



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Views invited on UN treaty

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The Government has invited the views of the Legislative Council, non-government organisations and other interested parties on a supplementary report on Hong Kong under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

In October 1995, the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) considered the fourth periodic report on Hong Kong under ICCPR. In its concluding observations, the Committee asked that a brief further report be submitted by May 31 for examination in the Autumn of this year.

This report should, the Committee asked, cover new developments pursuant to the recommendations in its concluding observations and the statement by its Chairman.

In 1994, the Government undertook that - before making submissions to the UK - it would give the Legislative Council, non-government organisations and other interested parties a formal opportunity to express their views on the state of implementation in Hong Kong of the various UN covenants and conventions applying to the territory.

Accordingly, letters have been issued to the LegCo Secretariat today (Thursday), inviting views in respect of the supplementary report.

A government spokesman said the Hong Kong Government would prepare a draft submission to the United Kingdom.

"To enable the Government to take into account views expressed during the drafting of its contribution to the UK Government's report - and to meet the deadline for submission to the United Nations - comments will need to reach the Government by March 8 this year.

"To facilitate comments, the Government has prepared an outline of topics which it intends to include in the draft report. The outline includes an annex containing the UNHRC's recommendations and the Chairman's statement," the spokesman said.

Non-government organisations or individuals who would like to express their views can write to the Secretary for Home Affairs before March 8.

Copies of the outline of the draft report can be obtained from the Home Affairs Branch, 31st floor, Southorn Centre, Wan Chai, on request, and are also available at the Marketing Office of the Government Information Services on the 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 176-192 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai.

End

Response to comments on legal services recommendations

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In response to comments made by the Law Society on the administration's implementation of legal services recommendations, a spokesman for the Legal Department today (Thursday) rejected allegations that the department had applied double standards to the Bar Association and Law Society.

The same standard was applied, namely: is the proposal in the public interest, he said.

He also emphasised that the proposal to permit solicitors to acquire extended rights of audience has not been dropped. Further study was, however, needed in the form of:

- (a) a public opinion survey on this issue; and
- (b) research into the state of the Bar in other common law jurisdictions where solicitors can appear in the higher courts.

The proposal, if implemented, would certainly have some impact on the Bar, since some work currently only performed by barristers could be performed by solicitors. The question that needs to be addressed is whether that would undermine the strength and independence of the Bar, he explained.

The strength and independence of solicitors are of equal importance, but the proposal in respect of conveyancing fees would not take away any work currently performed by solicitors. There is therefore no question of the strength and independence of solicitors being undermined.

With regard to the question of whether a solicitor should be responsible for paying a barrister's fees, even though the lay client has not paid the solicitor, the spokesman said this was dealt with in the Report on Legal Services. The Administration has made it clear that this question is a matter of professional ethics, with which the Administration does not wish to interfere.

End

Japanese contractor strikes gold in safety award

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Aoki Corporation has taken four of the six gold awards of the 1995 Airport Core Programme (ACP) Construction Safety Award Scheme organised by the New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office (NAPCO) to promote safety among contractors and their workers.

And the sites with the best safety records last year were for contracts on Tung Chung, West Kowloon Reclamation and North Lantau.

The winners of the gold and other awards were honoured by the NAPCO at an award presentation ceremony at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre this (Thursday) afternoon for implementing sound safety management systems to ensure that construction work was carried out in a safe manner.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Chairman of Consultative Committee on the New Airport and Related Projects (ACC), Mr Hu Fa-kuang, called upon the award winners to keep up their good efforts, saying that they had set a very good example for others to follow.

He was pleased that stringent safety requirements had been incorporated into ACP contracts and other complementary safety measures had been introduced with the aim to achieving a high safety standard for ACP.

"So far, the ACP safety record is among the best when compared with other construction sectors in Hong Kong, and an improving trend is being maintained," he said.

However, he cautioned against complacency and called on ACP contractors to continue to do all they could to achieve a safety record that everyone could be proud of.

Mr Hu said one of ACC's key concerns was the industrial safety of the workers at various ACP sites, and the consultative committee's Planning, Environment and People's Livelihood Sub-committee had on numerous occasions discussed and advised the Government on this subject.

"ACC members, including myself, firmly believe that the safety of workers must take priority over programme and cost considerations," he stressed.

However, he added, pressure on completing tasks in the least possible time must not, under any circumstances, be taken as an excuse for compromising construction safety.

"We want to see completion at the least possible cost, not only in monetary term but also in terms of injuries and fatalities during construction," he said.

Also speaking at the award presentation, the Secretary for Works, Mr H S Kwong, said the joint efforts by the Government and ACP contractors in construction safety had produced positive results but more needed to be done.

