



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

Saturday, January 4, 1997

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International conference on school effectiveness

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Seven members of the Education Commission (EC) today (Saturday) departed for the tenth annual meeting of the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI), which will be held in Memphis, USA, from January 5 and 8.

They are the Chairman, Professor Rosie Young; Mr Moses Cheng; Ms Sansan Ching; Mr Kenneth Mak; Mr Tai Hay-lap; Sister Margaret Wong; and Director of Education, Mrs Helen C P Lai Yu.

Apart from the EC delegation, there are some 20 other participants from Hong Kong. They include representatives of the Education Department, the Hong Kong Institute of Education, academics, school principals and educational bodies.

Professor Young noted that the theme of the Congress is "A World of World Class Schools". The goal is to examine diverse methods for creating and sustaining "world class" education.

"The EC will publish in early 1997 its report no. 7 (ECR7) on quality school education. In view of the relevance of the ICSEI meeting to the development of quality education in Hong Kong, it is considered beneficial for EC members to participate in the meeting and study the practical experience of school reform in overseas countries," she said.

At the Congress, there will be international presentations on recent school reform movements and local school visits. Participants will also have ample opportunities to exchange views on issues relating to school effectiveness and improvement.

The Director of Education, Mrs Helen Yu, will host a Hong Kong Symposium on "the Latest Initiatives for School Effectiveness and Educational Quality in Hong Kong".

"This will give us the valuable opportunity to take reference and to confer with overseas policy-makers and leading advocates of quality education. This prepares us for the education reform to result from ECR7. The Congress will also enable our colleagues to establish and extend contacts overseas. For Education Department, we see this an occasion for staff development," Mrs Yu said.

The ICSEI is a group of researchers, policy specialists and school practitioners dedicated to building a base for research, practice and policy in the areas of school effectiveness and school improvement.

The first ICSEI meeting was held in London in 1988 and subsequent annual meetings have been held at various cities, including Rotterdam, Melbourne, Jerusalem, Cardiff and Victoria.

Senior officers of the Education Department have attended previous ICSEI conferences, which are considered to be a useful venue for researchers and school practitioners from different countries to share experience, and to keep abreast of the latest developments in school reforms in other parts of the world.

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Vietnamese migrants transfer operation at the Whitehead Detention Centre yesterday (January 3) have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary today (Saturday).

The four monitors comprised two non-official Justices of the Peace, Mr George Ng Sze-fuk and Mr Michael Lai Kam-cheung ; and representatives from two non-government organisations, Mr Augustine Ng Cheuk-tai from Caritas, Hong Kong and Mrs Anthea Strickland from Save the Children Fund.

End

Fresh water cut in Tai Po

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Tai Po will be temporarily suspended from 9 pm on Tuesday (January 7) to 7 am the following day for watermain connection.

The suspension will affect all premises in Ting Kok Road from Ha Hang Village to Bride's Pool Road, Fortune Garden, Sam Mun Tsai San Tsuen, Sha Lan Village, Wong Yue Tan Village, Chim Uk Village, Chan Uk Village, Lei Uk Village, Po Sum Pai Village, Lai Pek Shan Village, Ting Kok Village, Shan Liu Road, Hoi Ben Village, Lo Tze Tin Village, Lung Mei Village, Wong Chuk Village, Tai Mei Tuk Village, Tai Mei Tuk Water Sports Centre, Bride's Pool Road Government Staff Quarters, Agriculture and Fisheries Department's Tai Mei Tuk Centre and Tai Mei Tuk Pumping Station.

End

Flushing water cut in Aberdeen

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Flushing water supply to all premises in Aberdeen, Tin Wan and Shum Wan will be temporarily suspended between 9 am and 7.30 pm on Tuesday (January 7) for maintenance work on watermains.

