DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Harbour water control zone effective on April 1

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Phase three of the Victoria Harbour Water Control Zone (VHWCZ), which covers Quarry Bay, North Point, Causeway Bay, Happy Valley, Wan Chai, Central, Sheung Wan, Sai Ying Pun and Kennedy Town, will become effective on April 1.

All discharges from industrial, commercial, institutional and construction activities in the zone will need to obtain a licence from the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and to meet the standards and requirements laid down under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

"This is the last phase of the VHWCZ to become effective. All waters of Hong Kong will now be protected under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance. It is a significant step forward in the Government's plan to improve the water quality in Hong Kong's coastal waters," said Mr John Boxall, Assistant Director of Environmental Protection.

"Starting from April 1, anyone wishing to start a business that discharges wastewater in the VHWCZ Phase III must obtain a licence beforehand. They must also be able to treat their wastewater discharges to standards laid down in the licence."

"For existing dischargers, licence applications must be submitted to EPD by December 1, 1996. People are encouraged to make early applications so that they will have sufficient time to provide for or improve treatment of their discharges to meet the required standards," he said.

Any person who discharges polluting matter into any water control zone is committing an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of $200,000 for the first offence and $400,000 for any subsequent offence. Offenders may also be liable to six months' imprisonment.

In addition, if the offence is a continuing one, a fine of $10,000 for each day may be imposed.

To assist the public in understanding the control requirements, EPD has published an information booklet which is available free of charge at its Local Control Office (Territory South) at Quarry Bay, and EPD's offices at Southorn Centre and Revenue Tower in Wan Chai.

Dischargers are also encouraged to attend seminars organised by the Department to be held at the Lady Trench Auditorium of the Duke of Windsor Social Service Building, Hennessey Road, Wan Chai on March 27, 28 and April 12.

Enquiries on the seminars, licensing and control matters can be made to Local Control Office (Territory South) on 2516 1710.

End

Public participation in tree-planting activities urged

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Members of the public who care for countryside conservation are urged to take part in the tree-planting activities organised by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) in the coming weeks.

The appeal was made by the President of the Legislative Council, Mr Andrew Wong Wang-fat, at the launching ceremony of the department's annual Community Tree Planting Scheme at Kei Ling Ha, Ma On Shan Country Park, this (Saturday) morning.

Mr Wong said: "Countryside conservation is a long-term and meaningful process which requires the participation and support of all sectors of the community. Only through active participation could our goal of making the countryside greener and more attractive be realised."

Mr Wong noted that in the context of conservation, trees were crucial natural resources in our country parks as they could help prevent soil erosion, provide habitat for wildlife and enhance biodiversity.

However, in addition to taking part in tree planting, Mr Wong reminded that to show their support to countryside conservation, members of the public should also help prevent hill fires when visiting country parks as statistics had indicated that the majority of hill fires were caused by human negligence.

The Community Tree Planting Scheme, introduced 39 years ago, has now become a very popular community event, with an average of more than 20,000 participants taking part every year.

Last year, more than 24,000 people took part in the scheme, with a total of 34,000 trees being planted.

The Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dr Lawrence Lee, said he was pleased to note that since the inception of the scheme, local residents' had become more and more aware of the concept of keeping the countryside green.

He further noted that the scheme had also become part and parcel to his department's annual tree-planting programme for country parks in Hong Kong with more than 300,000 trees being planted by the department each year.

Turning to this year's scheme, Dr Lee said that from tomorrow (Sunday) until the end of April, sites at four country parks in Ma On Shan, Quarry Bay, Hok Tau and Nam Shan in Lantau would be open on Sundays and public holidays for the public to plant trees.

During the period, AFD staff will station at the sites to give technical advice to participants. Seedlings and planting tools will also be provided.

Dr Lee noted that to further promote the meaningful activity, AFD had also identified eight country park sites for tree planting by schools and community organisations, including the participation of the Community Chest. Interested groups are welcome to contact AFD's Conservation Education Unit on 2733 2121.

In his tribute to community organisations and groups for their long-time support, Mr Lee especially thanked the International Lions Clubs District 303 for sponsoring this year's scheme and HK-TVB for assisting in its promotion.

Also present at this morning's launching ceremony were Chairman of the Country and Marine Parks Board, Dr Jim Chi-yung; Chairman of Friends of the Country Parks, Dr Tam Wing-kun; Lions Clubs' District Governor, Mr Phileas Fok, and General Manager of HK-TVB, Mr Alex Ying.

