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE USE OF CHINESE IN OTHER LEVELS OF COURTS, THE CHIEF JUSTICE SAID THE WORKING PARTY ON THE USE OF CHINESE IN THE DISTRICT COURT, CHAIRED BY MR JUSTICE PATRICK CHAN, WAS EXPECTED TO COMPLETE ITS REPORT SHORTLY.

MR JUSTICE LITTON OF THE COURT OF APPEAL WAS CURRENTLY LOOKING AT THE WHOLE QUESTION GLOBALLY.

WHILE HOPING TO SEE SOME USEFUL SUGGESTIONS FROM MR JUSTICE LITTON'S REPORT BEFORE TOO LONG, SIR TI LIANG SAID THERE WAS ALSO THE NEED TO LOOK AT THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE ORDINANCE TO BRING ITS PROVISIONS WITHIN ARTICLE 9 OF THE BASIC LAW.

"IT WILL THEN BE UP TO THE JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES AND THE LAWYERS TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO GIVE THE ARTICLE PRACTICAL EFFECT," HE SAID.

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LICENSING SYSTEM TO IMPROVE SECURITY SERVICES * * * * *

THE ADMINISTRATION IS INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO REGULATE THE SECURITY INDUSTRY THROUGH A TWO-LEVEL LICENSING SYSTEM.

UNDER THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES BILL GAZETTED TODAY (FRIDAY), COMPANIES PROVIDING SECURITY SERVICES WILL BE REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE AND INDIVIDUAL SECURITY PERSONNEL WILL BE REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR A PERMIT.

/THE SECURITY

THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES BILL STIPULATES THAT IT IS AN OFFENCE FOR:

- * A PERSON TO ENGAGE IN SECURITY WORK WITHOUT A VALID PERMIT;
- * A COMPANY TO SUPPLY SECURITY PERSONNEL WHO DO NOT HAVE VALID PERMITS;
- * A COMPANY TO PROVIDE SECURITY WORK WITHOUT A VALID LICENCE;
- * A PERSON TO REQUIRE ANOTHER PERSON, WHO DOES NOT HAVE A VALID PERMIT, TO DO SECURITY WORK FOR HIM; AND
- * A PERSON TO EMPLOY AN INDIVIDUAL TO DO SECURITY WORK, EITHER FOR HIM OR FOR ANOTHER PERSON, WITHOUT INFORMING THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE WITHIN 14 DAYS OF COMMENCEMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE AIM OF THE BILL WAS TO PROMOTE HIGHER STANDARDS OF SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES.

"FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW LICENSING SYSTEM, THE WATCHMEN ORDINANCE, WHICH WAS ENACTED IN 1956 AND HAS BECOME OBSOLETE, WILL BE REPEALED," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE BILL DEFINES SECURITY WORK AS:

- * THE GUARDING OF ANY PROPERTY;
- * PREVENTING OR DETECTING THE OCCURRENCE OF ANY OFFENCE;
- * INSTALLING, MAINTAINING OR REPAIRING A SECURITY DEVICE; AND
- * DESIGNING FOR ANY PARTICULAR PREMISES OR PLACE A SYSTEM INCORPORATING A SECURITY DEVICE.

THE APPLICATION AND RENEWAL OF PERMITS FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL SHOULD BE MADE TO THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE.

THE APPLICATION AND RENEWAL OF LICENCES FOR SECURITY COMPANIES SHOULD BE MADE TO THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES INDUSTRY AUTHORITY, WHICH IS TO BE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE BILL.

THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES INDUSTRY AUTHORITY WILL ALSO SPECIFY THE CRITERIA AND CONDITIONS FOR ISSUING PERMITS TO SECURITY PERSONNEL.

IT WILL COMPRISE A CHAIRMAN APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY AND THREE OTHER PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

AN APPEAL BOARD WILL BE SET UP TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS ARISING FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL.

THE BOARD WILL COMPRISE A CHAIRMAN AND NOT LESS THAN TWO PERSONS APPOINTED FROM A PANEL OF SUITABLE PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

CURRENTLY, THE WATCHMEN ORDINANCE REQUIRES SECURITY COMPANIES TO OBTAIN WRITTEN CONSENT FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE BEFORE THEY CAN OPERATE.

THE BILL PROPOSES THAT A 12-MONTH GRACE PERIOD BE GIVEN TO EXISTING SECURITY COMPANIES TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE UNDER THE NEW LEGISLATION.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE EXISTING WATCHMEN'S PERMITS ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WATCHMEN ORDINANCE, SHOULD INITIALLY BE REGARDED AS VALID PERMITS FOLLOWING THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL.

THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES INDUSTRY AUTHORITY WILL THEN INFORM THE PERMIT HOLDERS TO APPLY FOR A NEW PERMIT.

THE BILL PROPOSES A FINE OF \$100,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR TWO YEARS FOR AN OFFENCE COMMITTED BY A COMPANY PROVIDING SECURITY WORK WITHOUT A VALID LICENCE.

THE PENALTY FOR CONTRAVENTION OF OTHER OFFENCES IS A FINE OF \$10,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR THREE MONTHS.

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE ABOUT 130,000 REGISTERED WATCHMEN AND 92 COMPANIES INVOLVED IN THE SUPPLY OF WATCHMEN AND ABOUT 136 COMPANIES INVOLVED IN INSTALLING AND MAINTAINING BURGLAR ALARMS.

THE BILL IS SCHEDULED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 10.

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IMPORTANCE OF TAKING SAFETY MEASURES

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S CHIEF FACTORY INSPECTOR CHAN TAT-KING TODAY (FRIDAY) REMINDED WORKERS THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING SAFETY MEASURES WHILE WORKING AT HEIGHT.

