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# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Governor appeals for more jobs for the disabled

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, today (Thursday) urged the community to do more to improve job opportunities for the disabled.

Speaking at the second Summit Meeting on Open Employment for People with a Disability, the Governor said that while good progress had been made since the first summit a year ago, more should be done to tackle the question of enhancing the employment prospects of the disabled.

"The work is not done; it is just beginning," he declared.

The meeting, at which three Policy Secretaries pledged support for the worthy cause, was attended by some 100 representatives of employers associations and disabled groups.

Referring to a recent survey by the University of Hong Kong on the employment of the disabled, the Governor said while he would not go along with all the methodology in that report and did not accept that the unemployment figures for the disabled were as high as suggested, he agreed that the report made a very valid point: there were many disabled persons who could work, who wished to work but who did not work.

"We must do more for these people," he asserted.

He noted that 37 employers had responded to the proposal at last year's summit to set voluntary targets for employing disabled persons and, as a result, 302 additional employment opportunities would be made available for disabled persons by next year.

"We hope to increase the new job opportunities to 500 by March 1997," the Governor said.

Also speaking at the meeting, the Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Michael Leung, said a record 1,414 disabled people were placed in open employment last year by the Labour Department's Selective Placement Division (SPD) while the Employees Retraining Board had spent \$8 million to provide training for 819 disabled workers in 31 courses.

The SPD had also undertaken an impressive array of educational and promotional activities to improve employers' understanding of the working abilities of the disabled, including launching the popular TV series "Under the Same Sky" and radio programme "Newsrama" which had a viewership of 1.27 million and an audienceship of 170,000 respectively.

In addition, two sets of guide books were published, one on "Job Interviewing Techniques" for people with a disability and the other on "Peer Group Acceptance" for seven types of disabilities.

Staff of the SPD also reach out to employers through direct contacts to promote the working abilities of the disabled.

"We are making fully-fledged publicity efforts to dispel public misconceptions about employing people with a disability," Mr Leung said.

The Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, said a working party chaired by the Director of Social Welfare to review training and employment for the disabled had made excellent progress and would produce its final report in a few months.

Meanwhile, the Vocational Training Council had adopted a flexible approach to entrance requirements for applicants to their skill centres for the disabled and had successfully organised six short courses for disabled people on various basic occupational skills in the servicing and commercial sector.

"With good training and the experience and confidence gained from working in sheltered workshops, we encourage those people with a disability who have the potential for advancement to integrate themselves further into society by moving on into supported employment," Mrs Fok said.

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Michael Sze, said there were 3,842 persons with a disability in the civil service and the number would rise to 4,000 by March next year, the target set at the last summit.

A deputy secretary for the Civil Service has been charged with the important task of co-ordinating a more imaginative, proactive and facilitating approach in the employment of the disabled in the civil service.

This includes co-operating with the SPD and non-governmental organisations in the identification of target departments, conduct of sensitive job matching, more focused training for certain types of civil service jobs, better preparation of disabled applicants and selection boards for recruitment procedures, and planning of practical and helpful assistance at the workplace to the employment departments.

This approach was applied on a pilot basis to two recruitment exercises for office assistants and clerical assistants last year and, as a result, about one-third of all the disabled applicants turning up for interviews were found suitable for appointment.

Summing up the discussions at today's meeting, the Governor reiterated the Government's firm commitment to promoting and expanding the employment opportunities for people with a disability, in both the public and private sector. The Government will take a series of actions in the coming year:

- \* introduce the Disability Discrimination Bill into the Legislative Council next month
- \* publish a White Paper on Rehabilitation by the end of May
- \* continue to expand its educational and promotional programmes to improve public understanding of people with a disability
- \* produce two sets of videos with guide books to strengthen publicity efforts
- \* increase staff resources at the SPD
- \* look for more ways of matching the skills of disabled people to the specific jobs on offer
- \* provide 330 additional supported employment places
- \* give urgent consideration to the final report to be received in May from the working party on training and employment for people with disabilities

- \* ensure that a promotional visit is paid to all major Government departments by the Civil Service Branch and Labour Department

"So we in the Government have a full programme ahead. I would like to ask employers to join us in these efforts," the Governor said.

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Transcript of remarks by FS

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Following is the remarks by the Financial Secretary, Sir Hamish Macleod, after his briefing at Home Affairs Department this morning (Thursday):

Good morning,

Well, we had a very full discussion. We ran a bit over time and I wasn't able to stay any longer but I must say the general reaction was very encouraging. I'm grateful to District Board Chairmen for their general support. Of course they have some particular points also to make but the general reaction was very good. There are a few points which I've said we can look into further.

I think still, inevitably, some concern, for example, over traffic congestion in some areas. Clearly, we accept there is a problem, that is why we are consulting on what measures we should take on traffic congestion. But in general I am encouraged and I will go on today explaining what we have done and also listening to reaction. This is an on going process, we have to listen to reaction and reflect it in future measures. So, any questions? Quick ones.

Question: Sir Hamish, can you react to Mr Chen Zuo'er's comment last night?

FS: I'm not going to react.

