



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1993

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1993

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MICHAEL SZE REPLIES ON CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE FUTURE CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SITTING TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

ON 7 OCTOBER 1992 THE GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED IN THIS COUNCIL PROPOSALS FOR THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS IN 1994-95. THESE PROPOSALS REPRESENTED THE ADMINISTRATION'S BEST JUDGEMENT OF THE OPTIMUM BALANCE BETWEEN THE CLEARLY EXPRESSED DESIRE OF THE COMMUNITY FOR A GREATER SAY IN RUNNING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS ON THE ONE HAND, AND ON THE OTHER THE WISH TO SEE ARRANGEMENTS BEING PUT IN PLACE WHICH ARE WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW, AND THUS CAPABLE OF TRANSCENDING 1997.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSALS HAVE ATTRACTED EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS. AND I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT THERE IS CONTINUING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE PACKAGE, AS REFLECTED IN THE SERIES OF INDEPENDENT OPINION SURVEYS DURING THIS PERIOD. IN TWO MOTION DEBATES ON 17 OCTOBER AND 11 NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, THIS COUNCIL ALSO GAVE ITS GENERAL SUPPORT TO THE PACKAGE AS A WHOLE, AND TO THE PROPOSED COMPOSITION OF THE ELECTION COMMITTEE IN PARTICULAR.

DESPITE THIS GENERAL SUPPORT, SOME OF OUR CRITICS INCLUDING A FEW OF THE SPEAKERS TODAY, HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD NOW WITHDRAW ITS PROPOSALS. THEIR ARGUMENT IS THAT THE PROPOSALS SOMEHOW VIOLATED THE JOINT DECLARATION, THE BASIC LAW AND THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS IN EARLY 1990.

I DO NOT WISH TO PROLONG THIS DEBATE BY REHEARSING OUR WELL-KNOWN POSITION EXCEPT TO SAY THAT NONE OF THE ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THESE ACCUSATIONS BEAR EXAMINATION.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT, IT REMAINS THE ADMINISTRATION'S FIRM AND SINCERE BELIEF THAT OUR PROPOSALS ARE IN THE OVERALL LONG-TERM INTEREST OF HONG KONG, ARE WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE BASIC LAW, AND ARE CONDUCIVE TO HONG KONG'S CONTINUED PROSPERITY AND STABILITY. WE CANNOT THEREFORE SEE ANY REASON WHY THE PROPOSALS SHOULD NOT BE INTRODUCED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THIS COUNCIL. INDEED, WE WOULD THINK THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC EXPECT THE PROPOSALS TO BE EXAMINED IN A DETAILED MANNER AND DECIDED UPON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

/ACCORDINGLY, SUBJECT

ACCORDINGLY, SUBJECT TO THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, IT IS OUR PLAN TO INTRODUCE INTO THIS COUNCIL, SOME TIME IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR, DRAFT LEGISLATION WHICH SEEK TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS. TO FACILITATE MEMBERS' CONSIDERATION, WE WILL PUBLISH, IN PARALLEL WITH OR JUST BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BILLS, WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED SO FAR. MEMBERS WILL THEN BE ABLE TO SCRUTINIZE THE PROPOSALS IN DETAIL, ALONG WITH THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS WHICH HAVE EMERGED FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS OR SO. THE BILLS, LIKE ANY OTHER BILLS, WILL BE OPEN TO AMENDMENTS BY MEMBERS. ULTIMATELY, THEREFORE, IT WILL BE THIS COUNCIL WHO WILL DECIDE ON THE FINAL SHAPE OF THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1994-95. I HAVE EVERY FAITH THAT MEMBERS WILL TAKE INTO FULL ACCOUNT WISHES OF THE PUBLIC, AND ARRIVE AT A FINAL PACKAGE WHICH CAN COMMAND THEIR CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT.

FOR THESE REASONS, THE THREE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS WILL VOTE AGAINST MR. WONG'S MOTION.

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BILL PROVIDES FOR INTRODUCTION OF PAY TV

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THE TELEVISION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PROVIDES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION IN HONG KONG.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, SAID ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE BILL WAS TO ENSHRINE A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE EXISTING AND NEW TELEVISION SERVICES TO CO-EXIST AND COMPETE IN A HEALTHY AND EQUITABLE MANNER.