Looking ahead, he said the Government was taking action to step up the various effective safety measures that were already in place to maintain the improving trend and to achieve the safety targets. These include:

- * Distributing souvenirs bearing the "safety first" message to workers at ACP sites to improve their safety awareness;
- * Introducing a new report on contractors' performance which will highlight the importance of safety among other contract requirements. Contractors with a poor safety performance will be given ratings which will lead to suspension in tendering Government contracts; and
- * Introducing in new Public Works Programme contracts a Pay for Safety Scheme to reward those contractors who comply with safety requirements, and to punish those who do not.

He said the fatal and non-fatal accident rates of ACP contracts in 1995 were 0.6 fatalities per thousand workers per year and 62 accidents per thousand workers per year respectively.

The rates were five per cent and 33 per cent respectively lower than the rates of ACP contracts in 1994.

"The improvements were achieved despite a more than 50 per cent increase in the labour force. For comparison, the corresponding fatal and non-fatal accident rates for the construction industry as a whole were 0.85 and 274 in 1994," he said.

Despite the improvement, Mr Kwong said, the overall ACP accident rates were still higher than the target of zero fatality and less than 60 reportable accidents per thousand workers per year.

"I therefore appeal to you all, workers, contractors, consultants and government staff alike, to increase your safety endeavours in every way possible," he urged.

Mr Kwong said besides a series of safety management measures introduced in the past, the Government had made further efforts on ACP projects last year. These included:

- * More staff have been assigned by works agents to strengthen monitoring of contractors' activities;
- * Labour Department has further expanded its special team responsible for enforcing safety legislation at ACP sites and conducting safety talks for the management and supervisory staff of contractors;
- * Fire Services Department has conducted fire safety talks for contractors' safety officers;
- * Marine Department has conducted marine industrial safety talks for workers and supervisory staff on board vessels at ACP sites; and
- * NAPCO has arranged for the display of safety materials at ACP sites.

The Gold, Silver and Bronze ACP Construction Safety Management Awards were presented by Mr Hu, Mr Kwong and the Director of NAPCO, Mr Billy Lam, respectively.

The other prizes of the ACP Construction Safety Record Award and the ACP Construction Safety Promotion Award were presented by the Chairman of the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union, Mr Poon To-chuen; the Vice President of the Hong Kong Construction Association, Mr David Gem; the Chairman of the Occupational Safety and Health Council, Professor Leung Ping-chung; the Commissioner for Labour, Mr Stephen Ip; and the Director of Fire Services, Mr Peter Cheung.

The full list of winners are:

ACP Construction Safety Management Awards

Gold Award:	Aoki Corporation;
Silver Award:	Kumagai-Maeda-CRABC JV;
Bronze Award:	China State-Leighton-Hochtief JV;
Meritorious Awards:	Airport Platform Contractors JV, Aoki Corporation, and Dragages et Travaux Publics.

ACP Construction Safety Record Awards (for major contracts)

Gold Award: Aoki Corporation;
Silver Award: Kumagai-Maeda-CRABC JV;
Bronze Award: China State-Leighton-Hochtief JV;
Meritorious Awards: Kumagai Gumi-Entrecanales-Cubiertas,
Aoki Corporation,
Maeda-Kumagai JV,
Airport Platform Contractors,
Leighton-China State-Van Oord ACZ-Lau
Cheong Kee JV, and
BCJ JV.

ACP Construction Safety Record Awards (for general contracts)

Gold Award: Aoki Corporation and Kier-SFK-CFCITEC JV;
Silver Award: Shun Shing Construction & Engineering Co Ltd;
Bronze Award: Hsin Chong Construction Co Ltd;
Meritorious Awards: Realty Cheng & Partners Construction Ltd,
China State Construction Engineering Corporation,
Dragages et Travaux Publics,
Maeda-CSCES JV,
Ready Mixed Concrete (HK) Ltd,
Yau Lee Construction Co Ltd,
Maeda Corporation,
Leighton-Lama JV,
AMEC International Construction Ltd-
Shui On Civil Contractors Ltd-China Fujian Corporation,
Shui On JV,
Laing-Hip Hing JV, and
GTM International-Wan Hin & Company Ltd-Compagnie
D'Entreprises CFE SA JV.

ACP Construction Safety Promotion Awards

Gold Award: SOGEA-Campenon Bernard-Franki JV;
Silver Award: Kumagai-Maeda-CRABC JC;
Bronze Award: Anglo Japanese Construction JV.

End

Education and Careers Expo opens

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The public are given a chance to get the most comprehensive and updated information on careers, education and training opportunities at the sixth Education and Careers Expo which opens today (Thursday).

Jointly organised by the Labour Department and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Expo is the largest of its kind Hong Kong has ever seen.

It consists of a careers section organised by the department and an education section staged by the Council.