"TAKING A SIMPLE MEASURE, SUCH AS WEARING A SUITABLE SAFETY BELT WITH THE LANYARD HOOKED TO AN INDEPENDENT LIFE-LINE, WORKERS CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM RECEIVING SERIOUS OR EVEN FATAL INJURIES CAUSED BY FALLING FROM HEIGHT," MR CHAN SAID.

THE CHIEF FACTORY INSPECTOR SAID AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED IN CAUSEWAY BAY THIS (FRIDAY) MORNING WAS A VIVID EXAMPLE OF HOW TWO WORKERS ESCAPED FROM FALL WHILE WORKING IN A GONDOLA HANGING OUTSIDE THE UPPER FLOORS OF A BUILDING.

HE SAID ACCORDING TO INITIAL INFORMATION, THE GONDOLA SUDDENLY TILTED DOWN BUT NOT THE TWO WORKERS BECAUSE BOTH WERE WEARING SAFETY BELTS WHICH ATTACHED TO AN INDEPENDENT LIFE-LINE. THEY WERE LATER RESCUED BY FIREMEN.

MR CHAN SAID THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE DIVISION WAS INVESTIGATING CAUSES OF THE ACCIDENT.

/THERE ARE

THERE ARE STATUTORY SAFETY REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING THE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF LIFTING APPLIANCES, INCLUDING GONDOLAS, HE SAID.

"ALL CONTRACTORS SHOULD STRICTLY OBSERVE THE SAFETY RULES WHEN THEY USE GONDOLAS IN THEIR PROJECTS."

HE SAID THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF BRINGING IN A MORE SPECIFIC PIECE OF LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE SAFE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL SUSPENDED WORKING PLATFORMS, INCLUDING GONDOLAS.

MR CHAN ALSO APPEALED TO ALL WORKERS TO SERIOUSLY OBSERVE SAFETY MEASURES WHEN THEY NEED TO WORK AT HEIGHT. CONTRACTORS SHOULD ALSO EXERCISE PROPER SUPERVISION WHEN THE JOB IS IN PROGRESS.

"A SIMPLE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE WILL HELP A WORKER SAVE HIS OWN LIFE," HE SAID.

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RECORD NUMBER OF VM'S RETURNED

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A RECORD NUMBER OF 1,662 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS (VM'S) HAVE RETURNED TO VIETNAM THIS MONTH UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

A GROUP OF 268 VM'S RETURNED TO VIETNAM TODAY (FRIDAY), BRINGING TO 34,592, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VM'S WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY SINCE THE LAUNCH OF THE PROGRAMME IN MARCH 1989.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES NOW EXCEEDS THE NUMBER OF VM'S REMAINING IN THE CAMPS.

THE REFUGEE CO-ORDINATOR, MR BRIAN BRESNIHAN WELCOMED THE SIGNIFICANT UPTURN IN THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

"IT IS INDEED GOOD NEWS. AFTER A POOR START, THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME HAS PICKED UP AND IT LOOKS AS IF ABOUT 12,000 VM'S WILL RETURN HOME THIS YEAR," MR BRESNIHAN SAID.

NOTING THAT ONLY 55 VM'S HAD ARRIVED IN HONG KONG THIS YEAR, MR BRESNIHAN SAID IF THE CURRENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TRENDS CONTINUED, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CLOSE ALL CAMPS IN EARLY 1996.

THE VIETNAMESE MIGRANT POPULATION IN HONG KONG CAMPS NOW STANDS AT 33,344, THE LOWEST FIGURE SINCE MAY 1989.

THE GROUP REPATRIATED TODAY COMPRISED 89 MEN, 66 WOMEN, 61 BOYS AND 52 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 173TH BATCH TO BE RETURNED UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

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DSD LAUNCHES PERFORMANCE PLEDGES

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THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT (DSD) TODAY (FRIDAY) LAUNCHED ITS PERFORMANCE PLEDGES FOR CLEARING BLOCKED DRAINS AND PROCESSING DRAINAGE CONNECTION APPLICATIONS.

ANNOUNCING DETAILS OF THE PLEDGES, THE DIRECTOR OF DRAINAGE SERVICES, MR SIU CHUEN, SAID HIS DEPARTMENT WAS COMMITTED TO PROVIDE EFFICIENT AND COURTEOUS SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

ON CLEARING BLOCKED DRAINS, MR SIU STRESSED THAT URGENT CASES WOULD BE HANDLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND DURING OFFICE HOURS ON-SITE INVESTIGATION WOULD BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN ONE HOUR AFTER RECEIVING A COMPLAINT.

WHEN A COMPLAINT IS RECEIVED BETWEEN 8 AM AND NOON, INVESTIGATION WILL BE CARRIED OUT ON SITE WITHIN THE SAME DAY.

FOR COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AFTER NOON, ON-SITE INVESTIGATION WOULD BE CARRIED OUT BEFORE NOON THE NEXT DAY, HE ADDED.

HOWEVER, MR SIU POINTED OUT THAT BECAUSE OF THE REMOTENESS OF SOME SITES, A LONGER RESPONSE TIME WOULD BE NEEDED FOR RURAL AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND OUTLYING ISLANDS.

IN GENERAL, RECTIFYING ACTION WILL BE CARRIED OUT IMMEDIATELY AFTER INVESTIGATION WORK EXCEPT WHERE HEAVY PLANT HAS TO BE MOBILISED OR WHERE SITE CONSTRAINTS RENDER IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PROCEED IMMEDIATELY, HE SAID.

MR SIU NOTED THAT THREE TELEPHONE HOTLINES HAD BEEN INSTALLED IN DSD TO RECEIVE COMPLAINTS OF BLOCKED DRAINAGE FROM THE PUBLIC BETWEEN 8 AM AND 10 PM.

THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS ARE 805 6344 FOR REPORTING CASES ON HONG KONG AND OUTLYING ISLANDS, 300 2637 FOR KOWLOON, AND 300 1444 FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES.