IT ALSO SEEKS TO AMEND THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE GENERAL REGULATORY PARAMETERS FOR SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION.

IT ALSO SETS OUT THE TERMS ON WHICH SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION BROADCASTING LICENCES MAY BE GRANTED.

THESE TERMS WILL INCLUDE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS WHICH WILL BIND THE LICENSEE TO DELIVER THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SERVICE IT HAS PROMISED, BUT WHICH, AT THE SAME TIME, WILL GUARD AGAINST TOO MUCH RIGIDITY SO THAT IT CANNOT RESPOND PROMPTLY TO MARKET FEEDBACK.

"THE BILL THEREFORE PROVIDES THE FIRST SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION OPERATOR AN EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO PROVIDE A SUBSCRIPTION BROADCASTING SERVICE FOR THREE YEARS FROM THE DATE OF LICENCE," MR SO SAID.

THE LICENSEE, HOWEVER, IS TO BE REQUIRED TO BROADCAST SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION PROGRAMMES SUPPLIED TO IT BY HUTCHVISION DURING THIS EXCLUSIVITY PERIOD.

THE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS WILL NEED TO BE NEGOTIATED BY THE TWO PARTIES. IF THEY FAIL TO DO THIS, THERE IS PROVISION FOR DETERMINATION BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL, HE SAID.

TO FACILITATE EARLY LAUNCH OF A SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE, MR SO SAID THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT NEED TO ISSUE A "TRANSITIONAL" LICENCE BEFORE THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL.

PROVISION IS INCLUDED IN THE BILL TO GIVE RETROSPECTIVE VALIDATION TO ANY SUCH LICENCE GRANTED AS A "TRANSITIONAL" LICENCE UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE.

ANOTHER OBJECTIVE OF THE BILL IS TO RELAX CERTAIN PROGRAMMING AND ADVERTISING REQUIREMENTS AS WELL AS TO REDUCE THE ROYALTY PAYABLE BY ASIA TELEVISION LTD AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS LTD.

IT ALSO EFFECTS RELAXATION OF SHAREHOLDING RESTRICTIONS CURRENTLY APPLIED TO TELEVISION LICENSEES.

UNDER THE BILL, A LICENSEE MAY BE ALLOWED TO OWN OR CONTROL SHARES IN ANY LOCAL OR OVERSEAS COMPANY DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH BROADCASTING WITHOUT THE EXISTING REQUIREMENT THAT THE LICENSEE SHOULD HAVE A CONTROLLING INTEREST IN THOSE COMPANIES.

"THE ONLY RESTRICTION AS REGARDS INVESTMENT IN SUCH COMPANIES WILL BE ON A LICENSEE'S HOLDING OF OVER 15 PER CENT OF THE SHARE CAPITAL IN THOSE 'MAJOR' BROADCASTING COMPANIES SPECIFIED IN THE BILL," MR SO EXPLAINED.

"THIS IS TO PREVENT ANY ONE COMPANY FROM HAVING TOO MUCH INFLUENCE ON HONG KONG'S BROADCASTING," HE SAID.

ANTI-AVOIDANCE PROVISIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THE BILL TO TARGET CIRCUMVENTION OF THE 15 PER CENT LIMIT BY CONNECTED PERSONS ON SUCH INVESTMENTS, HE ADDED.

THE BILL ALSO PROPOSES THAT, WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY, AN OVERSEAS PARTNER OF A LICENSEE MAY HOLD, ACQUIRE OR EXERCISE OVER 10 PER CENT IN AGGREGATE OF THE TOTAL VOTING CONTROL OF THE LICENSEE. THE 49 PER CENT CEILING REMAINS UNTOUCHED HOWEVER.

ONE FINAL OBJECTIVE OF THE BILL IS TO REMOVE OR MODIFY PROVISIONS IN THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE WHICH ARE UNNECESSARY OR WHICH GIVE THE GOVERNMENT UNLIMITED OR WIDE DISCRETIONARY POWERS IN REGULATING THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

BILL TO TACKLE OVERLOADED GOODS VEHICLES INTRODUCED
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A BILL SEEKING TO PROVIDE MORE STRINGENT MEASURES AGAINST THE OWNERS OF OVERLOADED GOODS VEHICLES WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1992, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID DESPITE VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT ACTION BY THE POLICE, THE NUMBER OF OVERLOADING OFFENCES INVOLVING GOODS VEHICLES HAD INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY IN RECENT YEARS, FROM AN AVERAGE OF 1,820 A MONTH IN 1989 TO 2,770 A MONTH IN THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR.

