DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GOVT MEETS NEW PUBLIC HOUSING CHALLENGES VIGOROUSLY: GOVERNOR

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THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO FURTHER DEVELOP ITS PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES AHEAD, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (FRIDAY).

"ITS CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT WILL HELP TO ENSURE THE CONTINUING SUCCESS AND STABILITY OF THIS GREAT HOME, HONG KONG", MR PATTEN SAID.

SPEAKING AT A CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HONG KONG'S PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME, MR PATTEN SAID NEW CHALLENGES CAME FROM RISING EXPECTATIONS AS THE COMMUNITY PROSPERED.

HE SAID PEOPLE WANTED HIGHER STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION, BETTER SECURITY AS WELL AS MORE FACILITIES.

"CHALLENGES COME FROM MAINTAINING AND RENOVATING AN EVER-INCREASING NUMBER OF ESTATES AND BUILDINGS.

"THEN THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF PEOPLE BEING CAUGHT IN THE TRAP OF DEPENDENCY ON PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING AND UNABLE TO ACHIEVE OWNERSHIP, FOR WHICH SOLUTIONS ARE NEEDED."

THE GOVERNOR ADDED THAT WHILE THE GOVERNMENT MET THESE NEW CHALLENGES VIGOROUSLY, IT MUST NOT FORGET THAT THERE REMAINED MANY PEOPLE STILL IN NEED OF DECENT HOUSING.

COMMENDING THE PROGRAMME AS "A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT" AND "THE FINEST EXAMPLE OF A PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME" AROUND THE WORLD, MR PATTEN SAID IT STRENGTHENED AND STABILISED THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

THE HOUSING PROGRAMME IS NOT A CONSEQUENCE OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS, IT IS ONE OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF THAT SUCCESS, HE ADDED.

EARLIER IN THE CEREMONY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, MS ROSANNA WONG, PLEDGED THAT THE AUTHORITY WOULD PUSH FORWARD WITH ITS VISION OF PROVIDING HOMES FOR ALL WHO NEEDED THEM.

SHE SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME WENT HAND-IN-HAND WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG AND WAS CENTRAL TO THE LIFE AND WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE.

"DECENT HOMES ARE A VITAL PART OF STABLE FAMILY LIFE. SECURE, WELL-MAINTAINED HOMES ENABLE PEOPLE TO CONTINUE TO DO THEIR BEST FOR THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG."

MS WONG SAID OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST BLOCKS WERE BUILT IN RESPONSE TO A CRISIS, THE PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES HAD IMPROVED BEYOND RECOGNITION.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT FROM THE HUMBLE BEGINNING IN 1953 WHEN A FEW TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FIRE VICTIMS WERE HOUSED IN A HURRY, THE AUTHORITY NOW HAD 650,000 FLATS IN 1,200 BLOCKS.

"NOT ONLY HAS THE QUANTITY GROWN DRAMATICALLY, BUT THE QUALITY OF HOUSING UNITS AND THE ESTATES, THE CONCEPT AND DESIGN, ALL GET BETTER AND BETTER.

/"MOREOVER, UNDER .....

"MOREOVER, UNDER THE COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME, OLD BUILDINGS ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO MODERN ESTATES COMPLETE WITH ALL THE FACILITIES THEIR INHABITANTS NEED," SHE SAID.

MS WONG SAID OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE SPENDING MORE THAN $11 BILLION IN MAINTAINING AND UPGRADING ITS HOUSING STOCK.

ON THE AUTHORITY'S HOMES-FOR-SALE SCHEME, SHE SAID IT WAS GOING WELL AND NEARLY 200,000 FLATS HAD BEEN SOLD TO HOUSE WELL OVER HALF A MILLION PEOPLE.

NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE TREMENDOUS DEDICATION AND HARD WORK OF ALL THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY, SHE SAID.

"PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY; STAFF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT UNDER MR FUNG TUNG'S EXPERT DIRECTION; ALL THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES HAVE MADE THEIR INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS. THESE ALL DESERVE OUR SINCEREST THANKS," SHE SAID.

EQUALLY, SHE SAID, THANKS WERE ALSO DUE TO CONSUMERS OF PUBLIC HOUSING, THE AUTHORITY'S TENANTS AND FLAT OWNERS, FOR THEIR FEEDBACK WHICH HELPED THE AUTHORITY AWARE OF WHAT WAS WANTED AND NEEDED, AND FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND CO-OPERATION OVER THE YEARS.

TODAY'S CEREMONY WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF A SERIES OF EVENTS ORGANISED TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARY OF PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

SOME EVENTS HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.

AMONG THESE WERE A SLOGAN COMPETITION AMONG HOUSING DEPARTMENT STAFF IN JUNE, AND A PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION DEPICTING LIFE IN PUBLIC HOUSING AND THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, WHICH WAS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND SPONSORED BY JUSCO STORES IN SEPTEMBER.

THE WINNING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MORE THAN 1,200 ENTRIES HAVE BEEN REPRODUCED IN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S CALENDAR FOR 1994 AND WERE USED IN A ROVING EXHIBITION AT VARIOUS PRIVATE COMMERCIAL MALLS AND PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE SHOPPING CENTRES THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

THE EXHIBITION WOULD DEPICT PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, RANGING FROM THE EARLIEST ESTATES BUILT SOON AFTER THE FIRE TO THEIR GROWTH INTO THE MODERN SELF-CONTAINED COMMUNITIES THAT ARE BEING BUILT TODAY.

A KARAOKE COMPETITION IS ALSO UNDERWAY. IT IS SPONSORED BY RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG AND LASTS FROM MID-SEPTEMBER UNTIL DECEMBER 19.

A SERIES OF 13 HALF-HOUR TV DRAMAS PRODUCED BY RTHK FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY ARE BEING SHOWN ON TELEVISION BROADCASTS LTD ON SUNDAY EVENINGS FROM DECEMBER 5 TO FEBRUARY 1994.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE EVENTS WILL BE A LIVE TELEVISION SPECIAL TO BE PRODUCED IN CONJUNCTION WITH TVB ON DECEMBER 26.

/FROM JANUARY .....

FROM JANUARY TO MARCH, A COOKING COMPETITION JOINTLY ORGANISED WITH ASIA TELEVISION LTD WILL BE HELD FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS.

THIS COMPETITION WILL BE THE CLOSING EVENT OF THE WHOLE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF LARGE-SCALE PUBLIC HOUSING, AFTER THE SHEK KIP MEI SQUATTER AREA FIRE ON DECEMBER 25, 1953.

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BRITAIN READY TO TALK ANY TIME

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UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO BRING FORWARD THE REST OF THE PROPOSALS ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENT, THE BRITISH SIDE IS PREPARED TO TALK WITH THE CHINESE SIDE AT ANY TIME, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (FRIDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER OPENING THE KWAI SHING SCHOOL OF THE SPASTICS ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG, MR PATTEN SAID: "OUR POSITION NOW IS THAT WE'VE INTRODUCED OUR PARTIAL LEGISLATION BECAUSE THE LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE TIMETABLE MADE THAT ESSENTIAL.

"WE'VE GOT A BIT OF TIME AND UNTIL WE HAVE TO BRING FORWARD THE REST OF THE PROPOSALS, WE ARE PREPARED TO TALK WITH THE CHINESE SIDE AT ANY TIME. THAT REMAINS OUR POSITION.

"WE ARE NOT GOING TO WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. WE ARE GOING TO LEAVE OUR PAPERS ON THE TABLE AND WE ARE GOING TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE CHINESE SIDE WON'T CLOSE THE DOOR."

ASKED TO RESPOND TO REMARKS BY A CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN ON ENDING THE TALKS, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "I THINK THAT IF THAT'S THE CHINESE POSITION, THEY WOULD WANT TO DRAW OUR ATTENTION TO IT FORMALLY. BUT I HOPE THAT IS NOT THE CONSIDERED CHINESE POSITION."

THE GOVERNOR NOTED THAT IN AN OPINION POLL THIS MORNING, OVER 60 PER CENT OF THOSE WHO WERE QUESTIONED DID NOT BELIEVE THAT TABLING THE PARTIAL LEGISLATION SHOULD BE TAKEN AS A REASON FOR BREAKING OFF THE TALKS.

"AS THE CHINESE SIDE KNOW PERFECTLY WELL, WE TABLED THE PARTIAL LEGISLATION WHICH I THINK HAS BEEN WIDELY WELCOMED IN THE COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO GIVE OURSELVES SOME MORE TIME FOR THE TALKS. THAT REMAINS OUR POSITION," HE ADDED.