FOR OTHER TIMES BETWEEN 10 PM AND 8 AM THE NEXT DAY, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN REPORT CASES TO ANOTHER HOTLINE 300 1447.

REGARDING DRAINAGE CONNECTION APPLICATIONS FROM PRIVATE DEVELOPERS, MR SIU STRESSED THAT DSD WOULD STRIVE TO PROCESS THE REQUESTS PROMPTLY.

UPON RECEIPT OF AN APPLICATION ON OUR STANDARD FORM DSD25, A DEMAND NOTE FOR THE COST OF THE DRAINAGE WORKS WILL BE ISSUED WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS, HE NOTED.

MR SIU SAID HE WOULD MONITOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THOSE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PUBLISH THE RESULTS ANNUALLY.

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HE URGED THE PUBLIC TO GIVE COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS ON THE WAY IN WHICH THESE SERVICES WERE HANDLED BY WRITING TO HIM TO THE 43RD FLOOR, REVENUE TOWER, 5 GLOUCESTER ROAD, WAN CHAI.

MR SIU ALSO NOTED THAT DESPITE BEST EFFORTS THERE WOULD BE OCCASIONS WHEN THE SERVICE WAS UNABLE TO MATCH THE STANDARDS SET.

"IN SUCH CASES, THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO A FULL AND PROMPT EXPLANATION.

"ALL COMPLAINTS, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WILL BE DEALT WITH EXPEDITIOUSLY WITH AT LEAST AN INTERIM REPLY GIVEN WITHIN 10 DAYS," HE SAID.

ANYONE WHO FEELS THAT THEIR CASES HAVE NOT BEEN DEALT WITH ADEQUATELY, SHOULD WRITE TO THE DIRECTOR OF DRAINAGE SERVICES.

MEANWHILE, BILINGUAL LEAFLETS LISTING THE PERFORMANCE PLEDGES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC AT ALL DISTRICT OFFICES.

ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE ON TEL 877 0660 DURING OFFICE HOURS.

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TELA COMMISSIONS SURVEY ON FILM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

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THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY (TELA) WILL CONDUCT A PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON FILM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS.

AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY COMPANY SELECTED THROUGH TENDER HAS BEEN COMMISSIONED TO CONDUCT THE SURVEY.

TECHNICAL ADVICE WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE SURVEY WILL COVER A SAMPLE OF OVER 500 RESPONDENTS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR TELA SAID: "THE SAMPLE WILL BE BALANCED AND REPRESENTATIVE IN RESPECT OF AGE, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, RESIDENCE AND CINEMA-GOING HABITS, WITH RESPONDENTS AGED 13 TO 60 TO BE COVERED IN THE SURVEY."

IN THE SURVEY, RESPONDENTS WILL BE ASKED TO VIEW A SERIES OF SELECTED FILM EXCERPTS IN A CINEMA SETTING AND TO RESPOND BY COMPLETING A QUESTIONNAIRE, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

THE RESPONDENTS' OPINIONS ON FILM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS ABOUT SEX, VIOLENCE, HORROR, OBJECTIONABLE LANGUAGE, OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOR, TRIAD DEPICTION AND THEMES WILL BE SOUGHT. THEIR VIEWS ABOUT THE OPERATION OF THE THREE-TIER FILM CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM WILL ALSO BE COLLECTED.

/THE SPOKESMAN

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "IN VIEW OF THE GROWING CONCERN ABOUT THE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF INDECENT FILM POSTERS AND THE UNDESIRABLE IMPACT ON YOUNGSTERS, RESPONDENTS WILL ALSO BE ASKED TO WHETHER A PRE-CENSORSHIP SYSTEM SHOULD BE IMPOSED ON CATEGORY THREE FILM POSTERS."

THE FILM INDUSTRY WILL BE CONSULTED IN CONDUCTING THE SURVEY.

THE SURVEY IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN FOUR MONTHS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS ARE CONDUCTED BY TELA FROM TIME TO TIME TO COLLECT VIEWS ON FILM CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS TO ENSURE THAT THEY REFLECT THE CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND ARE ACCEPTABLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

THE LAST SUCH SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED IN 1991.

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CALL TO PREVENT INJURY AT HOME
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THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY IN ACCIDENT PREVENTION AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHOULD MAKE THEIR HOME A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE IN.

THIS CALL WAS MADE TODAY (FRIDAY) BY URBAN COUNCILLOR PROFESSOR LEUNG PING-CHUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE "TREASURE LIFE, PREVENT INJURY" EXHIBITION AT THE QUEENSWAY EXHIBITION HALL.

PROFESSOR LEUNG SAID MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHOULD PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PROTECTING THEIR OWN HEALTH BY PREVENTING ACCIDENTS.

HE SAID: "ACCIDENTS MAY CAUSE PERMANENT DISABILITY OR DEATH AND WILL ALWAYS HAPPEN IF PRECAUTIONARY SAFETY MEASURES ARE NEGLECTED."

PROFESSOR LEUNG URGED THE PUBLIC TO BE MINDFUL OF MAKING THE HOME A SAFE PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY WHO WERE MOST VULNERABLE TO ACCIDENTS.

ALSO SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, DR MARGARET CHAN, SAID INJURY AND POISONING WAS THE NUMBER ONE KILLER FOR CHILDREN UNDER 14 IN HONG KONG LAST YEAR.

DR CHAN SAID 80 CHILDREN UNDER 14 DIED BECAUSE OF INJURY AND POISONING LAST YEAR.

DR CHAN SAID: "FOR THE WHOLE LOCAL POPULATION, INJURY AND POISONING IS THE FIFTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH, ACCOUNTING FOR 1,693 DEATHS IN 1992."