"OVERLOADING POSES A SERIOUS RISK TO ROAD SAFETY AND SEVERELY DAMAGES ROAD SURFACES THUS SHORTENING THEIR LIFE SPAN.

"SO FAR ONLY DRIVERS HAVE BEEN PROSECUTED FOR OVERLOADING OFFENCES, BUT SOME DRIVERS CLAIM THAT THEY ARE FORCED BY GOODS VEHICLE OWNERS TO COMMIT THE OFFENCE," HE SAID.

THE BILL EMPOWERS THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO MAKE REGULATIONS IMPOSING STRICT LIABILITY ON OWNERS OF OVERLOADED GOODS VEHICLES UNLESS THEY CAN PROVE THAT THE OFFENCE WAS COMMITTED WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT AND THAT THEY HAD TAKEN REASONABLE MEASURES TO PREVENT THE OVERLOADING.

MR LEUNG SAID IT WAS ALSO INTENDED TO INCREASE THE FIXED PENALTY FINE FOR VEHICLE OVERLOADING FROM \$450 TO \$1,000 BY A RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE BILL ALSO EMPOWERS THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO MAKE REGULATIONS REQUIRING THE DISPLAY OF DRIVERS' IDENTITY PLATES IN PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES SUCH AS PUBLIC BUSES, PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES AND TAXIS.

"INITIALLY, IT IS INTENDED THAT ONLY TAXIS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO THIS REQUIREMENT SO AS TO HELP CURB THE RISING TREND OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST TAXI DRIVER MALPRACTICES AND TO ENCOURAGE GREATER SELF-DISCIPLINE IN THE TAXI TRADE," HE SAID.

THE IDENTITY PLATES WOULD BE IN A SPECIFIED FORM, BEARING THE NAME AND PHOTOGRAPH OF THE TAXI DRIVER.

THE BILL INCLUDES TWO AMENDMENTS THAT SEEK TO DELEGATE FROM THE GOVERNOR TO THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT THE AUTHORITY TO SPECIFY THE AGE OF VEHICLES TO BE EXAMINED BEFORE LICENSING AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXAMINATION OF VEHICLE TRAILERS TO ENSURE THEIR ROADWORTHINESS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

HK, MALAYSIA JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT DRUG TRAFFICKING

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED AN AMENDMENT ORDER TO DESIGNATE MALAYSIA UNDER THE DRUG TRAFFICKING (RECOVERY OF PROCEEDS) ORDINANCE.

MOVING A MOTION TO SEEK APPROVAL OF THE ORDER, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY INITIALLED AN AGREEMENT WITH MALAYSIA CONCERNING MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN THE SUPPRESSION OF DRUG TRAFFICKING.

THE AGREEMENT WILL COME INTO EFFECT WHEN IT IS SIGNED BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS AFTER THEY HAVE NOTIFIED EACH OTHER THAT THEY HAVE COMPLIED WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ITS ENTRY INTO FORCE.

HONG KONG HAS ALREADY CONCLUDED 10 AGREEMENTS AND ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS.

"DRUG TRAFFICKING IS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM AND CO-OPERATION AMONG GOVERNMENTS IN CONFISCATING THE PROCEEDS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING ACTS AS A MAJOR DETERRENT," MR ASPREY SAID:

AS A RESULT OF THIS BILATERAL CO-OPERATION, ABOUT \$280 MILLION WORTH OF ASSETS HAVE BEEN SEIZED IN HONG KONG.

MR ASPREY SAID THE ORDINANCE HAD STRENGTHENED THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO COMBAT DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING BY PROVIDING THE MEANS TO TRACE, RESTRAIN AND CONFISCATE THE PROCEEDS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING.

THE DRUG TRAFFICKING (RECOVERY OF PROCEEDS) (DESIGNATED COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 1992 WAS MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 8 LAST YEAR.

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POLICE PLANNING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY TRAGEDY EXPLAINED

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THE POLICE HAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THEIR PLANNING THE PLANNED TELEVISION AND RADIO BROADCASTS FROM LAN KWAI FONG ON THE NEW YEAR'S DAY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG, MR ASPREY SAID THE LIVE RADIO BROADCAST AT LAN KWAI FONG ON THE NIGHT OF THE TRAGEDY WAS ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING CO LTD.