End

Tunnel management contracts retendered

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The Transport Department has retendered the two four-year contracts for the management, operation and maintenance of the Airport Tunnel/Lion Rock Tunnel and Shing Mun Tunnels/Tseung Kwan O Tunnel.

The contract for the Airport Tunnel/Lion Rock Tunnel is awarded to Serco Guardian (F.M.) Limited while the Shing Mun Tunnels/Tseung Kwan O Tunnel goes to China Tollways Limited.

The new contracts, with a provision for extension of the contract period up to six months by the Government, will commence on March 26 and April 1, 1996 respectively.

A spokesman for the Transport Department said the terms and conditions of the new contracts are basically the same as those of the existing ones.

The contractors will, on behalf of the Government, manage and operate the respective tunnels and maintain the associated tunnel equipment and plants.

Their operational duties include patrol of the tunnels, regulation of tunnel traffic, toll collection and recovery of breakdown vehicles.

In addition, the contractors will be required to provide automatic toll collection facilities, to form user liaison groups, to take public suggestions and complaints and make performance pledges, the spokesman added.

The performance of the tunnel contractors will continue to be closely monitored by the Government.

Under the management contracts, the Government continues to own the tunnels and their equipment as well as retains full control over the tolls and fee levels.

End

Electors reminded to vote in by-election tomorrow

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The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) today (Saturday) reminded the 10,242 electors of Siu Hei constituency to vote in the Tuen Mun District Board by-election in respect of their constituency tomorrow (Sunday).

The polling station will be set up in Law Chan Chor Si Primary School, 29 Wu King Road, Tuen Mun. It will be open from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm.

An REO spokesman said an elector must bring along his identity card to the polling station. But it would facilitate polling proceeding if he could bring also the poll card sent to him earlier.

For enquiries, please call 2827 1122.

End

Fee required for naturalisation application

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In response to a number of enquiries concerning applications for naturalisation as British Dependent Territories Citizen (BDTC), a spokesman for the Immigration Department said that payment of fee was required for each application.

The full fee for naturalisation application is $2,400. A non-refundabled $1,200 is paid on application and the remaining $1,200 is paid on grant of a certificate of naturalisation as a BDTC. For those applicants whose spouses are BDTCs, the fee is $840.

"To shorten the waiting time for applications, we have streamlined our procedure and applicants are not required to pay the fee when they initially submit application form. They will be called up later on for necessary formalities including payment of fee," the spokesman explained.

Meanwhile, he also appealed to the public to check their own eligibility before submitting application in order to avoid wasting time in queuing up.

The spokesman said: "A person must fulfil certain requirements before he can apply for naturalisation. Among others, applicants have to meet the 'five years residence' requirement. The residence requirement for a spouse of BDTC is three year.

"For those people who were born in Hong Kong and are already BDTCs, they need not apply for naturalisation."

The spokesman noted that on the last day for naturalisation application, i.e. March 31 (Sunday), the Naturalisation and Nationality Section of the department would be open from 8 am until midnight.

Detailed information concerning naturalisation application is available in the guidance notes (ID27) and for other enquiries, members of the public may telephone 2824 6111 or use the faxline 2877 7711.

End

Firing practice scheduled on five days in April

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Firing practice will take place at the Ha Tsuen/Castle Peak Range on five days next month.

The public is advised not to enter the area when red flags are hoisted.

Following are the dates and times for the firing practice:

Date	Time
April 1 (Monday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
April 2 (Tuesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
April 11 (Thursday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
April 16 (Tuesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
April 18 (Thursday)	8.30 am - 5 pm

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ Million	Time (Hours)	Cumulative Change ($ Million)
Opening Balance in the account	2,779	09:30	Nil
Closing Balance in the account	1,769	10:00	Nil
Change Attributable to:		11:00	Nil
Money Market Activity	Nil	11:30	Nil
Laf Today	-1,010		

Laf Rate 4% Bid/6% Offer TWI 123.7 *-0.1* 23.3.96

End

Statement by the Governor

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The following is a statement by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, on the Preparatory Committee's decision to set up a provisional legislature :

"This is a black day for democracy in Hong Kong. At a time when democracy is moving forward all over the Asian region, a Chinese Government-appointed body of Chinese Government officials and hand-picked Hong Kong advisers has voted to tear down a legislature which was freely, fairly and openly elected by the people of Hong Kong in the most democratic election in our history.