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PENSION SCHEME SHOULD DO THING THE HK WAY

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IF HONG KONG WANTS TO AVOID THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED ELSEWHERE, WE NEED TO HAVE A SENSIBLE OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME WHICH DOES THINGS THE HONG KONG WAY - ONLY GETTING OUT WHAT PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO PAY IN.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN AFTER OFFICIATING AT THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME AT LI CHENG UK ESTATE.

/IN REPLY .....

IN REPLY TO PRESS QUESTIONS ON THE ISSUE, THE GOVERNOR SAID : "WE'VE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTING THE TAX-PAYERS WILL NEED TO CONTRIBUTE FOR EXAMPLE THE SAME AMOUNT THAT IT PUTS INTO OLD AGE ALLOWANCES, AT THE MOMENT OVER $3 BILLION."

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GREAT DISADVANTAGE OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, WHICH A LOT OF PEOPLE HAD TALKED ABOUT IN THE PAST, DID NOTHING TO TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S ELDERLY.

"YOU'VE GOT TO WAIT 20 OR 30 OR 40 YEARS. AND THEN FOR MUCH LARGER CONTRIBUTIONS, YOU GET A LOWER RETURN," HE ADDED.

EXPANDING ON THE QUESTION OF GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION, THE GOVERNOR SAID : "PEOPLE CAN'T SAY THE GOVERNMENT MUST DO MORE WITHOUT RECOGNISING THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOING MORE MEANS THAT TAX-PAYERS DOING MORE.

"THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T HAVE ANY MONEY OF ITS OWN. IT'S ONLY GOT YOUR MONEY, THE HARD EARNED MONEY THAT YOU'VE MADE.

"SO I THINK IF FROM NOW ON, PEOPLE TALK ABOUT TAX-PAYERS' RATHER THAN GOVERNMENT'S, THEY'LL BE A BIT CLOSER TO THE MARK."

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FS CLARIFIES MISGIVINGS ABOUT PENSION PROPOSAL

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THE TIME HAS COME FOR HONG KONG TO FACE SQUARELY ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A DIGNIFIED OLD AGE FOR ITS RESIDENTS, WITH ADEQUATE INCOME FOR LIFE'S NECESSITIES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (FRIDAY).

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON WEDNESDAY OF THE WAY AHEAD ON PROVIDENT FUNDS AND PENSIONS MARKED A DECISIVE MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN SOCIAL SERVICES.

SPEAKING AT THE LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE HONG KONG EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION, HE SOUGHT TO ALLAY SOME INITIAL MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE PROPOSED OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME (OPS).

HE REFUTED THE ARGUMENT THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS SIMPLY A NEW TAX TO INCREASE GOVERNMENT REVENUE.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE REVENUE FROM CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD BE USED ONLY FOR THE OPS AND NONE OF IT WOULD GO INTO GENERAL REVENUE AND THAT ANY SURPLUS WOULD STAY IN THE POOL OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUND PENSION PAYMENTS IN FUTURE.

ON THE CONTENTION THAT THE MIDDLE-CLASS WOULD BE HARDEST HIT, HE SAID THE OPS FUNCTIONED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE SUPPORT FOR OLD PEOPLE.

"IF THE COMMUNITY WISHES TO HAVE A REAL SAFETY NET FOR OUR OLD PEOPLE, WE WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO PLAY OUR PART IN MAKING IT WORK, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHICH INCOME BRACKET WE COME FROM," HE SAID, NOTING THAT THE DETAILS OF THE CONTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENTS WOULD NEED TO BE WORKED OUT.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID IT WAS TRUE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD THAT IF THERE WERE CONTRIBUTIONS, BE THEY TAXES OR LEVIES, THEN OF COURSE THOSE WHO WERE BETTER OFF WOULD TEND TO HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE MORE.

"THIS IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT FOR HONG KONG. THAT IS PRECISELY THE CONCEPT WHICH UNDERLIES OUR PRESENT TAXATION SYSTEM," HE SAID.

HE WARNED THAT TO HAVE A NON-CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME, ASSUMING A QUALIFYING AGE OF 65, WOULD MEAN A BURDEN OF $13 BILLION IN THE FIRST YEAR ON TAXPAYERS.

HE ALSO CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS EMPLOYING DELAYING TACTICS.

"WE HAVE DECIDED THAT THE WAY FORWARD ON PROVIDENT FUNDS IS NOT COMPULSION BUT VOLUNTARISM. WE HAVE FURTHER DECIDED TO PURSUE A COMPULSORY AND CONTRIBUTORY OPS, SUBJECT TO BEING SATISFIED ON A NUMBER OF MAJOR ISSUES.

"IT IS A FACT THAT WE NEED TIME TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF THE SCHEME, AND TO HAVE AN INFORMED DIALOGUE BOTH WITH THE COMMUNITY AND THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT. THIS IS TOO BIG AN ISSUE TO STAMPEDE AHEAD ON; WE MUST BE SURE OF OUR GROUND," HE SAID.

HE ALSO ANSWERED WITH AN UNAMBIGUOUS "NO" TO THE SUGGESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO SAVE MONEY THROUGH THIS INITIATIVE.

HE SAID THE SAVING FROM REPLACING THE EXISTING LOWER OLD AGE ALLOWANCES AND STANDARD RATE SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS TO THE ELDERLY WITH OPS WOULD BE PLOUGHED BACK INTO FINANCING THE OPS.

"THERE WILL BE NEW EXPENDITURE TO BE MET FOR RUNNING AND REGULATING THE SCHEME, AND THE BALANCE OF SAVINGS LEFT AFTER THIS WOULD BE USED TO REDUCE CONTRIBUTIONS BY EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

"THERE WILL BE FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER. AND THERE WILL BE REDUCED PROFITS TAX REVENUE BECAUSE EMPLOYERS' CONTRIBUTIONS WILL COUNT AS EXPENDITURE," HE ADDED.

COMMENTING ON THE SUGGESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO REDISTRIBUTE INCOME AND THAT HONG KONG WAS IN DANGER OF BECOMING A WELFARE STATE, MR MACLEOD SAID THESE IMPRECISE AND RATHER EMOTIVE LABELS WERE NOT HELPFUL TO THE DEBATE.

"THE FACT IS THAT ALL TAX SYSTEMS BENEFIT SOME MORE THAN OTHERS. HONG KONG IS NO EXCEPTION," HE SAID.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISED HEAVILY HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION AND HOUSING AND IT ALSO PROVIDED A NON-CONTRIBUTORY SAFETY NET THROUGH THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.

HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT HONG KONG HAD BEEN VERY CAREFUL AND WOULD GO ON BEING VERY CAREFUL TO ENSURE THAT IT DID NOT GO BEYOND WHAT IT COULD AFFORD.

"MOST IMPORTANTLY, OUR NEW PROPOSAL IS BASED ON CAREFULLY BALANCING THE TOTAL BENEFITS WITH THE TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS; IT WILL BE A SELF-CONTAINED SET OF TRANSACTIONS IN A SEPARATE FUND, SEPARATE FROM NORMAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE," HE SAID.

/HE FURTHER .....

HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT IT COULD NOT HAVE OPTED TO PROCEED WITH COMPULSORY PROVIDENT FUNDS FIRST AND THEN TO INTRODUCE A CONTRIBUTORY OPS LATER.

"I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN REALISTIC TO REQUIRE ALL EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO CONTRIBUTE FIVE PER CENT EACH, FOR A PROVIDENT FUND - AND THEN ON TOP OF THAT TO CONTRIBUTE A FURTHER IF LESSER SUM FOR A PENSION. WE HAD TO MAKE A CHOICE BETWEEN ONE AND THE OTHER," HE SAID.

HE SAID TO HAVE CHOSEN COMPULSORY PROVIDENT FUNDS RATHER THAN A PENSION WOULD HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE.

MANY PEOPLE HAD POINTED OUT IN RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE THAT PROVIDENT FUNDS HAD THEIR ROLE BUT THEY DID NOT ADDRESS THE NEED OF THOSE WHO WERE NOT EMPLOYED TO HAVE AN INCOME IN OLD AGE, HE SAID.

"EVEN FOR THE EMPLOYED, THE PROVIDENT FUND BENEFIT IS LOW UNLESS CONTRIBUTIONS ARE MADE OVER A LONG PERIOD, AT A REASONABLY HIGH RATE," HE ADDED.

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BACK THE HANDICAPPED: GOVERNOR URGES

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (FRIDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INVESTING HEAVILY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS TO OVERCOME THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING IN THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS THE HANDICAPPED.