A LICENCE AND A PERMIT WERE GRANTED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINING LICENSING AUTHORITY RESPECTIVELY.

HE SAID THE TELEVISION COMPANIES DID NOT ORGANISE ANY PERFORMANCES OR ACTIVITIES, BUT HAD NEWS TEAMS REPORTING LIVE FROM THE SCENE.

"THIS DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY LICENCE OR PERMIT," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE SECRETARY ALSO SAID A TOTAL OF 146 POLICE OFFICERS WERE DEPLOYED IN THE LAN KWAI FONG AREA AND ITS VICINITY BEFORE THE TRAGEDY HAPPENED.

NO OTHER DISCIPLINED SERVICES PERSONNEL WERE DEPLOYED IN THE AREA BEFORE THE INCIDENT OCCURRED.

HE SAID THE POLICE EXPECTED A CROWD OF UP TO 20,000 PEOPLE AND THEIR PLANNING TOOK THIS INTO ACCOUNT.

THE CROWD WAS LARGER THAN ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AND CHRISTMAS EVE IN 1990 AND 1991. IN 1990, ONLY A FEW THOUSAND PEOPLE WERE THERE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AND CHRISTMAS EVE. IN 1991, THE CROWD TURNOUT ON EACH OCCASION WAS ESTIMATED TO BE ABOUT 20 PER CENT LESS THAN LAST YEAR.

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MACHINERY THERE TO MONITOR HANDLING OF COURT CASES

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MACHINERY IS IN PLACE WITHIN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT TO MONITOR THE WAY IN WHICH COURT CASES ARE HANDLED, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARVIN CHEUNG, MR MACLEOD SAID THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S JOB WOULD BE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH MONITORING MACHINERY WAS ADEQUATE FOR THE PURPOSE AND WAS IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY.

HE SAID IF A MAJOR PROSECUTION RESULTED IN AN ACQUITTAL, THE CASE WOULD BE REVIEWED BY A SENIOR OFFICER IN THE DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THAT IT WAS PROPERLY BROUGHT AND CONDUCTED.

ANY SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN THESE AREAS WOULD BE LIABLE TO ATTRACT ADVERSE COMMENT FROM THE BENCH.

TO DATE, THE AUDIT OF LEGAL COSTS HAS BEEN CONFINED TO REGULARITY AUDIT TO SEE THAT PAYMENTS WERE IN ORDER AND PROPERLY AUTHORISED.

NO VALUE FOR MONEY AUDIT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED OF SUCH PAYMENTS.

REGULARITY AUDIT IS CONCERNED WITH PROVIDING THE LEGCO WITH AN OVERALL ASSURANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING TRANSACTIONS ARE PROPER, AND THAT THEY CONFORM WITH ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING STANDARDS.

VALUE FOR MONEY AUDIT IS AN EXAMINATION INTO THE ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS WITH WHICH A DEPARTMENT HAS DISCHARGED ITS FUNCTIONS.

/MR MACLEOD

MR MACLEOD SAID IF A VALUE FOR MONEY AUDIT ON LEGAL COSTS WERE TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT, HE WOULD EXAMINE THE PROCEDURES TAKEN BY THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT TO SEE WHETHER THEY WERE ADEQUATE AND WHETHER THERE WAS ANY FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THEM.

HE SAID THE AUDIT DEPARTMENT DID NOT HAVE THE EXPERTISE TO ESTABLISH WHETHER LOSSES OF COURT CASES RESULTED FROM ERRORS OR FAILURES OF A LEGAL NATURE.

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CLOSED ROAD PERMIT SYSTEM WORKS WELL

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THE CLOSED ROAD PERMIT SYSTEM AT THE THREE BORDER CROSSINGS ALLOWS THE GOVERNMENT TO SPECIFY WHICH CROSSING POINT SHOULD BE USED BY A PARTICULAR VEHICLE, THUS HELPING TO SPREAD THE TRAFFIC LOAD.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON SAMUEL WONG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG SAID THE PRESENT PERMIT SYSTEM WAS ALREADY QUITE SIMPLE AND THERE WAS NO NEED TO CHANGE IT IN ANTICIPATION OF THE OPENING OF THE GUANGZHOU/SHENZHEN SUPERHIGHWAY.