"IN FACT, MOST OF THE INJURY AND POISONING CASES WERE ACCIDENTS WHICH COULD BE PREVENTED IF PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES WERE TAKEN," SHE SAID.

DR CHAN STRESSED: "THERE IS TRUTH IN THE OLD SAYING THAT PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE."

NOTING THAT THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION HAD SET ACCIDENT PREVENTION AS THE THEME OF THIS YEAR'S WORLD HEALTH DAY, DR CHAN FELT THAT THE EXHIBITION WAS A MEANINGFUL PROJECT IN PROMOTING ACCIDENT PREVENTION.

THE EXHIBITION, ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S CENTRAL EDUCATION UNIT, WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FROM 10 AM TO 6.30 PM DURING THE WEEKEND.

THERE WILL BE STATIC DISPLAYS ON A WIDE VARIETY OF TOPICS SUCH AS HOME SAFETY FOR THE ELDERLY, PREVENTION OF ELECTROCUTION AND PREVENTION OF INJURY IN SPORTS.

IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE AUDIO-VISUAL SHOW, BOOTH GAMES AND DISPLAY OF THE WINNING ENTRIES IN TWO RECENTLY HELD ESSAY CONTEST AND POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION.

HEALTH PERSONNEL FROM THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE THERE TO GIVE ADVICE AND ANSWER ENQUIRIES.

FREE EDUCATION AND INFORMATION LEAFLETS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO VISITORS.

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\$92 MILLION DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT SIGNED
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THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT TODAY (FRIDAY) SIGNED A \$92 MILLION CONTRACT FOR DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND OUTLYING ISLANDS.

THE THREE-YEAR-CONTRACT WAS SIGNED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANCE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE), MR CHE PING-DOON, AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONTRACTOR, SHUN YUEN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED.

THE WORKS INCLUDE THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF ALL EXISTING PUBLIC SEWERAGE AND STORMWATER DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, AS WELL AS THE CONSTRUCTION OF MINOR SEWERS AND DRAINS.

THE CONTRACT WILL RUN FROM NOVEMBER THIS YEAR TO MARCH 1996.

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HK'S FURNITURE AND LIGHTING INDUSTRIES: COMPETITIVE AND PROSPEROUS

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BY INVESTING IN PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY AND IN MAKING USE OF LOWER LABOUR COSTS FOR MORE LABOUR INTENSIVE MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS, THE LOCAL FURNITURE AND LIGHTING MANUFACTURERS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY MAINTAINED THE COMPETITIVE EDGE, CUT PRODUCTION COST AND IMPROVED QUALITY.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 10TH HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE AND LIGHTING FAIR, THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE, MR TONY MILLER TODAY (FRIDAY) ATTRIBUTED THE ACTIVE IMPROVEMENT TO THE GROWING DEMAND FOR HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTS AND INCREASINGLY INTENSE COMPETITION.

ALTHOUGH HONG KONG'S FURNITURE AND LIGHTING INDUSTRIES WERE RELATIVELY SMALL COMPARED TO OUR MAJOR INDUSTRIES, SUCH AS TEXTILES, GARMENTS AND ELECTRONICS, MR MILLER NOTED THAT HONG KONG HAD WITNESSED A FAST-EXPANDING DEMAND FOR HIGH QUALITY FURNITURE AND LIGHTING PRODUCTS.

"HONG KONG IS BECOMING AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY.

"AS THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE POPULATION CONTINUES TO IMPROVE, FAMILIES ARE PAYING GREATER ATTENTION TO INTERIOR DESIGN AND ARE WILLING TO SPEND A GREATER PORTION OF THEIR DISPOSABLE INCOME ON BEAUTIFYING THEIR HOUSEHOLDS, " HE SAID.

"IN RECENT YEARS, WE HAVE SEEN MORE AND MORE TASTEFUL AND WELL-DESIGNED FURNITURE AND LIGHTING PRODUCTS IN THE MARKET CATERING FOR LOCAL LIVING CONDITIONS," HE SAID.

FIGURES ALSO REFLECT THE GROWING DEMAND AND COMPETITION: BETWEEN 1987 AND 1992, HONG KONG'S IMPORTS OF ALL FURNITURE INCREASED BY 160 PER CENT TO SOME \$5 BILLION, WHILE THE GROSS OUTPUT OF THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY ALSO ROSE TO ONE-AND-A-QUARTER BILLION DOLLARS IN 1991.

"HONG KONG PRODUCES FURNITURE IN BOTH WESTERN AND ASIAN STYLES," MR MILLER SAID.

"ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS ARE SOLD LOCALLY, WITH THE REMAINDER EXPORTED OVERSEAS, MAINLY TO THE USA, CHINA AND JAPAN, " HE ADDED.

ON LIGHTING EQUIPMENT, HONG KONG'S IMPORTS ALSO INCREASED DURING THE PERIOD FROM 1987 TO 1992.

OVERALL IMPORTS WERE VALUED AT FOUR-AND-A-QUARTER BILLION DOLLARS, AN INCREASE OF 350 PER CENT. THE GROSS OUTPUT OF THE LOCAL LIGHTING INDUSTRY ALSO GREW TO SOME \$300 MILLION IN 1991.

MR MILLER PRAISED THE FAIR FOR PROVIDING AN EXCELLENT FORUM FOR LOCAL AND OVERSEAS MANUFACTURERS TO EXHIBIT THEIR LATEST PRODUCTS, EXCHANGE IDEAS ON THE DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE OF THE PRODUCTS, AND EXPLORE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY.

APPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL AGENTS
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THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED IN TODAY'S (FRIDAY) GAZETTE APPOINTMENTS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL AGENTS (ACTA).

MR TANG KWAI-NANG HAS BEEN RE-APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF ACTA FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR FROM NOVEMBER 1 TO OCTOBER 31 NEXT YEAR.