"SADLY, THERE ARE SOME IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO, THROUGH PREJUDICE OR IGNORANCE, HAVE OBJECTED TO EFFORTS TO HELP THE HANDICAPPED AND TO INTEGRATE THEM INTO THE LIFE OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY," MR PATTEN SAID.

HE SAID OVERCOMING THIS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING WAS A PRIORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING OF THE SPASTICS ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG KWAI SHING SCHOOL, MR PATTEN HIGHLY PRAISED THE ASSOCIATION FOR ITS WORK IN PROVIDING A WIDE RANGE OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE MULTIPLY HANDICAPPED.

THE SPASTICS ASSOCIATION HAS, SINCE 1964, BEEN WORKING TO IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF DISABLED PEOPLE, PROVIDE SCHOOL EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES SUCH AS HOME THERAPY SERVICES AND WHEELCHAIR REPAIR SERVICES.

THE ASSOCIATION HAD TAKEN THE LEAD IN PIONEERING NEW REHABILITATION WORK SUCH AS THE INTRODUCTION OF CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES TO HELP MOTOR DISORDERED CHILDREN, MR PATTEN SAID.

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GOVERNOR SPEAKS TO PRESS AFTER OFFICIATING
40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME
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GOVERNOR: PUBLIC HOUSING IS, AS I WAS SAYING IN MY REMARKS EARLIER, ONE OF OUR GREATEST SUCCESS STORIES IN HONG KONG BUT THERE IS STILL MORE FOR ALL OF US TO DO DESPITE THE GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS. WE'VE STILL GOT PROBLEMS TO TACKLE. PEOPLE WHO ARE STILL SQUATTING, PEOPLE WHO ARE LIVING AND HAVE BEEN LIVING FOR TOO LONG IN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS, PEOPLE VERY OFTEN THE ELDERLY WHO ARE AFFECTED BY REDEVELOPMENT AND SOME CLEARANCE AND, OF COURSE, THE ASPIRATION WHICH MANY HAVE TO BECOME HOME OWNERS. ALL THOSE ARE PROBLEMS THAT WE'VE STILL GOT TO DEAL WITH. WE ARE DETERMINED TO DO SO. WE ARE BUILDING OVER 40 000 FLATS A YEAR THROUGH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY. WE ARE DETERMINED, AS I SAID IN MY SPEECH TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL EARLIER THIS YEAR, TO ACHIEVE EVEN BETTER TARGETS IN COPING WITH CLEARANCE AND IN COPING WITH REHOUSING THOSE WHO ARE IN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS. SO, A LOT OF WORK TO DO BUT A VERY SOLID FOUNDATION LAID.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, WHEN YOU SAID THIS MORNING THAT BRITISH SUPPORTED CHINA IN GETTING GATT MEMBERSHIP AND SO THAT NOW CHINA SHOULD ADOPT A MORE CALM AND SENSIBLE WAY IN HANDLING THE SINO-BRITISH TRADE RELATION, ARE YOU PROPOSING A COUNTER THREAT TO WHAT .....?

GOVERNOR: NO, I HAVE BEEN GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG FOR 18 MONTHS. I HAVE NEVER THREATENED ANYONE NOR DO I INTEND TO DO SO. I POINTED OUT THIS MORNING THAT BRITAIN'S ONLY INTEREST WAS TO DO WHAT WAS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF HONG KONG AND SECONDLY, I POINTED OUT THAT WE ALL VERY STRONGLY AGREED WITH PRESIDENT JIANG ZEMIN AND HIS VIEW THAT ONE SHOULD KEEP POLITICS AND ECONOMICS AND TRADE SEPARATE. I THINK THAT'S VERY WISE AND SAGE ADVICE BY THE DISTINGUISHED PRESIDENT.

QUESTION: WILL THEN THE BRITISH POSITION BE CHANGED AFTER WU JIANMIN SAID THAT ... THE RELATIONSHIP....?

GOVERNOR: I HAVE SAID WHAT OUR POSITION IS. I GAVE SIMILAR ANSWERS WHEN SIMILAR THINGS WERE SAID LAST YEAR. I DO TRY TO SAY ALWAYS WHAT I MEAN.

QUESTION: ARE YOU TRANSPLANTING THE WELFARE-STATE CONCEPT OR THE SOCIAL SECURITY FROM OVERSEAS TO HONG KONG, THAT IS.... THE ONLY CONTRIBUTION FROM THE WORKING POPULATION OR THE WHOLE HONG KONG POPULATION?

/GOVERNOR .....

GOVERNOR : LET'S BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR WHAT DISCUSSION IS ABOUT. THE COMMUNITY WANTS, I BELIEVE TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY SO THAT THEY CAN LIVE THEIR LIVES IN EVEN GREATER DIGNITY AND EVEN GREATER COMFORT. THEY DESERVE IT. THEY HAVE BUILT HONG KONG WITH THEIR OWN SWEAT AND THEIR OWN DETERMINATION AND THEIR OWN ENTERPRISE. SO HONG KONG WANTS TO RESPOND TO THAT AS ANY CIVILISED PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY SHOULD. WE'VE PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS FOR DOING THAT WHICH, IN OUR VIEW, MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE AND HELP TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM NOT JUST IN 30 OR 40 YEARS, BUT HERE IN NOW. IF PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WANT TO HELP THE ELDERLY, THEN THIS IS, IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE BEST WAY OF DOING IT. YOU CAN'T DO IT FOR NOTHING. THERE AREN'T MONEY BEARING TREES IN HONG KONG. WE CAN'T DIG MONEY OUT OF THE GROUND. MONEY HAS TO COME FROM OUR OWN EFFORTS AND OUR OWN WORK. WE'VE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTING THE TAX-PAYERS WILL NEED TO CONTRIBUTE FOR EXAMPLE THE SAME AMOUNT THAT IT PUTS INTO OLD AGE ALLOWANCES, AT THE MOMENT OVER $3 BILLION. BUT WE'VE SAID THAT IF WE WANT TO AVOID THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED IN EUROPE AND IN NORTH AMERICA, THEN WE NEED TO HAVE A SENSIBLE SCHEME WHICH DOES THINGS THE HONG KONG WAY, ONLY GETTING OUT WHAT PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO PAY IN. THE GREAT DISADVANTAGE OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, WHICH A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE TALKED ABOUT IN THE PAST, BUT FIRST OF ALL, IT DOES NOTHING TO TODAY'S ELDERLY, DOESN'T DO ANYTHING FOR TOMORROW'S ELDERLY. YOU'VE GOT TO WAIT 20 OR 30 OR 40 YEARS. AND THEN FOR MUCH LARGER CONTRIBUTIONS, YOU GET A LOWER RETURN. I RECOGNISE THAT IT IS GOING TO BE A VERY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE IN THE COMMUNITY. AND I DON'T REGRET OR RESENT THE AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION THAT IS GOING TO BE. IT'S JUST ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT DOMESTIC ISSUE THAT THE COMMUNITY WOULD HAVE TO MAKE ITS MIND UP ABOUT IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS OR MONTHS. I ALSO RECOGNISED THAT WE MUST DISCUSS THE ISSUE WITH CHINA AS THE FUTURE SOVEREIGN. BUT THERE AREN'T ANY EASY ANSWERS. THERE AREN'T ANY WAYS OF CROPPING OUT OF THE ISSUE. IF WE WANT TO HELP, THEN, WE'VE GOT TO RECOGNISE SOME OF THE HARD CHOICES THAT NEED TO BE MADE. AND I BELIEVE THIS COMMUNITY CAN MAKE THEM WITHOUT RUNNING INTO THE SAME DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS WHICH AFFECTED OTHER SOCIETIES, WHICH HAVEN'T BEEN AS SENSIBLE AS WE ARE PROPOSING TO BE. ONE LAST THOUGHT, PEOPLE CAN'T SAY THE GOVERNMENT MUST DO MORE WITHOUT RECOGNISING THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOING MORE MEANS THAT TAX-PAYERS DOING MORE. THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T HAVE ANY MONEY OF ITS OWN. IT'S ONLY GOT YOUR MONEY, THE HARD EARNED MONEY THAT YOU'VE MADE. SO I THINK IF FROM NOW ON, PEOPLE TALK ABOUT TAX-PAYERS' RATHER THAN GOVERNMENT'S, THEY'LL BE A BIT CLOSER TO THE MARK. ON MORE QUESTION.

QUESTION : DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE A BURDEN FOR OUR FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT AS OUR GENERATION GROWS OLDER BECAUSE OUR GENERATION IS A LARGE PART OF THE POPULATION?