Senior Labour Officer (Careers Advisory and External Employment Services), Mrs Bernadette Lai, said the Labour Department's exhibition booth was the largest in the careers section.

"It occupies a total of six booths and adopts an integrated approach in the presentation of the multi-dimensional employment services provided by the department for different client groups such as young people, the disabled and the unemployed.

"Colourful displays in the booth carry information on the Job Matching Programme, Job Matching Promotion Team, careers advisory, employment and selective placement services as well as summer job traps and working abilities of the disabled," she said.

There are also computer games to test participants' knowledge of career options and services provided by the department as well as slide and video shows on various trades.

Mrs Lai noted that response from schools to the Expo was overwhelming as over 12,000 students from about 100 school had enrolled for group visit, representing an increase of 20 per cent over last year.

The Expo is participated by about 180 exhibitors from various trades, government departments, professional bodies as well as local and overseas educational institutes.

It opens from 10.30 am to 7.30 pm today, 10 am to 7.30 pm tomorrow and on Saturday (February 9 and 10), and 10 am to 6 pm on Sunday (February 11). Admission is free.

End

Proposal to acquire an actuary of an insurer endorsed

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The Insurance Advisory Committee has endorsed a proposal of the Insurance Authority to require an appointed actuary of an insurer to certify that, in performing his duties, he has complied with the professional guideline issued by the Actuarial Society of Hong Kong.

The Insurance Authority will proceed to consult the relevant parties on the proposal before implementation.

At present, an insurer carrying on long term business is required under the Insurance Companies Ordinance to appoint an actuary to advise on the financial condition of its long term business. The role and duties of an appointed actuary, however, are not defined in the ordinance.

To address this problem, the Insurance Authority proposed that the law should be amended.

The professional guideline, which clearly sets out the role and duties of an appointed actuary, was issued by the Society in 1993 in consultation with the Insurance Authority.

End

More residential facilities for elderly underway

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The Government, recognising a growing trend of a general lengthening of life expectancy, has been rapidly developing various types of services for the elderly with a view to keeping elderly people to remain active members of the community for as long as possible.

This was stated by the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Ian Strachan, when he officiated at the opening ceremony of the Yan Chai Hospital Artiste Training Alumni Association Care and Attention Home in Tsuen Wan today (Thursday).

Mr Strachan pointed out that in the throes of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, coupled with the weaning of the traditional value of tightly knit family, elderly people were now much more in need of residential service than before in order that they could enjoy a comfortable and dignified old age.

He said against the background of these social changes, the Government had made forward plans to enhance residential facilities for the elderly, in particular to improve the quality of life of those who could no longer be cared for at home.

Of the various initiatives taken in this pursuit, Mr Strachan noted that in addition to provision of additional places in care and attention homes and aged homes, the Government would continue to plan for the construction of six nursing homes, implement the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance and establish an integrated waiting list for applicants for all residential care services for the elderly.

On the role of non-governmental organisations, he especially paid tribute to the Yan Chai Hospital that the care and attention home opened today was a remarkable and latest example of its contribution in its distinguished history of 23 years of community services.

End

Chairperson of Equal Opportunities Commission sought

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The Government welcomes qualified candidates from both the public and private sectors to apply for the post of chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC).

The chairperson is to steer the Commission to fulfil its statutory functions and powers under the Sex and Disability Discrimination ordinances to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities

A government spokesman said press advertisements will be placed on Saturday (February 10) to invite applications to fill the post of the EOC chairperson.

"We are looking for candidates who have interest in the work of the EOC, possess rich administrative and managerial experience, leadership qualities and good interpersonal skills.

"Candidates with legal background and a good command of English and Chinese will be preferred," the spokesman said.

The Sex Discrimination Ordinance also requires that the chairperson should be appointed on a full-time basis.

Remuneration for the chairperson will be equivalent to Point 8 of the Directorate Pay Scale in the Civil Service - a basic salary of \$157,250 a month. A monthly cash allowance of \$70,320 in lieu of housing, passage and other benefits will also apply.

The spokesman said the successful candidate will be appointed by the Governor on a full-time basis for a period of three years initially.

The open invitation follows the Government's earlier attempts to search for a chairperson for the EOC.

"We had identified a number of suitable candidates during the past few months. Unfortunately, for one reason or another, none of them felt able to take up the proposed appointment," the spokesman said.

Applications should reach the Equal Opportunities Commission Preparatory Office on 15th floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, by March 8.

End

Informal consultations with EC prove useful

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The informal bilateral consultations held between Hong Kong and the European Commission (EC) on February 6 in Brussels concerning EC's initiation of anti-circumvention investigation on imports of 3.5-inch microdisks originating in Hong Kong and eight other countries proved to be a useful exchange.