ALL THE OTHER EXISTING NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS HAVE BEEN RE-APPOINTED FOR THE SAME PERIOD.

THEY ARE MRS PAMELA CHAN, MR HAROLD WU, MR BENTON LAU KWOK-KIU, MR ROBERT KWAN CHIU-YIN, MR JAMES LU, MR HOWARD YOUNG, MR SIMON HAU SUK-KEI, MR DICKSON PANG KAM-FAI, MR WILLIAM WAN HON-CHEUNG, MR TAM KAI-ON AND DR KENNETH LEUNG WAI-YIN.

"ACTA MEMBERS, WITH THEIR EXPERIENCE AND STANDING IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS, HAVE PLAYED A VALUABLE ROLE IN DEVELOPING THE REGULATORY REFORM PACKAGE FOR THE OUTBOUND TRAVEL INDUSTRY NOW EMBODIED IN THE TRAVEL AGENTS (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1993 WHICH CAME INTO OPERATION ON OCTOBER 15, THIS YEAR," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

THEIR RE-APPOINTMENT WILL PROVIDE CONTINUITY FOR ACTA TO SEE THROUGH THE REFORM PROCESS, HE ADDED.

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APPEAL BOARD FOR AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES
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REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF AN APPEAL BOARD TO DEAL WITH CASES CONCERNING AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES WILL BE GAZETTED NEXT FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 5), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (FRIDAY).

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES ORDINANCE, WHICH WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON DECEMBER 1, THIS YEAR, WILL PROVIDE FOR APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AND FOR SUCH APPEALS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THIS NEW BOARD.

AT PRESENT APPEALS ARE CONSIDERED ONLY BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL.

THE BOARD WILL COMPRISE A CHAIRMAN AND NOT LESS THAN TWO MEMBERS.

THE AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES (APPEAL BOARD) REGULATION SETS OUT THE MAIN PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE BOARD WHEN CONSIDERING APPEALS.

THE HEARING OF APPEALS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN PUBLIC UNLESS UNDER SPECIAL ORDER FROM THE CHAIRMAN.

"BOTH THE APPELLANT AND THE COMMISSIONER MAY BE REPRESENTED BY A BARRISTER OR SOLICITOR," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"IF THE APPELLANT FAILS TO SERVE A COPY OF THE NOTICE OF APPEAL ON THE COMMISSIONER OR TO FURNISH PARTICULARS, THE APPEAL BOARD MAY DISMISS THE APPEAL," HE ADDED.

IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES (FEES) REGULATION WHICH SETS OUT THE NEW LICENCE FEES FOR GAME MACHINES OR AMUSEMENT DEVICES WILL ALSO BE GAZETTED NEXT FRIDAY.

"THE NEW FEES WILL BE \$920 PER MACHINE OR DEVICE," SAID THE SPOKESMAN.

HE SAID THE OLD FEES HAD NOT BEEN ADJUSTED SINCE 1981.

THERE WILL BE A CHARGE OF \$535 FOR EACH APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF LICENCE, TRANSFER OF LICENCE AND AMENDMENT OF THE CONDITIONS OR PARTICULARS OF A LICENCE AT THE REQUEST OF A LICENSEE.

"THE GOVERNMENT INCURS COSTS IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THEY ARE APPROVED OR NOT, THE NEW CHARGE HAS BEEN SET TO RECOVER IN FULL THESE COSTS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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CONTRACT SIGNED FOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT
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A \$2.7 MILLION CONTRACT SIGNED TODAY (FRIDAY) BETWEEN THE HONG KONG APPLIED R & D FUND COMPANY LIMITED AND A LOCAL COMPANY TO DEVELOP A COMPUTER SOFTWARE PACKAGE SHOWS THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN PROMOTING APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R & D) ACTIVITIES IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING AT THE CONTRACT SIGNING CEREMONY, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRY, MR RICKY FUNG, SAID THIS FIRST CONTRACT WAS ONLY A START, ADDING THAT GOOD PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING SUPPORT UNDER THE \$200 MILLION APPLIED R & D SCHEME.

"AT PRESENT, APART FROM THE APPLICATION WHICH IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS CEREMONY, FOUR APPLICATIONS ARE IN THE FINAL STAGE OF ASSESSMENT AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS FOR THE EXTENSION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO A COUPLE OF PROJECTS ARE BEING DRAFTED," HE SAID.

HE URGED THOSE INDIVIDUALS OR COMPANIES WITH BRIGHT IDEAS FOR APPLIED R & D TO LOSE NO TIME AND SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO SECURE AN ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF FINANCING FOR THEIR PROJECTS.

ALSO SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY WAS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG APPLIED R & D FUND COMPANY LIMITED, MR CHENG HON-KWAN.

COMMENTING ON THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL PROJECT TO RECEIVE FUNDING SUPPORT UNDER THE APPLIED R & D SCHEME, MR CHENG SAID:

"THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONSIDERS THE PROJECT WORTH SUPPORTING BECAUSE IT IS THE FIRST COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN APPLICATION SOFTWARE TO BE DEVELOPED LOCALLY AND WITH THE NEEDS OF LOCAL USERS IN MIND.

"BESIDES, IT WILL ALSO HELP TO FURTHER TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT IN HONG KONG."

HE SAID THE PROJECT WAS BEING DEVELOPED FROM AN ALREADY EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE BASE BUILT UP UNDER THE "MANUFACTURING APPLICATION SOFTWARE", DEVELOPED BY THE LOCAL ACADEMIA UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT IN 1987.

"THIS PROJECT IS THUS A MILESTONE IN THE TRIPARTITE EFFORTS AMONG GOVERNMENT, ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY IN COMMERCIALISING ACADEMIC RESEARCH RESULTS," MR CHENG SAID.