GOVERNOR : AS THE YEARS PASS, WE'RE GOING TO FIND IN HONG KONG THAT A LARGER PROPORTION OF OUR POPULATION IS RETIRED AND THE LARGER PROPORTION OF THAT RETIRED POPULATION IS VERY ELDERLY. THAT IS ONE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS. IT IS ONE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF IMPROVEMENTS IN MEDICAL CARE, ONE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF IMPROVEMENTS IN HOUSING. IF WE'RE TO LOOK AFTER THOSE ELDERLY, WE HAVE TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE PROVISION OF PENSIONS BUT WE ALSO HAVE TO RECOGNISE THAT WE NEED TO GO FURTHER AND THAT DOES INVOLVE COSTS AND YOU CAN'T SIMPLY WHISH THEM AWAY BY SAYING THAT SOMEBODY ELSE APART FROM ALL OF US AS INDIVIDUALS HAS GOT TO MEET THE COSTS OF THAT. WHAT WE WANT TO DO AND THIS IS THE INTENTION OF OUR PROPOSALS IS TO LIMIT THOSE COSTS TO WHAT IS AFFORDABLE. AND WE DON'T WANT TO RUN THE RISK WHICH IS PRESENT IN A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND OF HAVING LARGER CONTRIBUTIONS BY INDIVIDUALS AND EMPLOYERS FOR SMALLER BENEFITS AND GAINS. I REPEAT THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF WHAT I THINK IS A VERY IMPORTANT ARGUMENT AND ONE THAT GOES RIGHT TO THE HEART OF WHAT SORT OF SOCIETY WE WANT TO BE IN HONG KONG. BUT I THINK AT THE END OF DAY PEOPLE ARE GOING TO RECKON THAT THEY WANT A SOCIETY WHICH LOOKS AFTER ITS ELDERLY CITIZENS DECENTLY SO THAT THEY HAVE A PROPER REWARD FOR THE LIVES THEY'VE CONTRIBUTED TO THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY. I AM SURE THAT WILL BE THE OUTCOME AND I VERY MUCH BELIEVE THAT THE APPROACH THAT WE'VE SUGGESTED IS THE BEST ONE. THANK YOU.

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GOVERNOR SPEAKS TO PRESS AFTER OPENING KWAI SHING SCHOOL
OF THE SPASTICS ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG

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GOVERNOR: I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO VISIT THIS EXCELLENT NEW SCHOOL. I THINK IT'S PROVIDING AN OUTSTANDING SERVICE FOR SOME OF THE DISABLED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY AND WE'VE, OBVIOUSLY, GOT TO GO ON DEVELOPING OUR SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR THE DISABLED IN HONG KONG IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY OF DEVELOPING THEIR POTENTIAL TO THE FULL WHICH NOT ONLY HELPS THEM BUT HELPS THE WHOLE OF THE COMMUNITY. SO I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE SEEN THIS SCHOOL THIS MORNING.

QUESTION: GOVERNOR, WE KNOW THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AND BRITAIN AS WELL ARE WAITING FOR A FORMAL REPLY FROM CHINA BUT THEN ISN'T THAT A PASSIVE WAY OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM BECAUSE CHINA MAY NOT GIVE YOU ANY FORMAL REPLY AND WHEN WILL YOU TABLE THE REST OF YOUR BILL THEN?

GOVERNOR: IN THE 17TH ROUND OF TALKS, WE PROPOSED DATES FOR THE 18TH ROUND OF TALKS AND THEN, WE CONTACTED THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN PEKING ON TWO FURTHER OCCASIONS ON DECEMBER 2ND AND 14TH. I THINK AFTER THE MOST RECENT CONTACT, OUR ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN YESTERDAY. I WANT TO MAKE THIS ABSOLUTELY CLEAR. LAST YEAR, IT WAS US WHO ASKED FOR TALKS AND PRESSED FOR TALKS, SOME OF YOU WERE VERY PATIENT, IT TOOK MUCH TOO LONG TO GET TALKS GOING BUT EVENTUALLY TALKS DID GET GOING IN THE SPRING. OUR POSITION NOW, AS YOU KNOW, IS THAT WE'VE INTRODUCED OUR PARTIAL LEGISLATION BECAUSE THE LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE TIME TABLE MADE THAT ESSENTIAL. WE'VE GOT A BIT OF TIME AND UNTIL WE HAVE TO BRING FORWARD THE REST OF THE PROPOSALS, WE ARE PREPARED TO TALK WITH THE CHINESE SIDE AT ANY TIME. THAT REMAINS OUR POSITION. WE'VE BOUGHT OURSELVES SOME TIME FOR MORE TALKING. WE ARE NOT GOING TO WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. WE ARE GOING TO LEAVE OUR PAPERS ON THE TABLE AND WE ARE GOING TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE CHINESE SIDE WON'T CLOSE THE DOOR. I REPEAT THAT UNTIL IT IS NECESSARY TO BRING FORWARD THE REST OF THE LEGISLATION, WE ARE PREPARED TO TALK.

/QUESTION .....

QUESTION: WHEN WILL THAT BE.... FOR THE REST OF THE PROPOSALS?

GOVERNOR: YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT FOR WEEKS IF NOT MONTHS, I HAVE DECLINED TO TALK IN TERMS OF DEADLINES WHILE KNOWING THAT THE CHINESE SIDE WERE WELL AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES WE HAD ON THE LEGISLATIVE SIDE AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE. WE ARE GOING TO PROCEED WITH THE PRESENT BILL THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND IN DUE COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO COME FORWARD WITH THE REST OF THE MEASURES BUT UNTIL THEN, WE ARE VERY HAPPY TO TALK TO THE CHINESE SIDE. INDEED, WE WILL GO ON PRESSING FOR TALKS.

QUESTION : HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THE CHINESE SPOKESMAN WHO SAID THAT IT IS THE END OF THE TALKS TO THE MEDIA YESTERDAY?

GOVERNOR: I THINK THAT IF THAT'S THE CHINESE POSITION, THEY WOULD WANT TO DRAW OUR ATTENTION TO IT FORMALLY. BUT I HOPE THAT IS NOT THE CONSIDERED CHINESE POSITION. YOU WILL NOTICE THIS MORNING THAT IN AN OPINION POLL, OVER 60 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO WERE QUESTIONED DID NOT BELIEVE THAT TABLING THIS PARTIAL LEGISLATION SHOULD BE TAKEN AS A REASON FOR BREAKING OFF THE TALKS NOR DO I. AS THE CHINESE SIDE KNOW PERFECTLY WELL, WE TABLED THE PARTIAL LEGISLATION WHICH I THINK HAS BEEN WIDELY WELCOMED IN THE COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO GIVE OURSELVES MORE TIME FOR THE TALKS. THAT REMAINS OUR POSITION.

QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL BEING THREATENED WHILE THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR WU JIANMIN, SAID THAT NOW THAT THE SINO-BRITISH TRADE RELATION IS INEVITABLY BEING ....., THAT IS, YOU'VE TABLED THE PARTIAL BILL?

GOVERNOR: OUR CONCERN AND THE CONCERN OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CERTAINLY ARE CONCERN HERE IN HONG KONG IS TO DO WHAT'S IN THE BEST INTEREST OF HONG KONG TO MAINTAIN THE RULE OF LAW IN HONG KONG, TO ENSURE THAT THE JOINT DECLARATION IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED. THAT'S WHAT WE ARE DOING AND I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS. I VERY MUCH AGREE WITH WHAT PRESIDENT JIANG ZEMIN SAID WHAT HE MET PRESIDENT CLINTON AND SAID THAT NOBODY SHOULD CONFUSE POLITICS AND TRADE; PEOPLE SHOULD KEEP POLITICS AND ECONOMICS SEPARATED. I THINK THAT WAS VERY WISE ADVICE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PRC AND I AM SURE IT'S ADVICE WHICH ALL HIS COLLEAGUES WILL WANT TO TAKE. IT'S ALSO WORTH NOTING, OF COURSE, THAT AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THERE IS A CHINESE TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM OF TWO TO ONE AND I DON'T IMAGINE THAT CHINESE OFFICIALS WOULD WANT TO DAMAGE THAT RELATIONSHIP. THEY'RE APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE GATT WHICH IS, OF COURSE, VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE. THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS TOTALLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY SUPPORTED THEIR APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF GATT. THAT ISN'T THE POSITION OF ALL THE OTHER MEMBERS OF GATT BUT IS CERTAINLY THE UNITED KINGDOM'S POSITION. SO I THINK WE NEED TO BE A LITTLE CALM AND SENSIBLE AND I THINK WE NEED TO RECOGNISE AS I'VE SAID EARLIER THAT IT IS OUR CONCERN TO DO WHAT IS BEST FOR HONG KONG AND I HOPE THAT IS THE CHINESE SIDE'S CONCERN AS WELL. THEY CAN BEST SHOW THAT BY FULLY CO-OPERATING ON ALL THE MEASURES THAT ARE OUTSTANDING IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP AND SO ON AND THEY CAN BEST DO THAT AS WELL BY COMING TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AND TRYING TO DEAL WITH MATTERS LIKE THE ELECTION COMMITTEE AND THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND THE THROUGH TRAIN ON WHICH THERE IS, ALAS, STILL QUITE A WIDE GAP. ONE MORE.