Question: No, but do you think that he is commenting on the 1996-97, just participate in the study to know the budgetary process or direct participation in the following Budget?

FS: As I said yesterday at the press conference, my aim is not to have public arguments through the press.

Question: No, what is your interpretation of his words?

FS: I'm not going to interpret his words because then he'll feel compelled to comment on my words. We've made proposals to them in December and we hope that soon we can have a discussion, not in the newspapers but in the JLG forum, that's the way to make progress. And if I fall for the temptation of commenting on reactions from various people, then I am just contributing to megaphone diplomacy. So let's have a sensible discussion in the JLG and reach an agreement. Thank you very much.

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AG to appeal against Magistrate's decision on Ming Pao case

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The Attorney General, Mr Jeremy Mathews, has decided to lodge an appeal against a magistrate's decision made on February 16 on summonses issued to Ming Pao Newspaper Limited and three of the paper's editorial staff for offences contrary to section 30 of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance.

Mr Mathews has applied today (Thursday) to the magistrate to state and sign a case in order that he may conduct his appeal.

In the event that the magistrate signs the case as requested, it will be placed before a judge of the High Court. It is the intention of the Attorney General to ask that judge to refer the matter for the consideration of the Court of Appeal.

The magistrate, Mr Hugh Sinclair, had ruled that the defendants had no case to answer because section 30(1) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance was inconsistent with Article 16 of the Bill of Rights and consequently had been repealed by the Bill of Rights Ordinance.

A spokesman for the Legal Department said today that in view of the appeal, ICAC had been advised that they should continue to respond to any alleged or suspected breach of section 30(1) in the same manner as they have hitherto.

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## Actions to improve employment prospects of disabled

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The following is a list of actions to be taken by the Government in the coming year to improve employment prospects of disabled people:

- \* The Government will introduce the Disability Discrimination Bill into the Legislative Council in April. The bill will cover a wide range of activities including prohibiting discrimination against disabled people in employment. It will give people with a disability powerful legal weapons to fight for equal opportunities and to fight against discrimination and harassment.
- \* The Government will publish a White Paper on Rehabilitation by the end of May. This will set out a comprehensive statement of Government policy for the development of all its plans for rehabilitation services for the next decade and beyond. An executive summary will be provided to make the paper accessible to a wider audience.
- \* The Government will allocate about \$8 million in 1995/96 to expand its educational and promotional programme to improve public understanding of people with a disability. Of this, \$1.9 million will be allocated specifically to promote job opportunities for people with a disability. Programmes will be launched in collaboration with employers associations to achieve the maximum impact.
- \* Two sets of videos with guide books will be produced to strengthen the Government's publicity efforts: one on support services available to employers and the other on work ethics in open employment for employees who have a disability.
- \* Two Assistant Labour Officer I posts will be created to strengthen the staff resources of the Labour Department's Selective Placement Division, which achieved a record 1,414 placements in 1994. The division will aim for no fewer than these in 1995.
- \* The Government will be looking increasingly for ways of matching the skills of disabled people to the specific jobs on offer. The Civil Service Branch, under a pilot scheme, has recruited a number of Office Assistants and Clerical Assistants with a disability. The branch will review the success of the scheme shortly to see whether it can be expanded. Staff of the Selective Placement Division will step up visits to individual employers to gauge more accurately the kind of jobs they need to fill so that training course for the disabled can be adjusted to meet these needs.

- \* The Government has earmarked funds to provide 330 additional supported employment places and will continue to re-target resources to provide additional supported places as needs arise.
- \* The Government will give urgent consideration to the final report to be received by May from the Director of Social Welfare's working party on training and employment for people with disabilities. Recommendations which are endorsed by the Government will be implemented as rapidly as possible.
- \* A promotional visit will be paid to all major Government departments by the Civil Service Branch and Labour Department. The branch will aim to sit in on at least 50 per cent of recruitment interviews of people with a disability held by Government departments this year. Every effort will be made to meet the voluntary target of 4,000 disabled persons employed in the civil service by March 1996. A further target will be set for March 1997 in a year's time.

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#### Answers to critics of TOC

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The Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) is designed to address some of the needs of the education system in Hong Kong, downplaying the role of rote learning and encouraging teachers to bring life, interest and active participation into the classroom, Senior Assistant Director of Education Mr T F Kwan said today (Thursday).

Speaking at a press conference, Mr Kwan said rather than "teaching across-the-board", which resulted in brighter students feeling bored and less bright students frustrated and failing to catch up, TOC advocated adoption of various teaching approaches that would meet the evolving demands of a larger and more diversified group of learners.

"Through careful observations and monitoring of the progress of individual children, teachers are able to discover their strengths and weaknesses and devise appropriate remedial measures at an earlier stage, thus preventing aggravation of the problem," Mr Kwan said.

Replying to critics of the curriculum, Mr Kwan said as far as management approach in the implementation of TOC was concerned, the Education Department specified the aims and objectives and allowed schools to choose their own procedures to meet the aims and objectives.

"We have full confidence in the professionalism of Hong Kong teachers and believe that for well qualified professionals, the best approach to motivate them is to give them as much freehand as possible," he said.