UNDER THE AGREEMENT SIGNED THIS AFTERNOON, THE HONG KONG APPLIED R & D FUND COMPANY WILL LEND \$2.7 MILLION OVER THE NEXT 14 MONTHS TO THE COMPANY AT PRIME INTEREST RATE FOR DEVELOPING THE COMPUTER PROJECT.

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE COMPANY, MR EDWIN LEE, SAID: "THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY USUALLY INVOLVE MORE RISK.

"THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT IS THEREFORE A BOOSTER TO HELP HONG KONG TO BE COMPETITIVE WITH ITS NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES BY ENCOURAGING MORE COMPANIES TO INVEST, IN THE LONG TERM, IN TECHNOLOGY-ORIENTED PROJECTS."

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GUANGDONG DELEGATION VISITS EPD

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A 12-MEMBER DELEGATION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICES IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE TODAY (FRIDAY) CONCLUDED A FOUR-DAY PROGRAMME OF BRIEFINGS AND VISITS TO SEE THE WORK OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND TO EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES WITH ITS STAFF.

LED BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BUREAU OF GUANGDONG PROVINCE, QIANG BINGHUAN, THE DELEGATION WAS BRIEFED ON VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS, INCLUDING THE WASTE DISPOSAL STRATEGY AND THE OPERATION OF LOCAL CONTROL OFFICES.

THE GROUP ALSO VISITED DIFFERENT FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT'S LABORATORIES, THE ISLAND EAST REFUSE TRANSFER STATION AND THE TSING YI CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT CENTRE.

/"THE VISIT

"THE VISIT IS PART OF A SERIES WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE IN THE PAST FEW YEARS TO FACILITATE EXCHANGES OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES THAT ARE OF MUTUAL INTEREST," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID.

DURING THE VISIT, EPD OFFICIALS WERE ALSO BRIEFED BY THE DELEGATION ON POLLUTION CONTROL PRACTICES IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE.

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RECONSTRUCTION OF BAKER COURT AND NEARBY REAR LANES

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO RECONSTRUCT BAKER COURT AND THE NEARBY REAR LANES IN HUNG HOM.

THE PROJECT COMPRISES THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXISTING FOOTWAYS AND NEARBY REAR LANES, CONVERSION OF PART OF THE EXISTING FOOTWAY ALONG BAKER COURT INTO A CARRIAGEWAY AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATED DRAINAGE/UNDERGROUND SERVICES.

AT PRESENT BAKER COURT AND THE NEARBY REAR LANES ARE NOT PROPERLY MAINTAINED AND MANAGED BECAUSE THEY ARE UNDER MULTIPLE SUBDIVIDED OWNERSHIP.

AS A RESULT, THEY ARE GENERALLY IN POOR CONDITION, THUS GIVING RISE TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND ACCESS PROBLEMS.

IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY, IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, TO RESUME THE PRIVATE STREET AND NEARBY REAR LANES TO ENSURE THEIR PROPER MAINTENANCE AND USE.

THE IMPROVEMENT WORK IS PROGRAMMED TO START IN FEBRUARY 1995 AND WILL TAKE ABOUT FIVE MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

A NOTICE ON THE PROPOSED WORKS IS GAZETTED TODAY (FRIDAY).

THE PLAN AND SCHEME CAN BE SEEN AT THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT OFFICES DURING OFFICE HOURS:

- * CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT OFFICE, PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL, HONG KONG;
- * DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON WEST, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON; AND
- * KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE, PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, 141-143 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, KOWLOON.

ANY PERSON WISHING TO OBJECT TO THE PROPOSAL MUST SEND HIS OBJECTION IN WRITING TO THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, EAST WING, SECOND FLOOR, LOWER ALBERT ROAD, HONG KONG SO AS TO REACH THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 28, THIS YEAR, DESCRIBING HIS INTEREST AND THE MANNER IN WHICH HE ALLEGES HE WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE WORKS OR THE USE.

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GMB OPERATORS SELECTION PROCEDURES OUTLINED

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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO GRADUALLY CONVERT RED MINIBUSES (RMB) TO GREEN MINIBUSES (GMB) AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (FRIDAY).

UP TO MID-OCTOBER, A TOTAL OF 1,591 RMBS HAVE BEEN CONVERTED INTO GMBS SERVING ON 231 ROUTES, REPRESENTING 37 PER CENT OF THE PUBLIC LIGHT BUS FLEET.

"NEW GMB ROUTES ARE PLANNED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TAKING ACCOUNT OF NEW TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURES, NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS, PUBLIC SUGGESTIONS, PROPOSALS FROM THE PLB TRADE AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE DISTRICT BOARDS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE PURPOSE OF NEW GMB SERVICES IS TO FULFIL ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS:

- * TO SERVE AREAS WHICH ARE INACCESSIBLE TO FRANCHISED BUSES DUE TO SUCH FACTORS AS ROAD CONDITION OR TOPOGRAPHY;
- * TO MEET DEMAND IN AREAS WHERE THE PROVISION OF NEW/ADDITIONAL BUS SERVICES IS NOT JUSTIFIED;
- * TO REPLACE LOSS-MAKING BUS ROUTES;
- * TO SERVE AREAS WHERE THERE ARE DEMANDS FOR HIGHER QUALITY TRANSPORT OR WHERE A GMB ROUTE BEST SUITS THE DEMAND; AND
- * TO REPLACE SERVICES FOR THE RURAL AREAS, WHICH USED TO BE PROVIDED BY THE LOCAL USING GOODS VEHICLES WITH SPECIAL PERMITS.

"THE AIM OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT IS TO CONDUCT AT LEAST ONE GMB SELECTION EXERCISE A YEAR AND INTRODUCE AS MANY GMB ROUTES AS POSSIBLE EACH TIME," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

APPLICATIONS FOR OPERATING GMB SERVICES ARE CONSIDERED BY A GREEN MINIBUS OPERATORS' SELECTION BOARD.