/QUESTION .....

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, YOU ALWAYS SAY THAT THE BRITISH SIDE IS GOING ON TO PRESS FOR TALKS, BUT THE CHINESE SIDE HAVE ALREADY STATED CLEARLY THEIR POSITION, SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? ARE YOU WAITING FOR THE CHINESE SIDE OFFICIALLY REFUSING TO GO ON FOR TALKS?

GOVERNOR: I'VE ANSWERED THAT QUESTION A COUPLE OF TIMES AND I DON'T THINK I CAN ADD ANYTHING TO WHAT I'VE SAID ALREADY. WE ARE PREPARED TO GO ON TALKING UNTIL WE HAVE TO INTRODUCE THE REST OF THE LEGISLATION. THE COMMUNITY KNOWS THAT WE'VE BEEN PREPARED TO CUT THINGS PRETTY FINE IN ORDER TO GIVE OURSELVES A BIT MORE TIME TO TALK. ONE MORE, AS I 'VE ANSWERED THAT.

QUESTION: CHINA IS BLAMING YOU FOR THE BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS.DO YOU CARE WHAT THE CHINESE SAYS AT THIS STAGE?

GOVERNOR: I THINK THE COMMUNITY KNOWS WHO WAS ASKING FOR TALKS IN THE FIRST PLACE, WHO VERY PATIENTLY SAT THERE FOR 17 ROUNDS WHILE, ALAS, NOT VERY MUCH PROGRESS WAS MADE DESPITE OUR CONDITIONAL CONCESSIONS. I THINK THE COMMUNITY KNOWS WHO'S NOW SAYING THAT WE LIKE TO GO ON TALKING, PERFECTLY PREPARED TO GO ON TALKING. THE COMMUNITY IS, AS I NOTED EARLIER, IN AN OPINION POLL, 60 PERCENT OF PEOPLE HAVE SAID THAT TABLING THE PARTIAL BILL SHOULDN'T MEAN THAT THE TALKS ARE CALLED OFF. THAT'S MY VIEW. WE TABLED THE BILL IN ORDER TO GIVE OURSELVES A BIT MORE TIME FOR TALKS. SO, I AM NOT GOING TO ENGAGE TODAY ANY MORE THAN I HAD IN THE PAST IN RHETORIC. WE ARE GOING ABOUT OUR BUSINESS VERY CALMLY. THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL START TO CONSIDER THE BILL NOW AND AS FOR OTHER THINGS, WE SEE THIS MORNING AND HONG KONG PEOPLE PREPARING CHEERFULLY FOR A HAPPY, STABLE, TURMOIL-FREE CHRISTMAS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED.

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GOVT SPARES NO EFFORT IN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT: RS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS SPARED NO EFFORT IN PLANNING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT, THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MISS CHRISTINE CHOW, SAID THIS (FRIDAY) EVENING.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT FESTIVAL, MISS CHOW NOTED THAT A SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF THE RESIDENTS.

NOTING THAT SHAM SHUI PO IS AN OLD URBAN AREA, MISS CHOW SAID RESIDENTS MIGHT FACE A NUMBER OF COMPLEX PROBLEMS IN THEIR LIVELIHOOD.

SHE SAID SHAM SHUI PO HAD HOWEVER A FACELIFT AFTER MANY YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT. THE GOVERNMENT HAS BUILT PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME BLOCKS, REDEVELOPED PRIVATE BUILDINGS, IMPROVED SEWERAGE SYSTEM, AND LAUNCHED THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION.

THE OPENING CEREMONY WAS FOLLOWED BY A VARIETY SHOW BY POPULAR SINGERS.

THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT FESTIVAL WILL LAST FOR 38 DAYS UNTIL JANUARY 23 NEXT YEAR.

OTHER ACTIVITIES INCLUDE VARIETY SHOWS, CONCERTS, SPORTS COMPETITIONS, CANTONESE OPERA SHOWS, EXHIBITIONS, PHOTO CONTEST, A FIGHT CRIME CARNIVAL AND A CIVIC EDUCATION CARNIVAL.

/PAMPHLETS ON .....

PAMPHLETS ON DETAILS OF THE FESTIVAL ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT OFFICE AND ITS BRANCH OFFICES.

ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE ON TEL 720 4251.

COSTING MORE THAN $1.3 MILLION, THE FESTIVAL IS SPONSORED BY THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD, URBAN COUNCIL AND LOCAL PERSONALITIES.

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PUBLIC URGED TO GIVE VIEWS ON ELDERLY CARE

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MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE URGED TO SUBMIT THEIR VIEWS ON THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY TO THE WORKING GROUP ON CARE FOR THE ELDERLY BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH.

THE WORKING GROUP, CHAIRED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, WAS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR LAST MONTH TO REVIEW WHAT MORE COULD AND SHOULD BE DONE TO PROVIDE THE SORT OF INTEGRATED CARE FOR THE ELDERLY THAT THEY NEED AND WHICH HONG KONG CAN AFFORD.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (FRIDAY) THAT THE WORKING GROUP HAD DECIDED ON A PROGRAMME OF WORK AT ITS FIRST MEETING LAST MONTH.

"IT WILL ALSO CONDUCT A GENERAL REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE AND ADVISE ON THE FORMULATION OF A STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE POLICIES AND SERVICES."

THE WORKING GROUP WILL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR BY AUGUST NEXT YEAR.

VIEWS ARE WELCOME AND SHOULD BE SENT TO THE SECRETARY, WORKING GROUP ON CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, SEVENTH FLOOR, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES (MAIN WING), LOWER ALBERT ROAD, CENTRAL, HONG KONG ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31 THIS YEAR.

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WATERWORKS CONTRACT AWARDED UNDER ACP

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THE CENTRAL TENDER BOARD HAS APPROVED THE AWARD OF A $519.59 MILLION WATERWORKS CONTRACT UNDER THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME (ACP) TO AOKI CORPORATION - PWT (HK) LIMITED JOINT VENTURE.

THE CONTRACT IS PART OF THE NORTH LANTAU WATER SUPPLY PROJECT TO PROVIDE A FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO THE NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT ON NORTH LANTAU AND THE NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK.

IT COVERS ALL THE CIVIL AND BUILDING WORKS FOR THE SIU HO WAN WATER TREATMENT WORKS AS WELL AS TREATED AND RAW WATER PUMPING STATIONS, INCLUDING THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF WATER TREATMENT PROCESS EQUIPMENT, CONTROL EQUIPMENT AND BUILDING SERVICES.

CONSTRUCTION WILL START LATER THIS MONTH FOR COMPLETION IN MARCH 1996.

/THE AWARD .....

THE AWARD OF THIS WATERWORKS CONTRACT BRINGS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ACP CONTRACTS AWARDED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO 34, WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF ABOUT $31.3 BILLION.

TOGETHER WITH THE FOUR MAJOR CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS VALUED AT $9.7 BILLION AWARDED BY THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY AND THE $5.7 BILLION CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARDED BY THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY LIMITED, THE TOTAL VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS AWARDED FOR THE ACP, ALL WITHIN BUDGET, IS ABOUT $46.7 BILLION.

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FESTIVE LIGHTS BRIGHTEN UP SHA TIN

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SHA TIN DISTRICT HAS BEEN BRIGHTENED UP BY MORE THAN 60,000 LIGHT BULBS TONIGHT (FRIDAY), USHERING IN THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SEASON.

THE NUMBER OF LIGHT BULBS USED THIS YEAR IS THE LARGEST SINCE 1983, DOUBLING THE NUMBER IN THE YEAR BEFORE. JUMBO GRAPHIC DECORATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN PUT UP.

THE LIGHTS ARE LINED UP ALONG SHING MUN RIVER, PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND TWO HOTELS. LIT-UP AREAS COVER CHE KUNG MIU ROAD, FROM THE TRADITIONAL SPOTS OF LEK YUEN BRIDGE, SAN MARTIN BRIDGE, TSUI YUNG BRIDGE AND TAI CHUNG KIU ROAD, ALL THE WAY TO TAI WAI.