The affected areas will include Shek Pai Wan Estate; all premises bounded by Tin Wan Hill Road, Yue Kwong Road and Aberdeen Praya Road, and those along Shum Wan Road, Welfare Road and Nam Long Shan Road.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority interbank liquidity

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		TIME	AGGREGATE BALANCE OF SETTLEMENT ACCOUNTS
OPENING AGGREGATE BALANCE	678 MN	0930 HR	9,987 MN
CLOSING AGGREGATE BALANCE	856 MN	1000 HR	10,559 MN
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100 HR	9,102 MN
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+2	1130 HR	9,047 MN
LAF REVERSAL	+7,780 MN		
LAF TODAY	- 7,604 MN		

LAF RATE 4.00% BID/6.00% OFFER TWI 125.5 *+0.2* 1/4/97

Closed January 4 1997

End

Airport Core Programme heads towards completion

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Eight of the 10 Airport Core Programme (ACP) projects are heading towards completion as the countdown begins to the opening of a new transport corridor from Central to Tung Chung on Lantau Island.

In a review of progress made in 1996, the Director of the New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office (NAPCO), Mr Billy Lam, said today (Sunday), "1996 has been a year of remarkable progress for the 10 projects of the ACP and 1997 will see us starting to reap the benefits of the programme as eight of the projects come to fruition."

Mr Lam said that starting from February, the 34-kilometre long transport corridor, linking the new town at Tung Chung and the new airport at Chek Lap Kok to the urban areas, will be progressively opened to traffic.

The first project to cross the ACP "finishing line" will be the expressway that runs along the West Kowloon Reclamation, known as the West Kowloon Expressway, and the Kwai Chung Viaduct section of Route 3. This 7.2 kilometre stretch of six-lane expressway will be opened soon after the Chinese New Year in February.

"A major benefit of this opening will be to ease traffic congestion in the west Kowloon area," said Mr Lam.

The next major ACP project set for completion is the two-kilometre Western Harbour Crossing linking Sai Ying Pun to the West Kowloon Reclamation which is due to be opened to traffic in April, ahead of schedule.

The remaining roads of the ACP highways network, that is the Lantau Link, the Tsing Yi section of Route 3 and the North Lantau Expressway, will open in May.

Looking back over the past year, Mr Lam said that excellent progress continued to be made on all of the 10 ACP projects. As at the end of November, the Government's seven ACP projects were 93 per cent complete, while overall, including the new airport, the Airport Railway and the Western Harbour Crossing, the ACP was about 73 per cent complete.

"It is a remarkable achievement that work has been progressing so well on a 10-project programme of this size and complexity," said Mr Lam.

Apart from maintaining good momentum on the ACP, one of the significant achievements of the year was the reduction of \$1,850 million in the overall ACP budget from \$158,169 million to \$156,364 million.

"This reduction was made possible principally as a result of the Government's rigorous cost control on the works," he said.

This was the second time that the ACP budget had been reduced. In January 1994 the ACP budget was cut from \$163,730 million to \$158,169 million mainly because of savings arising from Government contracts being awarded below the original estimates.

"Many major infrastructure projects overseas have been hit by massive cost over-runs. It is therefore a major achievement on one of the world's largest infrastructure projects that we have been able to reduce costs and have done it twice," said Mr Lam.

Looking ahead, Mr Lam said that despite excellent progress in 1996, the next 12 months will be an important period for the construction of the new airport and the airport railway where there is much to be done.

"To maintain momentum on the two projects there will be a need for more workers," he said.

The following provides a rundown of the progress of the ACP based on percentage figures as at the end of November:

New airport at Chek Lap Kok

Development of the new airport at Chek Lap Kok has entered its most intensive phases on all fronts. The southern runway will be substantially completed for airfield trials early this year (1997) when the first plane will land on the runway.

As at the end of November, the Airport Authority (AA) works were 73 per cent complete. Including those of the Government and franchisees, the airport project was 61 per cent complete overall.

In mid-September, the AA signed two Supplemental Agreements valued at \$1.9 billion with the main contractors for the Passenger Terminal Building. The supplemental agreements re-established a works programme that supported the April 1998 target opening date and settled outstanding claims and related matters with the contractors.

The payment of \$1.9 billion was within the overall budget of \$49.8 billion for the construction of the new airport and the AA is confident that it can complete the airport works within the overall budget.

Another significant development in the past year was the agreement reached by the British and Chinese sides of the Airport Committee on the AA's proposal to bring forward the construction of the second runway at the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

The second or northern runway will be operating at the end of 1998. The second runway and related facilities are estimated to cost about \$4.9 billion. The AA has estimated that the construction costs of its works will be about \$4.3 billion, to be financed by the authority through borrowings. The Government will provide additional facilities and equipment to support the operation of the second runway at an estimated cost of about \$600 million in money of the day.