THE BOARD COMPRISES REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE TRANSPORT BRANCH, TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, AN OFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION.

THE BOARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTING THE MOST SUITABLE APPLICANT FOR EACH ROUTE PACKAGE THE OPERATION OF WHICH IS INVITED THROUGH A NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE.

ALL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED WILL BE CAREFULLY EVALUATED UNDER A POINT SYSTEM WHICH INCLUDED SUCH ASSESSMENT FACTORS AS THE APPLICANT'S OPERATING EXPERIENCE AND RECORD IN GMB OR RMB OPERATION, HIS FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR THE SERVICE AND THE QUALITY OF HIS PROPOSED VEHICLES FOR DEPLOYMENT IN THE SERVICE.

APPEAL CASES LODGED BY APPLICANTS WHO FAILED IN THE INITIAL APPLICATION WILL BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD.

IT REQUIRES CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT TO COMPLETE ALL THE NECESSARY PROCEDURES FOR EACH GMB EXPANSION EXERCISE STARTING FROM THE INITIAL PROCESS OF ROUTE PLANNING AND CONSULTATION TO THE FINAL PROCESS OF SELECTION OF APPLICANTS.

THE WHOLE PROCESS WOULD NORMALLY TAKE ABOUT 10 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT IN PLANNING NEW GMB ROUTES, IT WAS NECESSARY TO AVOID DUPLICATION WITH AN EXISTING FRANCHISED BUS ROUTE OR GMB ROUTE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO PREVENT OR MINIMISE OVER-PROVISION OR UNNECESSARY COMPETITION OF TRANSPORT SERVICES.

"IT IS NECESSARY TO PRESENT ALL THE PROPOSED GMB ROUTES SO DEVELOPED TO THE RELEVANT TRANSPORT OPERATORS AND THE RELEVANT DISTRICT BOARDS FOR CONSULTATION AND COMMENTS."

THIS PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS, WHICH USUALLY TAKES OVER THREE MONTHS TO COMPLETE, PROVIDES USEFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TO EXPLAIN THE ROUTE PROPOSALS TO THE RELEVANT PARTIES AND TO FINALISE THE NEW ROUTES FOR GAZETTING THROUGH MODIFICATIONS, OR EVEN WITHDRAWAL OF THE ORIGINAL PROPOSED NEW ROUTES.

ALTHOUGH THE OBJECTIVE OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT IS TO IDENTIFY AS MANY NEW GMB ROUTES AS POSSIBLE BASED ON THE PLANNING GUIDELINES, THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF NEW GMB ROUTES AND VEHICLES TO BE INTRODUCED EACH YEAR IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE NEW ROUTES, WHICH SHOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO THE OPERATORS WITHOUT SIGNIFICANTLY DUPLICATING THE EXISTING FRANCHISED BUS AND GMB ROUTES, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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OPERATION OF NEW GMB ROUTES INVITED

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT IS INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR OPERATING 16 NEW GREEN MINIBUS ROUTES IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE TERRITORY, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (FRIDAY).

THE NEW ROUTES ARE IN CENTRAL, POK FU LAM, SHAU KEI WAN AND NORTH POINT ON HONG KONG ISLAND; WONG TAI SIN, YAU MA TEI, TSIM SHA TSUI, KWUN TONG, AND KOWLOON CITY IN KOWLOON; AND TAI PO, YUEN LONG, AND SAI KUNG IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

"THERE WILL BE ONE ALL-NIGHT SERVICE ROUTE RUNNING BETWEEN TIN SHUI ESTATE (TIN SHUI WAI) AND YUEN LONG (EAST)", THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

DETAILS OF THESE ROUTES ARE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE TODAY (FRIDAY).

APPLICATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT:

- * TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS, 41ST FLOOR, IMMIGRATION TOWER, 7 GLOUCESTER ROAD, WAN CHAI, HONG KONG;
- * TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT KOWLOON AND NEW TERRITORIES REGIONAL OFFICES, SEVENTH FLOOR, MONGKOK GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 30 LUEN WAN STREET, KOWLOON;
- * HONG KONG LICENSING OFFICE, GROUND FLOOR, 2, MURRAY ROAD, HONG KONG;
- * KWUN TONG LICENSING OFFICE, FIFTH FLOOR, KOWLOON EAST GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 12, LEI YUE MUN ROAD, KOWLOON;
- * SHA TIN LICENSING OFFICE, FIFTH FLOOR, KCR HOUSE, SHA TIN STATION, SHA TIN, N.T.

APPLICATION MUST BE MADE ON THE APPLICATION FORM ENTITLED "APPLICATION FOR PASSENGER SERVICE LICENCE IN RESPECT OF THE PACKAGES OF PUBLIC LIGHT BUS (SCHEDULED) ROUTES GAZETTED IN OCTOBER 1993".

COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS MUST BE RETURNED BY REGISTERED MAIL TO REACH THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AT 41ST FLOOR, IMMIGRATION TOWER, 7, GLOUCESTER ROAD, WAN CHAI, HONG KONG ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 29 THIS YEAR.

APPLICATIONS BY ANY OTHER MEANS OR LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

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PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS FEE TO BE REVISED

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FEEES FOR THE USE OF THE PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MARINE DEPARTMENT WILL BE REVISED FROM NEXT THURSDAY (NOVEMBER 4), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (FRIDAY).

THE PORT CONTROL (CARGO WORKING AREAS) (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) REGULATION 1993, WHICH PROVIDES DETAILS OF THE NEW FEES, IS PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE TODAY.

"THE INCREASES, EQUATE ABOUT 10 PER CENT ON EXISTING FEES, HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE INCREASE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATING COSTS SINCE THE LAST FEE REVISION LAST YEAR," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT THE INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SECTION OF THE MARINE DEPARTMENT ON TEL 852 4423/ 852 4425 DURING OFFICE HOURS OR 9493 8262 AFTER OFFICE HOURS.