"Hong Kong will salute the member who voted against this proposal. The announcement that Mr Frederick Fung Kin-kee will now be disqualified from membership of the Selection Committee and from sitting on the provisional legislature speaks volumes about the Preparatory Committee, the aims of Chinese officials and the role of the provisional legislature with which Hong Kong is threatened.

"It is for the Chinese Government now to explain how today's decision squares with their obligations under the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law to develop the institutions of representative government in Hong Kong. There is no justification for any provisional legislature. No such arrangement is mentioned in the Joint Declaration or the Basic Law.

"There is deep scepticism in Hong Kong and the world at large about the Chinese Government's motives behind this decision, and a strong feeling that the real intention is to reduce the number of democrats in the legislature, and specifically to exclude the participation of individual members whose political views are unacceptable to them. They will need to convince the world that this is not so."

End

More compensation to tenants affected by redevelopment

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The Secretary for Housing, Mr Dominic Wong, will move a motion at the Legislative Council sitting on March 27/28 to amend Legislative Councillor James To Kun-sun's resolution in order to provide statutory compensation payment in a fair and equitable manner to tenants dispossessed for redevelopment purpose.

The Government's amending motion seeks to replace the existing flat rate compensation of 1.7 times the rateable value specified in the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance by a sliding scale of compensation levels as follows:

Portions of Rateable Value (RV)	Multiplier
1st portion of RV up to $30,000	5
2nd portion of RV $30,001 to $45,000	4
3rd portion of RV $45,001 to $60,000	3
4th portion of RV $60,001 to $75,000	2
Remainder of RV above $75,000	1

Based on the above scale, the formula to work out the statutory compensation for an average old style tenement unit with a rateable value of $60,000, for example, is as follows:

($30,000 X 5)+($15,000 X 4)+($15,000 X 3) = $255,000

Mr Wong said, "We accept that there is a need to increase compensation to tenants of sublet and smaller premises subject to redevelopment because they are in greater need of financial assistance for finding alternative accommodation. That is why we propose a substantial increase in compensation levels from the present 1.7 times rateable value to five times for premises with rateable values lower than $30,000. This will cover most sublet units such as bedspaces, cubicles, cocklofts and bedrooms where we think tenants deserve the biggest increase."

"Our proposal will avoid unnecessarily benefiting better-off tenants living in larger flats with higher rateable values. These people should have no problem in relocating themselves."

Under Mr To's resolution and Mr Law Cheung-kwok's amending motion, tenants living in premises with rateable value of $90,000 or below will receive compensation ranging from five to seven times the rateable value. In dollar terms, a flat with $90,000 rateable value will attract compensation of $450,000, compared with $153,000 under the existing level. The proposals unnecessarily benefit people in large premises, where in fact the rateable value of a typical old style tenement affected by redevelopment is only about $60,000.

"The proposed compensation levels are only the statutory minimum. The voluntary settlement level or the "market rate" will likely increase to an even higher level as a result of a higher statutory minimum level", Mr Wong said.

"Unjustifiably high levels of compensation are a disincentive to redevelopment. Mr To and Mr Law's proposals will be counter-productive as there is a real danger that urban renewal will significantly slow down and hence reduce the chances for tenants residing in dilapidated buildings to move out into better living conditions in the foreseeable future."

"Moreover, it will increase the risk of people resorting to illegal means to obtain vacant possession in order to avoid compensation payment," Mr Wong stressed.

"The Government's proposal is more equitable, and strikes a balance between the interests of landlords and tenants," Mr Wong said. "For the target group of low-income tenants, it provides much enhanced levels of compensation without being unnecessarily generous to better-off tenants."

Mr Wong maintained that a package of legislative amendments which enable compensation to be computed on the basis of a sliding scale and the apportioned rateable value of a sublet unit, as well as increasing the penalties for unlawful eviction would be the most equitable and reasonable approach to address the matter of redevelopment compensation. However, under the present circumstances where some LegCo members are bent on moving resolutions despite their shortcomings, the Government is forced to move an amending motion seeking to ensure that the enhanced benefit of compensation will go to the target tenants.

Mr Wong strongly urged LegCo Members to support the Government's amending motion which he firmly believed would balance the interests of landlords and tenants in a fair and equitable way.