Looking ahead, the AA will be pressing ahead with various works on the airport island, especially with fitting out, and the electrical and mechanical works in the passenger terminal building. The authority will also be continuing to work on its operational plans in readiness for airport opening in April 1998.

Airport Railway

The structural completion of the Airport Railway's immersed tube tunnel under the harbour in October marked a major milestone in the project, which is being undertaken by the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC).

The 1.3 kilometre crossing runs from the southern part of the West Kowloon Reclamation to the Central Reclamation where the Hong Kong Station is being built.

Track-laying started on the main line in March last year and to date over 50 per cent of the work has been completed. Work has also begun on the electrical and mechanical installations.

The topping out of the Tai Kok Tsui Station in August represented another important milestone for the project as it signified the structural completion of the first of the seven Airport Railway stations.

This was followed in December by the topping out of the Tung Chung station, the terminus of the Lantau Line.

The project was 62 per cent complete as at the end of November, and the Airport Railway remains on target for completion in June 1998.

When completed, the Airport Express which has been designed as an all-seated, business class-type service will carry passengers between the airport and Central District in Hong Kong in just 23 minutes.

Western Harbour Crossing

The breakthrough of the Western Harbour Crossing in September last year marked an important milestone on the way to completion of the project. The six-lane crossing, Hong Kong's third and largest cross harbour road tunnel, is scheduled to be opened in April, three months ahead of schedule.

Charging a toll of \$30 each way, the tunnel will be used by about 75,000 vehicles a day when it opens.

Lantau Link

Another significant milestone in the ACP works was achieved with the completion of the erection of the last main deck units for the Tsing Ma and Kap Shui Mun Bridges in March last year. This linked the island of Lantau to the rest of Hong Kong.

The installation of electrical and mechanical systems and other finishing work is now in progress. Together with the completion of concrete construction of Ma Wan Viaduct, work on the Lantau Link was 94 per cent complete at the end of November. It is well on target for completion in May.

Formerly known as the Lantau Fixed Crossing, the project's name was changed to Lantau Link in October.

The "Lantau Fixed Crossing" was essentially an engineering term to describe the 3.5 kilometre dual three-lane expressway and railway link connecting Tsing Yi with Lantau Island.

In preparation for its opening, the shorter name which is clearer, simpler and more suitable for everyday use was introduced.

Tung Chung New Town

Situated on Lantau Island adjacent to the new airport at Chek Lap Kok, the new town at Tung Chung has been designed as a support community for the new airport and is the first new town to be built on an outlying island.

The first phase of public housing development in the new town will be ready for occupation in the second half of 1997 to provide homes for 15,000 people. Community services and facilities will be available to meet the daily needs of residents. Seven bus routes will come into operation in mid-1997, linking Tung Chung with the New Territories, Kowloon and the new airport, when the first batch of residents move in.

Moreover, when completed in 1998, the Lantau Line of the Airport Railway will provide speedy access to Kowloon and Central.

Workers

Mr Lam said that more than 32,000 workers were employed on the projects, of which 26,800 were local workers and the rest imported workers.

He said that with work on the new airport and the airport railway moving ahead rapidly there will be a need for even more workers. While every effort will continue to be made to recruit local workers to fill these posts, there will be a need to import workers if there are not sufficient locals to fill the vacancies.

Mr Lam stressed that in carrying out the ACP, the Government paid close attention to safety on the ACP works sites.

"So far, our efforts in promoting safety have proven to be sound, with the accident rate on ACP sites comparably better than the construction industry as a whole," he said.

ACP Exhibition Centre

As part of its continuing effort to keep the public informed about the 10 projects, NAPCO set up an exhibition centre on the Airport Core Programme in January last year. Located on Castle Peak Road in Ting Kau, the centre is an ideal location from which to view the Lantau Link, Hong Kong's newest landmark.

The centre has become a popular tourist spot for both local and overseas visitors, attracting more than 480,000 people since its opening in January last year.

NAPCO also organises guided tours of the centre for primary and secondary schools and local organisations. So far 34,339 people from 240 schools and 220 community organisations have visited the centre.