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VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS FOR PUI O PROPOSED

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THE TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT'S SOUTH WEST NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT OFFICE HAS PROPOSED IMPLEMENTING SOME VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT PUI O, LANTAU UNDER THE RURAL PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY PROGRAMME.

THE WORKS COMPRISE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO CAR PARKS, RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FOOTPATH ALONG SOUTH LANTAU ROAD, AND BUILDING OF ASSOCIATED AMENITY AREAS AND DRAINS.

THE PROJECT IS AIMED AT DISCOURAGING ILLEGAL PARKING IN THE AREA SO AS TO RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENHANCE THE ROLE OF PUI O AS A POPULAR RECREATIONAL AREA IN SOUTH LANTAU.

THE WORKS ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN APRIL NEXT YEAR FOR COMPLETION IN 12 MONTHS.

A NOTICE OF THE PROPOSED WORKS WAS GAZETTED TODAY (FRIDAY).

THE PLAN OF THE PROPOSED WORKS IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION AT THE PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICES CENTRE OF THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT OFFICE, THE ISLANDS DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, THE ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE MUI WO SUB-OFFICE OF THE ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICE.

ANY PERSON WISHING TO OBJECT TO THE PROPOSAL SHOULD WRITE TO THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, EAST WING, SECOND FLOOR, LOWER ALBERT ROAD, HONG KONG, NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 28, 1993, DESCRIBING HIS INTEREST AND MANNER IN WHICH HE WILL BE AFFECTED.

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TENDERS INVITED FOR WATER IMPROVEMENT WORKS

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THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE YAU KOM TAU NO. 2 FRESH WATER SERVICE RESERVOIR AND THE ASSOCIATED MAINLAYING.

THE WORKS, WHICH FORM PART OF A PROJECT FOR ADDITIONAL TREATMENT AND TRANSFER FACILITIES AT YAU KOM TAU IN TSUEN WAN, INCLUDE CONSTRUCTION OF A SERVICE RESERVOIR WITH A CAPACITY OF 53,000 CUBIC METRES AND ANCILLARY WORKS AND LAYING OF 1,100 METRES OF FRESH WATERMAIN.

THE WORKS ARE PLANNED TO START IN JANUARY NEXT YEAR FOR COMPLETION IN 25 MONTHS.

/ON COMPLETION,

ON COMPLETION, THE STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION CAPACITY OF THE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM FOR TSUEN WAN WILL BE IMPROVED.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON NOVEMBER 19.

FORMS OF TENDER AND FURTHER PARTICULARS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT, 44TH FLOOR, IMMIGRATION TOWER, 7 GLOUCESTER ROAD, WAN CHAI.

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NEW POSTAL FEES AND CHARGES FROM NOVEMBER 1 REMINDED

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THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR M PAGLIARI, REMINDED THE PUBLIC TODAY (FRIDAY) THAT NEW POSTAL FEES AND CHARGES WOULD COME INTO EFFECT ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1.

THESE INCLUDED:

- * THE BASIC RATES FOR LOCAL LETTERS WOULD INCREASE FROM 80 CENTS TO \$1, AND FOR PRINTED PAPERS FROM 70 CENTS TO 90 CENTS;
- * THE BASIC SURFACE LETTER AND PRINTED PAPER RATES TO CHINA, TAIWAN AND MACAU WOULD BE \$1.20 AND \$1 RESPECTIVELY, WHILE THOSE TO OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE \$2 AND \$1.80 RESPECTIVELY;
- * THE MINIMUM AIR MAIL RATES FOR ZONE 1 AND ZONE 2 WOULD BE \$1.90 AND \$2.40 RESPECTIVELY;
- * AEROGRAMMES WOULD COST \$1.90 EACH, AND
- * REGISTRATION FEE WOULD BE \$11.

DETAILS OF OTHER REVISED POSTAL CHARGES CAN BE OBTAINED AT BRANCH POST OFFICES OR BY TELEPHONING THE POST OFFICE ENQUIRY BUREAU ON 9221 2222.

MR PAGLIARI SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE REVISION WAS TO RESTORE THE REAL VALUE OF POSTAGE CHARGES WHICH HAD NOT BEEN INCREASED SINCE THE LAST POSTAGE RATE ADJUSTMENT IN 1991 APRIL.

THE AVERAGE INCREASE FOR THE PRINCIPAL POSTAGE RATES WOULD BE 20 PER CENT WHICH WAS BELOW THE INFLATION RATE FOR THE PAST TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS.

THE POSTAGE RATES REVISION WOULD HAVE MINIMAL EFFECT ON INFLATION GIVEN THAT POSTAGE CONSTITUTED ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF OVERALL CONSUMER EXPENDITURE.

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1993

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STRIKE DELAYS SERVICE
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THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR M PAGLIARI, ANNOUNCED TODAY (FRIDAY) THAT DUE TO THE STRIKE BY AIR FRANCE PERSONNEL AND THE PREVAILING CONDITIONS AT MAJOR AIRPORTS IN FRANCE, ALL AIRMAIL SERVICES TO AND FROM FRANCE WOULD BE SUBJECT TO DELAY.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
* * * * *

	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,980
REVERSAL OF LAF	+20
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	3,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	+400
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	3,400
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 113.2 *+0.0* 29.10.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.00 PCT	13 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.45	3.24
1 MONTH	2.82 PCT	16 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.72	3.41
3 MONTHS	2.77 PCT	19 MONTHS	2505	3.75	100.13	3.70
6 MONTHS	2.87 PCT	22 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.48	3.80
12 MONTHS	3.18 PCT	36 MONTHS	3610	4.20	99.83	4.31

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 17,338 MN

CLOSED 29 OCTOBER 1993

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