A SWITCHING-ON CEREMONY WAS HELD AT SHA TIN CENTRAL PARK, FOLLOWED BY A VARIETY SHOW.

THE DISPLAY WILL BE TURNED ON DAILY FROM 6.30 PM TO MIDNIGHT UNTIL JANUARY 9, AND THEN FROM FEBRUARY 3 TO 24.

FROM CHRISTMAS EVE TO DECEMBER 26, NEW YEAR'S EVE TO NEW YEAR'S DAY, AND FROM FEBRUARY 9 TO 12, THE LIGHTS WILL BE ON THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.

THE LIGHTING IS A PRELUDE TO A SERIES OF ACTIVITIES ON OFFER FOR RESIDENTS. A TWO-HOUR COUNTDOWN VARIETY SHOW, PRODUCED AND BROADCAST LIVE BY TELEVISION BROADCASTS LTD, WILL BE HELD AT 10.15 PM ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AT SHA TIN CENTRAL PARK.

IN ADDITION TO POP SONGS, A FIREWORK DISPLAY AND LASER EFFECTS WILL BE SHOWN.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON FESTIVE LIGHTING (PCOFL) IN SHA TIN, MR LAU KONG-WAH, SAID THE SHOW WAS EXPECTED TO BEEF UP THE FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE AND TO ATTRACT CROWDS AWAY FROM LAN KWAI FONG.

MR LAU SAID SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE ENFORCED THAT DAY. MOTORISTS AND RESIDENTS ARE ADVISED TO FOLLOW THE POLICE'S DIRECTIONS.

TICKETS TO THE SHOW ARE AVAILABLE FREE FROM 10 AM TO NOON AND FROM 2 PM TO 4 PM ON DECEMBER 22 AND 23, ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED BASIS.

/ALSO ON .....

ALSO ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, A DANCING PARTY, SPONSORED BY THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION, WILL BE HELD AT 9 PM ON THE PODIUM OF THE SHA TIN TOWN HALL.

RESIDENTS MAY ALSO JOIN A PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST TO CAPTURE THE BEAUTY OF THE SHA TIN LIGHTS. APPLICATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE SHA TIN DISTRICT OFFICE, FIRST FLOOR, KCR HOUSE. DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS FEBRUARY 28.

ENQUIRIES ON THE CONTEST CAN BE MADE ON TEL 604 8078 EXT 33.

THE FESTIVE PROGRAMME, COSTING ABOUT $2.8 MILLION, IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE SHA TIN DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

IT IS ORGANISED BY PCOFL AND CO-ORGANISED BY THE SHA TIN DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. IT IS ALSO SPONSORED BY THE SHA TIN DISTRICT BOARD, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, CABLE TV, KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION, TVB AND HENDERSON LAND DEVELOPMENT LTD.

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ORDERS-ON-HAND OF MANUFACTURERS IN OCTOBER

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THE VOLUME OF ORDERS-ON-HAND FOR THE 200 LARGEST MANUFACTURERS DECREASED SLIGHTLY BY 2% IN OCTOBER THIS YEAR OVER A YEAR EARLIER, ACCORDING TO A MONTHLY SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE VOLUME OF ORDERS-ON-HAND IS MEASURED IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF MONTHS THAT MANUFACTURERS WILL REQUIRE TO COMPLETE THE ORDERS OUTSTANDING AS AT THE END OF THE REFERENCE MONTH.

COMPARED WITH THE SAME MONTH LAST YEAR, ORDERS POSITION IN THE FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS AND THE TEXTILES INDUSTRIES DECREASED MODERATELY BY 5% AND 4% RESPECTIVELY. A SLIGHT DECREASE OF 2% WAS ALSO RECORDED IN THE WEARING APPAREL INDUSTRY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, ORDERS POSITION INCREASED MODERATELY BY 8% IN THE PLASTIC PRODUCTS INDUSTRY. AN INCREASE OF 1% WAS ALSO RECORDED IN THE ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS INDUSTRY.

COMPARED WITH THE PRECEDING MONTH, ORDERS FOR ALL THE MANUFACTURERS SURVEYED DECREASED SLIGHTLY BY 1%.

ORDERS POSITION DECREASED IN THE FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRY (5%), THE PLASTIC PRODUCTS INDUSTRY (4%) AND THE ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS INDUSTRY (3%).

ON THE OTHER HAND, ORDERS IN THE TEXTILES INDUSTRY REPORTED LITTLE CHANGE. A SLIGHT INCREASE OF 2% WAS RECORDED IN THE WEARING APPAREL INDUSTRY.

THE MONTHLY SURVEY OF ORDERS-ON-HAND COVERS A PANEL OF THE 200 LARGEST MANUFACTURERS CHOSEN BY REFERENCE TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT SIZES IN SEPTEMBER 1986.

/A SPOKESMAN .....

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID BECAUSE THE SURVEY SAMPLE COVERED ONLY LARGE COMPANIES, THE RESULTS MIGHT NOT BE FULLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GENERAL SITUATION OF THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

"NEVERTHELESS, THE RESULTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A USEFUL INDICATION OF THE DIRECTION OF CHANGE FOR MAKING A QUICK ASSESSMENT Of SHORT-TERM DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS SECTOR," HE SAID.

THE SURVEY REPORT FOR OCTOBER 1993, AT $5.50 A COPY, IS NOW ON SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL, AND AT THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS SECTION, 19TH FLOOR, WANCHAI TOWER, 12 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE RESULTS MAY BE MADE OF THE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION STATISTICS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON TELEPHONE 805 6441.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN ORDERS-ON-HAND:

INDUSTRY	AS AT THE END OF OCTOBER 1993	CHANGE WHEN COMPARED WITH SEPTEMBER 1993	OCTOBER 1992
	(MONTHS)	(%)	(%)
ALL MANUFACTURERS SURVEYED	4.34	-1	-2
WEARING APPAREL	4.56	+2	-2
TEXTILES	1.95	*	-4
PLASTIC PRODUCTS	2.65	-4	+8
FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS	4.33	-5	-5
ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS	5.79	-3	+1
OTHERS	3.82	+1	-3

* CHANGES WITHIN +/-0.5%

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DRUG ABUSERS ADVISED AGAINST TETANUS

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THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TODAY (FRIDAY) CALLED ON DRUG ABUSERS TO QUIT INJECTING DRUGS AND OPT FOR METHADONE TREATMENT TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THE THREAT OF TETANUS.

THE APPEAL WAS MADE FOLLOWING THE DEPARTMENT'S INVESTIGATION WHICH REVEALED AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TETANUS CASES AMONG DRUG ABUSERS.

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF PUBLIC HOSPITALS, ACTIVE CASE FINDING BY THE DEPARTMENT SHOWED THAT ALL OF THE 24 CASES OF TETANUS ADMITTED BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1 TO DECEMBER 15 HAD A PAST HISTORY OF ABUSING DRUG THROUGH INJECTION.

/THE CAUSE .....

THE CAUSE IS BELIEVED TO BE DUE TO CONTAMINATION OF HEROIN WITH THE BACTERIA.

FIVE PATIENTS HAVE DIED AND THE OTHERS ARE STILL IN HOSPITAL.

THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HEALTH (SPECIAL HEALTH SERVICES), DR P Y LAM, URGED DRUG ABUSERS TO QUIT THE INJECTION OF DRUGS.

DR LAM SAID: "THEY SHOULD SEEK TREATMENT AT METHADONE CLINICS AS THIS IS A READILY ACCESSIBLE, MEDICALLY SAFE AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE.

"THE PATIENTS ATTENDING OUR METHADONE CLINICS ARE ALWAYS ADVISED TO ADOPT A NORMAL AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE STYLE AND STOP INJECTING DRUG."

DR LAM STRESSED: "HEALTH COUNSELLING ON DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH INTRAVENOUS DRUG USE SUCH AS AIDS, HEPATITIS B AND TETANUS ARE GIVEN TO EVERY DRUG ABUSER ATTENDING THE METHADONE CLINICS.

"TETANUS VACCINE IS ALREADY AVAILABLE TO THE PATIENTS VISITING METHADONE CLINICS," DR LAM SAID.

IN VIEW OF THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TETANUS CASES, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN MADE TO ENCOURAGE OTHER DRUG ABUSERS TO RECEIVE TETANUS VACCINE AT THREE DESIGNATED INJECTION CENTRES DURING OFFICE HOURS.

THEY MAY GO TO THE VIOLET PEEL METHADONE CLINIC IN WAN CHAI, THE ROBERT BLACK METHADONE CLINIC IN SAN PO KONG AND THE LADY TRENCH METHADONE CLINIC IN TSUEN WAN TO RECEIVE THE VACCINE OR CONSULT THEIR OWN DOCTORS.