End

Joint efforts to combat tuberculosis

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Tuberculosis (TB) is returning with a vengeance and has become the leading infective cause of death in youth and adults throughout the world, Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, said today (Sunday).

Speaking at the ceremony of World TB Day, Mrs Katherine Fok said over the years, global improvements in living conditions and advances in medical science had led to a significant improvement in the world TB situation.

However, she said, this apparent success had diverted attention and led to complacency.

She said this global resurgence of the disease had been made even worse by HIV-related TB infection.

"Another cause for our concern is the emergence of potentially incurable drug-resistant TB bacteria as a result of inappropriate or inadequate treatment of the disease. These bacteria are now common in many developed as well as developing countries," she said.

In view of the deteriorating world-wide situation, said Mrs Fok, WHO has called for international collaboration in the fight against this important disease.

She pointed out that the key to successful treatment lay in ensuring that the patient completed the entire course of anti-TB treatment.

She noted that Hong Kong has adopted the DOTS (directly observed treatment, short course) treatment since 1970's to assess patients in the process of treatment and a continuous downward trend of TB in Hong Kong had been achieved.

"Under DOTS, health workers supervise their patients while they take their medicines. This ensures that the right medicines are always taken at the right time.

"By using DOTS, TB patients are not only supervised in their treatment but are also provided with the necessary reinforcement and motivation in achieving a cure." she added.

The notification rate of TB in Hong Kong was still high, said Mrs Fok, stressing the importance of health education on TB and reassuring the public that with the commitment of the government and various other sectors, Hong Kong would provide highest quality of care and services in the fight against the disease.

WHO has proclaimed March 24 to be the World TB Day. On this very day in 1882, the discovery of TB bacilli was officially announced.

According to WHO figures, one third of the world population (1.9 billion out of 5.7 billion) are now infected with TB bacillus.

In the next decade, 300 million more people will become infected, 90 million people will develop the disease, and 30 million people will die from it.

The local ceremony of World TB Day is jointly organised by the Department of Health and the Hong Kong Tuberculosis, Chest and Heart Disease Association.

A series of exhibitions have been organised throughout the year to promote the general public's awareness on TB prevention.

End

Total number of votes cast in by-election

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The poll of the Tuen Mun District Board's by-election in respect of Siu Hei constituency was closed at 10.30 pm today (Sunday).

During the 15-hour poll, a total of 1696 voters have cast their votes, representing 16.56 per cent of the total 10,242 electors.

End

DB by-election results

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The following is the number of votes received by the two candidates of the Tuen Mun District Board by-election in respect of Siu Hei constituency.

Mr Yim Tin-sang	1,504 votes
Ms Wong Yin-ping	185 votes

Mr Yim Tin-sang was declared elected by the Returning Officer, Mr Patrick Chan.

End

New leaflet on education indicators

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The Education Department has produced a leaflet, with English and Chinese versions, on education indicators which assess various aspects of the performance of the Hong Kong school education system.

Entitled "How much do you know about education in Hong Kong?", the leaflet carries graphs of 11 education indicators. Together, they provide a systematic indication of the well-being of the Hong Kong school education system, charting performances over ten or more years.

The indicators are selected from a report compiled by the Education Department in August 1995.

Some of the education indicators are:

* literacy rate
* general education attainment
* percentage of trained teachers serving in schools
* proportion of school-age children enrolled in schools
* Government expenditure per school pupil per year
* Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP
* average class size in primary and secondary schools
* Pupil-teacher ratio

The leaflet is now available to members of the public at district offices and district education offices.

End

Completion of 1996 population by-census

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The 1996 population by-census, which was launched a week ago, had just been completed, a spokesman for the Census and Statistics Department announced today (Sunday).

The spokesman noted that sampled households which could not be contacted despite repeated attempts by the enumerators during the by-census operation period (March 16-24) would have received a self-administered questionnaires deposited by the enumerators.

He appealed to these households for co-operation in completing and returning the questionnaires with the enclosed self-addressed envelope to the Census and Statistics Department by April 7.

End

Public dumping area at Tseung Kwan O relocated

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The Territory Development Department's New Territories East Development Office announced today (Sunday) that the public dumping area in Tseung Kwan O will be relocated from the Town Centre to Siu Chik Sha near Shek Kok Road/Wan Po Road roundabout from April 1.

End