"Front-line teachers know their students best. Therefore, we leave the organisation and pace of teaching to teachers so they can choose approaches and strategies that best fit the needs of their students to achieve the highest efficiency.

"The department will continue to provide examples and backup materials for reference by schools and teachers."

Mr Kwan added that active participation and collaboration from schools was essential for TOC to succeed.

On the call for more piloting before full implementation of TOC, Mr Kwan said in fact TOC had been tried out in the last three years and according to suggestions, it would take a long time to implement TOC in all schools and there would be confusion in the transition when, for example, Primary Six leavers were selected for secondary school admission.

Mr Kwan said TOC would initially be adopted in the three core subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics. It will be implemented in Primary 1 classes of 76 schools in 1995, extending to all Primary 1 classes in 1996.

TOC will be implemented in Primary 1 and 2 of all schools in 1997. Thereafter, TOC will gradually be extended to all primary classes.

Mr Kwan thanked staff of schools who helped develop TOC over the past three years.

He also invited members of the public to visit the roving exhibition on TOC, the opening of which will be officiated by the Director of Education, Mr W K Lam, and other educationists, including representatives of major sponsors of schools.

The opening ceremony will take place on Saturday (March 4) at second floor of Cityplaza II, Taikoo Shing, and the exhibition thereafter will be staged in four other popular arcades throughout the territory over a total period of 10 days.

### Another Airport Core Programme contract awarded

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The Secretary for the Treasury, on the advice of the Central Tender Board, has approved the award of an Airport Core Programme (ACP) contract for the construction of an administration building for the Lantau Fixed Crossing.

The \$87 million contract has been awarded by the Architectural Services Department to Yau Lee Construction Company Limited of Hong Kong.

The company will be responsible for building a three-storey administration block and a single-storey workshop block at the Lantau Fixed Crossing's toll plaza on the Lantau Island.

Works will start later this month for completion in early 1997.

The Lantau Fixed Crossing, one of the 10 ACP projects, comprises the Tsing Ma Bridge, the Kap Shui Mun Bridge and Ma Wan Viaduct. The Crossing forms part of the 34-kilometre long expressway linking Tung Chung New Town and the new airport at Chek Lap Kok to the urban areas in Kowloon and Hong Kong.

The award of this contract brings the total number of ACP major contracts awarded so far to 110, with a total value of \$79.1 billion.

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### HM ships Plover and Peacock visit Macau

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In what is thought to be the first visit by the Royal Navy in living memory, two patrol craft of the Hong Kong Squadron, HMS Plover and HMS Peacock, will make an informal visit to the Portuguese colony of Macau between tomorrow (Friday) and March 6.

A busy programme of events has been arranged while both ships are alongside at Macau International Ferry Terminal. Lieutenant Commander Simon Brown, Senior Officer Hong Kong Squadron and commanding officer of HMS Plover, and Lieutenant Commander Sean Steeds, commanding officer of HMS Peacock, are to host a lunch and cocktail party for local dignitaries tomorrow.

Lt Cdr Brown will hold a press briefing in HMS Plover at 10 am on Saturday (March 4), while later in the day local children will attend a party on board the patrol craft.

A combined team from HM ships Plover and Peacock has also been invited to take part in a football match against a Macau team.

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Attention news editors:

You are invited to photograph the arrival of HM ships at Macau International Ferry Terminal at 12.30 pm tomorrow (Friday) and attend the press briefing at 10 am on Saturday.

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#### Closure of Aberdeen illegal structure sought

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The Building Authority is seeking to close an unauthorised structure in Aberdeen so that it can be demolished without endangering the occupants and the public. The single-storey structure used for dwelling is located on the roof of a building in 162 Aberdeen Main Road.

A notice applying for a Closure Order from the District Court under the Buildings Ordinance on May 3 was posted on the premises today (Thursday).

Demolition work is expected to start as soon as the Closure Order is issued.

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New Labour Relations Service office to open in Sha Tin

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The two Labour Relations Service Offices at Hilton Plaza in Sha Tin and Tai Po Government Offices will be moved to a new office at New Town Plaza on March 4 and 18 respectively.

The new office, located at Unit 746-750, Level 7, New Town Plaza I, Sha Tin, will provide services to Sha Tin, Tai Po, Fanling, Sheung Shui, Lo Wu, Sha Tau Kok, Lin Tong Nei and Lok Ma Chau.

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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	1,820	0930	+889
Closing balance in the account	1,588	1000	+889
Change attributable to :		1100	+987
Money market activity	+988	1200	+987
LAF today	-1,220	1500	+987
		1600	+988

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 120.3 \*+0.1\* 2.3.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills

EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds

Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.03	15 months	2605	6.35	99.67	6.74
1 month	5.22	24 months	2702	7.50	100.80	7.18
3 months	5.94	29 months	3707	6.95	99.44	7.33
6 months	6.27	35 months	3801	8.00	101.56	7.53
12 months	6.64	58 months	5912	8.15	101.02	8.04

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$13,277 million

Closed March 2, 1995

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