DR LAM EMPHASISED THAT THIS MESSAGE WAS INTENDED FOR DRUG ABUSERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHOULD NOT BE UNDULY ALARMED.

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RE-INTEGRATION SCHEME FOR EX-PRISONERS

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE A SUPERVISION SCHEME TO HELP CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF PRISONERS RE-INTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY AFTER THEIR RELEASE.

UNDER THE POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION OF PRISONERS BILL GAZETTED TODAY (FRIDAY), AN INDEPENDENT STATUTORY POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION BOARD, CHAIRED BY A HIGH COURT JUDGE, WILL BE SET UP TO ADMINISTER THE SCHEME.

THE BOARD WILL EXAMINE THE CASE OF EACH PRISONER AND DECIDE WHETHER SUPERVISION ORDERS SHOULD BE MADE AND WILL MONITOR THE SCHEME.

SUPERVISION ORDERS IMPOSED WILL NOT BE LONGER THAN THE REMITTED PART OF THE PRISONER'S SENTENCE.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE AIM OF THE SCHEME WAS TO HELP EX-PRISONERS REHABILITATE AND RETURN TO THE COMMUNITY AS LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS.

/"EX-PRISONERS .....

"EX-PRISONERS FALLING UNDER THE SCHEME WILL BE SUPERVISED BY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AND POLICE OFFICERS, WHO WILL VISIT THE RELEASED PRISONERS REGULARLY TO PROVIDE CARE AND GUIDANCE TO THEM," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

AT THE INITIAL STAGE, ONLY THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF PRISONERS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD FOR POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION:

* PRISONERS SERVING SENTENCES OF SIX YEARS OR MORE;

* PRISONERS SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS OR MORE FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF OFFENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, TRIAD-RELATED OFFENCES, SEXUAL OFFENCES AND CRIMES OF VIOLENCE.

THESE PRISONERS ARE INCLUDED BECAUSE, GIVEN THE NATURE OF THEIR OFFENCES AND THE LENGTH OF THEIR IMPRISONMENT, THEY MIGHT NEED MORE ATTENTION AND ADVICE TO HELP THEM RE-ADJUST IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT THE SCHEME WOULD NOT ALTER THE LENGTH OF SENTENCE A PRISONER SHOULD SERVE, BUT WOULD ONLY IMPOSE A PERIOD OF AFTER-CARE SUPERVISION.

"WITH THE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE GIVEN BY THE SUPERVISING OFFICERS, IT IS HOPED THAT THE SCHEME WILL HELP DISCOURAGE EX-PRISONERS FROM COMMITTING OFFENCE AGAIN," HE ADDED.

THE BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON JANUARY 19.

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OPERATION TO STAMP OUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

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A 24-HOUR OPERATION AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION JOINTLY MOUNTED BY THE POLICE, THE LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENTS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY HAS RESULTED IN THE ARRESTS OF 145 PERSONS.

THE OPERATION WAS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ONGOING EFFORT TO FLUSH OUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

THE 141 SUSPECTED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARRESTED BY THE POLICE HAD BEEN REFERRED TO THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT. THOSE FOUND TO BE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WILL BE REPATRIATED.

THE OTHER FOUR PERSONS WERE ARRESTED BY IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATORS.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN REITERATED TODAY (FRIDAY) THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ANY AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

"OUR LATEST OPERATION SHOULD DRIVE HOME THE POINT THAT THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE TO THIS POLICY. ANYONE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE IS ONLY CHEATING HIMSELF," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID APART FROM CONTINUOUS CHECKS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY, THERE WAS NO LET-UP IN ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION EFFORTS AT THE BORDER.

/A HIGH .....

"A HIGH STATE OF VIGILANCE WILL CONTINUE TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE POLICE AND THE SECURITY FORCES BOTH AT THE LAND AND SEA BORDERS," HE SAID.

DURING THE JOINT OPERATION, WHICH BEGAN AT 3 PM ON DECEMBER 15 (WEDNESDAY) AND ENDED AT 3 PM YESTERDAY, THE POLICE HAD STEPPED UP THEIR IDENTIFICATION SPOT CHECKS IN PUBLIC PLACES AND CARRIED OUT CHECKS AT SUSPICIOUS LOCATIONS.

AS A RESULT, A TOTAL OF 19,929 PERSONS, 2,427 VEHICLES AND 337 VESSELS WERE STOPPED FOR IDENTIFICATION CHECKS.

ON THE LABOUR FRONT, INSPECTORS OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT VISITED 2,356 ESTABLISHMENTS TO WEED OUT ANY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO MAY BE WORKING, AND TO CHECK THAT EMPLOYERS FULFIL THEIR LEGAL OBLIGATION OF KEEPING PROPER RECORDS OF THEIR EMPLOYEES.

A TOTAL OF 9,129 EMPLOYEES HAD THEIR PROOF OF IDENTITY CHECKED DURING THE OPERATION.

NINETEEN ESTABLISHMENTS WERE FOUND NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE A RECORD OF EMPLOYEES FOR INSPECTION.

THE SPOKESMAN REMINDED EMPLOYERS THAT THEY COULD BE FINED UP TO $250,000 AND JAILED FOR UP TO THREE YEARS IF THEY WERE FOUND TO BE EMPLOYING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

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DRAINAGE WORKS FOR KOWLOON AND NT

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THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION WORKS IN KOWLOON, SHA TIN, SAI KUNG, TSUEN WAN AND KWAI TSING AREAS.

THE WORKS INCLUDE THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF ALL EXISTING PUBLIC SEWERS, STORMWATER DRAINS, PUMPING STATIONS, FLOOD STORAGE PONDS AND SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITIES.

MINOR SEWERS, DRAINS AND DRAINAGE STRUCTURES AND PLANTS WILL BE BUILT.

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

THE CLOSING DATE FOR TENDERS IS NOON ON JANUARY 7.

TENDER FORMS AND FURTHER PARTICULARS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER, MAINLAND SOUTH DIVISION, DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 15TH FLOOR, KOWLOON GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 405 NATHAN ROAD, YAU MA TEI.

MEANWHILE, THE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO INVITING TENDERS FOR PILING WORKS FOR SEDIMENTATION TANKS OF A PROPOSED PRIMARY SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT ON STONECUTTERS ISLAND.

THE WORKS ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN APRIL NEXT YEAR FOR COMPLETION IN 13 MONTHS.

/TENDER FORMS .....

TENDER FORMS AND FURTHER PARTICULARS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE OF THE CONSULTING ENGINEERS OF THE PROJECT, MONTGOMERY WATSON HONG KONG LIMITED, ROOM 1911, WINDSOR HOUSE, 311 GLOUCESTER ROAD, CAUSEWAY BAY.

THE TENDER OFFER WILL CLOSE AT NOON ON JANUARY 21.

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RESTORATION OF URBAN LANDFILLS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR A CONTRACT TO UNDERTAKE RESTORATION WORKS AT THE CLOSED URBAN LANDFILLS AT GIN DRINKERS BAY, JORDAN VALLEY, MA YAU TONG CENTRAL AND NGAU CHI WAN.

THE CONTRACT WILL BE THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF CONTRACTS TO BE INVITED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO REMOVE THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS, CONTROL ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION EMANATING FROM THE LANDFILLS, AND RENDER THE SITES SAFE FOR FUTURE USE.

THE WORKS INVOLVE EXCAVATION OF TRENCHES TO ALLOW THE VENTILATION OF GAS PRODUCED IN THE LANDFILLS, INSTALLATION OF PIPES TO COLLECT LEACHATE, AND REINSTATEMENT OF EXISTING DRAINS AND ACCESS ROADS AT THE LANDFILLS.

IT ALSO INCLUDES THE INSTALLATION OF A NUMBER OF GAS MONITORING WELLS TO ENSURE THAT GAS DOES NOT DISPERSE FROM THE LANDFILL SITES.

THE WORKS ARE EXPECTED TO START IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR AND TAKE NINE MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

TENDER FORMS AND PARTICULARS OF THE CONTRACT CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE SOLID WASTE DIVISION, CIVIL ENGINEERING OFFICE, CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRST FLOOR, CIVIL ENGINEERING BUILDING, 101 PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD, HO MAN TIN, KOWLOON.

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POST OFFICE TO ISSUE SIX STAMP SETS NEXT YEAR

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SIX SETS OF SPECIAL STAMPS WILL BE ISSUED NEXT YEAR, THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR M PAGLIARI, ANNOUNCED TODAY (FRIDAY).