Notwithstanding this, Hong Kong would continue its dialogue with EC with a view to reaching a mutually satisfactory solution to the matter.

The Assistant Director-General of Trade, Miss Emma Lau, who led the Hong Kong delegation, said today (Thursday): "We had a very useful round of consultations with the EC. We were able to clarify with the EC on the scope of its anti-circumvention action applied to Hong Kong."

Miss Lau said EC had repeatedly emphasised that the objective of its anti-circumvention action was to ensure the correct collection of anti-dumping duties imposed on the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan.

She noted that in the case of Hong Kong, EC's investigation would be looking into whether these duties were circumvented through false declaration of the origin of the microdisks from the territory.

"As far as Hong Kong is concerned, the anti-circumvention investigation was basically on origin fraud matters," Miss Lau emphasised.

She pointed out that EC did not enter into discussion with Hong Kong on the multi-lateral basis for their anti-circumvention action and they considered their action justified under the scope of the Council Regulation imposing the anti-dumping duties on the PRC and Taiwan in 1993.

"We will continue our dialogue with the EC in an attempt to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion," Miss Lau added.

End

Tuen Mun District Board by-election scheduled

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A by-election to fill a seat of the Siu Hei constituency of the Tuen Mun District Board will be held on March 24.

This is the second district board by-election scheduled for the same month. The first one, for the Tin King constituency of the Tuen Mun District Board, will be held on March 3.

The office of the member of the Siu Hei constituency will be declared vacant in a gazette notice to be published tomorrow (Friday), following Mr Ng Wai-cho's resignation which became effective on February 1.

Nomination period for the by-election will be from tomorrow to February 23.

Nomination forms are now available at Tuen Mun District Office, second floor, Tuen Mun Government Offices, 1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun, and the Registration and Electoral Office, 10th floor, Harbour Centre, 25 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

The Siu Hei constituency, comprising mainly Siu Hei court, Yuet Wu Villa, Miami Bridge Tower and Marina Garden, has an electorate of 10,242.

Poll will be held unless the seat is uncontested.

End

Revision of car parking fees at Kai Tak Airport

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The fees charged for vehicle parking at Hong Kong International Airport at Kai Tak will be increased from April 1, a government spokesman announced today (Thursday).

"The fees were last revised on April 1, 1995. Since then, car parking rates in prime parking locations and the vicinity of the airport have risen.

"The increase in fees is to discourage casual parking by non-airport users and long stay parking at the airport," the spokesman explained.

"The proposed increase will also help to ensure that airport carparks are used efficiently so as to provide enough spaces for members of the public using the airport," the spokesman added.

Details of the fee revision are as follows:

	<u>Present Fee</u>	<u>New Fee</u>
<u>Public Car Park</u>		
At Multi-storey Car Park and Cargo Circuit Car Park		
(a) First and second hours or part thereof	\$16 per hour	\$19 per hour
(b) Every subsequent hour or part thereof	\$32 per hour	\$38 per hour
At Concorde Road Car Park	\$14 per hour	\$16 per hour
<u>Monthly Parking</u>		
Private car	\$1,680 per month	\$2,065 per month
Commercial vehicle	\$2,250 per month	\$2,465 per month

End

HK Trade and Industrial Organisations directory published

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The Industry Department today (Thursday) announced the publication of the latest edition of its annual directory Hong Kong Trade and Industrial Organisations.

"Covering some 250 trade and industrial bodies in Hong Kong, the publication serves as a quick source of reference for traders, manufacturers and members of the public who wish to get in touch with these bodies," a spokesman for the Industry Department said.

They include government-funded/statutory organisations such as the Hong Kong Productivity Council, the Hong Kong Industrial Technology Centre Corporation and the Hong Kong Industrial Estates Corporation; chambers of commerce, district trade and industrial organisations and representative bodies of various industries and trades.

"Key information on each organisation including the address, telephone and fax numbers, names of principal office-bearers, size of membership and annual election dates, have been included," the spokesman added.

Enquiries or requests for copies of the free directory can be addressed to the Development Support Division, Industry Department, 14th floor, Ocean Centre, 5 Canton Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, or on 2737 2409.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,776	0930	-275
Closing balance in the account	2,479	1000	-275
Change attributable to :		1100	-275
Money market activity	-274	1200	-275
LAF today	-23	1500	-274
		1600	-274

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.8 *+0.3* 8.2.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.00	2 years	2711	5.60	100.95	5.09
1 month	5.00	3 years	3901	5.57	100.86	5.32
3 months	5.00	5 years	5012	6.38	102.54	5.85
6 months	5.00	7 years	7211	6.82	103.95	6.19
12 months	4.99	5 years	M502	7.30	105.13	6.13

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$10,426 million

Closed February 8, 1996

End