End

Know more about North DB's work through festival

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The Sixth North District Festival, which promises to be the biggest community event in the district, was launched today (Sunday) amidst much fanfare at North District Sports Ground in Sheung Shui.

Speaking at the kick-off ceremony, the Chairman of the North District Festival Organising Committee, Mr Tang Kun-nin, said: "We hope by providing residents and local groups with the opportunity of organising and participating in festival activities, we can create a more cohesive community."

"We believe this spirit of co-operation will spread to other spheres of activities in the district.

"Furthermore, the rich programme of activities reflect the significant development we have achieved in the district in recent years.

"Equally important, the festival provide an appropriate means for residents to get to know more about the functions and accomplishments of the district board, and it's work in improving the district's traffic and transport, district development, environment, social services, recreation, culture and overall safety," Mr Tang said.

The festival, which will end with a musical extravaganza on February 16, also serves to mark the 15th anniversary of district administration, Mr Tang added.

The ceremony was followed by demonstrations of lion and dragon dances, Chinese Kung Fu, Tai Chi and performances by orchestral bands and local artistes.

Other festival events to be featured later include Chinese opera, a carnival and an exhibition as well as competitions in slogan, writing and commemorative cover design.

Also officiating at the ceremony are the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau; Police Region Commander (N.T North), Mrs Wong Leung Kam-shan, North District Board Chairman, Mr Tang Kwok-yung; and North District Officer, Mr Tommy Yuen.

The festival will cost an estimated \$1.4 million, of which \$600,000 will be met by the district board, \$550,000 by the Regional Council and the balance by local donations.

End

Results of English essay contest announced

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Sixteen secondary school students have outstripped some 150 other participants in an English essay competition aimed at paying tribute to teachers.

These winners in the Respect Our Teachers English Essay Contest have written outstanding pieces, in prose or fiction of fewer than 2,000 words on "A Memorable Encounter with my Teacher" or "A Tribute to My Teacher". A prize-giving ceremony will be held in late-March this year.

The champion for Group A (Secondary 4 and 5) of the contest is Joanna Law of St Paul's School (Lam Tin) while the first and second runners-up are Connie Yan Tin-ye of Maryknoll Convent School and Dara Lee of Diocesan Girls' School respectively.

In Group B (Secondary 6 and 7), the champion is Tim Beyer of Wah Yan College, Hong Kong. The first runner-up is Denise Woo of Diocesan Girls' School and the second runner-up Jenny Chung of Heep Yunn School.

Other winners in Group A are Tejaswini Dhavale of Sear Rogers International School, Man Hoi-ye of Buddhist Ma Kam Chan Memorial English Secondary School, Rufina Lam of Our Lady's College, Cynthia Tang Wai-wing of Holy Family Canossian College and Hanny Wan of Belilios Public School.

Merit prizes in Group B go to Elaine So of Heep Yunn School, Michael Leung Yee-lun of La Salle College, Juliana Fong Ngo-sai of Holy Family Canossian College, Lee Wai-ping of Belilios Public School and Jennifer Man of Diocesan Girls' School.

The winners will receive a trophy. In addition, the champion of each group will be awarded a cash prize of \$2,000 while the first and second runners-up will receive \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively. Five merit prize winners of each group will each receive \$400.

Winners were selected by a panel of judges comprising prominent academics of English, lecturers of the Hong Kong Institute of Education and inspectors of the Education Department.

The contest, jointly organised by the Committee on Respect Our Teachers Campaign and the Education Department and sponsored by Hongkong Standard, is aimed at increasing awareness of respect for teachers and promoting their image.

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Flushing water cut in Sham Shui Po and Mong Kok

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Flushing water supply to some premises in Sham Shui Po and Mong Kok will be temporarily suspended from 10 pm on Wednesday (January 8) to 6 am the following day for alteration work on watermains.

The suspension will affect all premises in the area bounded by Castle Peak Road, Po Lun Street, Sham Shui Po and Tai Kok Tsui seafronts, Cherry Street, Tong Mi Road, Mong Kok Road, Sai Yee Street, Bute Street, Kowloon Canton Railway, Cornwall Street, Nam Cheong Street and Ching Cheung Road.

End