DETAILS OF THE STAMP ISSUE ARE:

JANUARY 27 - YEAR OF THE DOG

THIS SET OF STAMPS WILL COMPRISE FOUR DENOMINATIONS. A SOUVENIR SHEET AND A STAMP BOOKLET WILL ALSO BE RELEASED.

THE YEAR OF THE DOG ELECTRONIC POSTAGE LABELS (FRAMA LABELS) WILL BE ISSUED ON MARCH 1.

/MAY 4 .....

MAY 4 - 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE

THERE WILL BE SIX STAMPS FEATURING POLICE OFFICERS IN PAST AND PRESENT UNIFORMS. THEY ARE SEPARATELY SHOWN AGAINST BACKGROUNDS OF THE POLICE BUILDINGS OF VARIOUS PERIODS AND ARCHITECTURAL STYLES.

JUNE 8 - TRADITIONAL CHINESE FESTIVALS

THE SET IS MADE UP OF FOUR DENOMINATIONS FEATURING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR, DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL, SEVEN SISTERS FESTIVAL AND MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL.

AUGUST 25 - 1994 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

THERE WILL BE FOUR DENOMINATIONS. THE STAMPS WILL SHOW STYLISED ILLUSTRATIONS OF FOUR MAJOR CATEGORIES OF EVENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES.

OCTOBER 5 - DR JAMES LEGGE THE SCHOLAR

ONE STAMP IN THE FORM OF A MINIATURE SHEET, WILL BE ISSUED, FEATURING DR JAMES LEGGE, WHO MADE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE WESTERN WORLD IN RECENT HISTORY.

NOVEMBER 17 - HONG KONG CORALS

THERE WILL BE FOUR STAMPS DESIGNED IN THE SE-TENANT FORMAT. EACH STAMP WILL ILLUSTRATE A VARIETY OF CORALS COMMON IN HONG KONG WATERS.

MR PAGLIARI SAID FURTHER DETAILS OF EACH STAMP ISSUE WOULD BE ANNOUNCED CLOSER TO THE DATE OF ISSUE.

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TENDERS INVITED FOR TWO WORKS PROJECTS

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THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR TWO PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS SCHEDULED TO START EARLY NEXT YEAR.

THE FIRST ONE INVOLVES THE REPROVISIONING OF KOWLOON BAY CARGO WORKING AREA PHASE II AT A 25,000-SQUARE METRE SITE IN CHA KWO LING, KOWLOON.

A REFUSE COLLECTION POINT, A KIOSK AND BOUNDARY WALLS WILL ALSO BE CONSTRUCTED THERE.

/THE WORKS .....

THE WORKS ARE EXPECTED TO START IN FEBRUARY AND TO BE COMPLETED BY DECEMBER NEXT YEAR.

THE SECOND PROJECT IS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CENTRALISED PRIMARY SCHOOL IN AREA 4, SAI KUNG.

IT WILL INCLUDE A MAIN TEACHING BLOCK OF 30 CLASSROOMS WITH STAFF ROOMS AND SPECIAL ROOMS ON THE UPPER FLOORS AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICES AND CHANGING ROOMS ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

CONSTRUCTION IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN MARCH NEXT YEAR AND FOR COMPLETION BY JULY 1995.

TENDERS FOR THE ABOVE TWO PROJECTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE JANUARY 7 AND 14.

TENDER FORMS AND FURTHER PARTICULARS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 34TH FLOOR, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 66 QUEENSWAY, HONG KONG.

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GOVT LAND FOR SALE BY TENDER

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THE LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SALE OF A PIECE OF GOVERNMENT LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THE SITE IS IN AREA 33, SHA TIN. WITH AN AREA OF 920.1 SQUARE METRES, IT IS INTENDED FOR PETROL FILLING STATION, EXCLUDING ANY LUBRICATING OR SERVICING FACILITIES.

THE STATION SHOULD BE COMPLETED FOR OPERATION WITHIN 24 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF POSSESSION OF THE LOT.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDER IS NOON ON JANUARY 14, NEXT YEAR.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD; AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES KOWLOON, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON.

TENDER DOCUMENTS WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE AT THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES OF SHA TIN, TAI PO, NORTH, YUEN LONG, TUEN MUN, TSUEN WAN, KWAI TSING, SAI KUNG AND ISLANDS.

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/22 .....

INDOOR SHOOTING RANGES FOR POLICE
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THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR TWO CONTRACTS TO BUILD A FOUR-STOREY SHOOTING RANGE AND ITS INTERNAL INSTALLATIONS.

ONE CONTRACT COVERS A FOUR-STOREY STRUCTURE AT NGAU TAU KOK POLICE STATION TO HOUSE EIGHT MINI SHOOTING RANGES AND A 25-METRE INDOOR CONVENTIONAL SHOOTING RANGE, AND CAR PARKING AREAS ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

THE OTHER CONTRACT CALLS FOR THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF TARGET MECHANISM, COMPLETE WITH ALL ASSOCIATED ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL WORKS FOR ALL THE SHOOTING RANGES, SEWAGE PUMPING SYSTEM AND A MONORAIL ELECTRICALLY-OPERATED HOIST.

THE TENDERS MUST BE ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN, PUBLIC WORKS TENDER BOARD, AND PLACED IN THE PUBLIC WORKS TENDER BOX ON 34TH FLOOR, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 66 QUEENSWAY, HONG KONG BEFORE NOON ON JANUARY 14 NEXT YEAR.

FORMS OF TENDER AND FURTHER PARTICULARS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT AT THE SAME LOCATION.

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DRAFT WONG NAI CHUNG ZONING PLAN APPROVED
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THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HAS APPROVED THE AMENDED DRAFT WONG NAI CHUNG OUTLINE ZONING PLAN NO. S/H7/4 AND HAS REFERRED THE DRAFT QUARRY BAY OUTLINE ZONING PLAN NO. S/H21/7 TO THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD FOR FURTHER AMENDMENTS.

THE DRAFT WONG NAI CHUNG PLAN WAS LAST APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL IN 1973.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE BOARD TODAY (FRIDAY) SAID IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHANGES IN LAND USE PROPOSALS, INCLUDING THE RACE COURSE EXTENSION.

"THE APPROVED PLAN WILL SERVE AS A BASIS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN WONG NAI CHUNG," HE SAID.

THE DRAFT QUARRY BAY PLAN, FIRST PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD IN 1976, HAS BEEN AMENDED TO INCORPORATE NEW LAND USE PROPOSALS SINCE THEN.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID IN ANTICIPATION OF FURTHER CHANGES IN LAND USE IN THE AREA, THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD REFERRED THE PLAN TO THE BOARD FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND AMENDMENTS.

THE AMENDED PLAN WOULD BE EXHIBITED FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION IN DUE COURSE, HE SAID.

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/23 .....

WATER WORKS FOR SHA TIN

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THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR LAYING WATER MAINS IN SHA TIN.

ABOUT 1.5 KILOMETRES OF FRESH AND SALT WATER MAINS RANGING FROM 200 TO 400 MILLIMETRES IN DIAMETER ARE PLANNED TO BE LAID FROM LOWER SHING MUN ROAD TO HEUNG FAN LIU STREET TO CONNECT WITH THE EXISTING MAINS.

AFTER THE WORKS ARE COMPLETED, WATER SUPPLY TO THE NEW TOWN WILL BE EXPANDED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE GROWING POPULATION.

WORKS ARE EXPECTED TO START IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR FOR COMPLETION IN ABOUT NINE MONTHS.

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

TENDER OFFER WILL CLOSE AT NOON ON JANUARY 7 NEXT YEAR.

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318 RETURN TO VIETNAM

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A GROUP OF 318 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS TODAY (FRIDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER A VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES.

COMPRISING 121 MEN, 91 WOMEN, 61 BOYS AND 45 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 188TH BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

THE GROUP BROUGHT TO 11,748 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY THIS YEAR, AND TO 38,060 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES SINCE THE PROGRAMME STARTED IN MARCH 1989.

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/24 .....

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	$ MILLION
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	3,910
REVERSAL OF LAF	+90
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	4,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-1,506
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,494

LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 113.8 *-0.1* 17.12.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.09 PCT	14 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.34	3.59
1 MONTH	3.11 PCT	17 MONTHS	2505	3.75	99.90	3.86
3 MONTHS	3.04 PCT	20 MONTHS	2508	4.625	100.96	4.06
6 MONTHS	3.19 PCT	23 MONTHS	2511	4.15	99.89	4.25
12 MONTHS	3.49 PCT	34 MONTHS	3610	4.20	98.76	4.72

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 2,289 MN

CLOSED 17 DECEMBER 1993

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