HE SAID THE OPENING HOURS OF THE BORDER CROSSING POINTS WERE ADJUSTED TO MEET CHANGING TRAFFIC DEMANDS, SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE SIDE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF THE NECESSARY RESOURCES.

HE SAID THE RECENT ARRANGEMENT OF ADVANCING THE OPENING TIME OF ALL BORDER CROSSINGS TO 7 AM AND EXTENDING THE CLOSING TIME AT MAN KAM TO AND LOK MA CHAU TO 10 PM HAD HELPED TO SPREAD TRAFFIC DEMAND AND TO REDUCE CONGESTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE EARLY MORNING.

"TRAFFIC DEMANDS ARE KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW AND WHEN THE SITUATION WARRANTS IT, FOR EXAMPLE BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE GUANGZHOU/SHENZHEN HIGHWAY, WE WILL CONSIDER WHETHER AND HOW TO EXTEND FURTHER THE OPENING HOURS," HE SAID.

ON PLANS TO INCREASE THE THROUGHPUT OF THE THREE VEHICLE BORDER CROSSINGS, MR LEUNG SAID MAN KAM TO AND SHA TAU KOK CROSSING POINTS WERE ALREADY OPERATING AT CAPACITY.

"SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AND AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES, MORE PROCESSING KIOSKS CAN BE BROUGHT INTO USE AT LOK MA CHAU TO INCREASE ITS THROUGHPUT STILL FURTHER," HE SAID.

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IMPROVEMENTS AT CHATER ROAD PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT

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THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS TAKEN STEPS TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND HYGIENE CONDITIONS IN THE CHATER ROAD PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT AND ITS SURROUNDING AREAS ON SUNDAYS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON YEUNG SUM, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THESE MEASURES INCLUDED PLACING A LARGE NUMBER OF 240 LITRE BULK LITTER CONTAINERS THROUGHOUT THE AREA AND TWO LARGE SKIPS FOR THE TEMPORARY STORAGE OF WASTE; DEPLOYING A LARGE FORCE OF CLEANSING AND OTHER STAFF IN THE AREA AND INCREASED ENFORCEMENT AGAINST LITTERING AND OTHER OFFENCES SUCH AS ILLEGAL HAWKING.

MR EASON SAID THERE HAD BEEN NOTICEABLE IMPROVEMENT OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS AND THE AREA WAS BEING KEPT AS CLEAN AS POSSIBLE HAVING REGARD TO ITS HEAVY USE.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID DIFFERENT METHODS WERE BEING USED TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM BY DEPLOYING A BROADCASTING VAN AND ERECTING NOTICE BOARDS WITH ANTI-LITTER MESSAGES IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES AND MOBILISING A NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY GROUPS TO GIVE OUT PUBLICITY MATERIALS.

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NO AIDS VICTIMS TURNED AWAY

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THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORTED INCIDENT OF LICENSED FUNERAL PARLOURS REJECTING REQUESTS FOR FUNERAL SERVICE, OR OF HOSPITALS TURNING AWAY PATIENTS WHO ARE AIDS VICTIMS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM, MRS WONG SAID THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS EVER READY TO GIVE NECESSARY ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO THE LICENSED FUNERAL PARLOURS AND UNDERTAKERS ON THE PROPER WAY AND THE REQUIRED SPECIAL PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH THE BODIES OF THOSE WHO DIED OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

GUIDELINES ON THE PROPER HANDLING OF PATIENTS WITH HIV INFECTION HAVE ALSO BEEN ISSUED TO ALL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT, SHE SAID, ADDING THAT REFUSAL BY MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS TO TREAT SUCH PATIENTS IS A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND COULD LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

MRS WONG SAID PUBLIC EDUCATION WAS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO DISPEL MISCONCEPTION, TO REMOVE PREJUDICE AND TO AWAKEN COMMUNITY CONSCIENCE.

/"ACCORDINGLY, WE

"ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE DESIGNATED AIDS AS THE FOCUS OF A MAJOR CAMPAIGN IN 1993 AND WILL CONTINUE TO STEP UP OUR EFFORTS IN THE YEARS TO COME," SHE SAID.

"AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE CONSIDERING HOW BEST TO PROVIDE FURTHER ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR HIV-INFECTED PATIENTS, HAVING REGARD TO SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED AND TAKING REFERENCE FROM OVERSEAS PRACTICES," SHE ADDED.

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STUDIES ON ANTI-COMPETITIVE TRADE PRACTICES
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOCATED ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR CONDUCTING A SERIES OF STUDIES TO ASCERTAIN WHAT ANTI-COMPETITIVE TRADE PRACTICES EXIST IN MAJOR BUSINESS SECTORS THAT AFFECT THE DAILY LIFE OF RESIDENTS.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, WHEN HE REPLIED TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LI WAH-MING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHAU SAID THE DECISION TO ALLOCATE FUNDS WAS TAKEN AFTER DISCUSSION BY THE GOVERNOR'S BUSINESS COUNCIL.

THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDIES WILL BE REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL FOR A FURTHER DISCUSSION.

"WE HOPE THAT THE FINDINGS OF THESE STUDIES WOULD HELP US CONSIDER THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO PROMOTE COMPETITION IN THE MAJOR BUSINESS SECTORS CONCERNED," HE SAID.

IN THIS PROCESS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ARE ADEQUATELY CONSULTED ON ANY LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS, MR CHAU SAID.

IN CONDUCTING THE SECTOR-SPECIFIC STUDIES, THE CONSUMER COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD FOR ANY VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE PUBLIC, THE CONCERNED BUSINESS SECTOR AND OTHER RELEVANT SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, HE ADDED.

ON THE GOVERNMENT'S PART, MR CHAU SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CO-OPERATE WITH THE CONSUMER COUNCIL.

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EXCHANGE FUND NOT FOR NEW AIRPORT PROJECTS
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS TO USE THE EXCHANGE FUND TO BUILD THE CHEK LAP KOK AIRPORT OR ITS RELATED PROJECTS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON PHILIP WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR MACLEOD SAID THE EXCHANGE FUND WAS PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF STABILISING THE EXCHANGE RATE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR.

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1,680 ADMITTED TO HOSPITALS ON SUICIDE BIDS
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A TOTAL OF 1,681 PERSONS WERE ADMITTED INTO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC HOSPITALS AS A RESULT OF ATTEMPTED SUICIDE OR SELF-INFLICTED INJURIES IN 1991, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS COMPARED WITH 1,829 IN 1990 AND 1,440 IN 1989, SHE ADDED.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG; MRS WONG SAID OF THOSE ADMITTED, 33 DIED IN 1991, 39 IN 1990 AND 46 IN 1989.

SHE ALSO SAID THE NUMBERS OF DEATHS ARISING FROM ATTEMPTED SUICIDE OR SELF-INFLICTED INJURIES WERE 748 IN 1991, 679 IN 1990 AND 604 IN 1989.

STATISTICS AVAILABLE FROM EIGHT PUBLIC HOSPITALS SHOW THAT THERE WERE FAR MORE WOMEN ATTEMPTING SUICIDE THAN MEN AND THAT MOST OF THOSE WHO ATTEMPTED SUICIDE WERE IN THE 15-24 AND 25-64 AGE GROUPS.

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NO PLAN TO LOWER MARK SIX BETTING DUTY
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THE GOVERNMENT DO NOT CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF BETTING DUTY ON THE PROCEEDS OF THE MARK SIX LOTTERY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K Y YEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, MR YEUNG SAID THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAD APPROVED THE INJECTION OF \$2.3 BILLION INTO THE LOTTERIES FUND.

THUS, THE FUND SHOULD BE ABLE TO MEET ITS REQUIREMENTS UP TO 1996/97, HE ADDED.

THESE ADDITIONAL FUNDS WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE KEY TARGETS FOR 1996/97 SET OUT IN THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE AND THE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION, MR YEUNG SAID.

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AIR-CONDITIONED BUS FARES EXPLAINED

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FARE SCALES FOR AIR-CONDITIONED BUS SERVICES OPERATED BY THE FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES ARE APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL AT LEVELS AIMED TO ACHIEVE SELF-FINANCING, WITHOUT THE NEED FOR CROSS SUBSIDISATION FROM THE ORDINARY BUS SERVICES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MRMICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO THE HON ALBERT CHAN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WITHIN THE APPROVED FARE SCALE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT DETERMINES THE ACTUAL FARE POINT CHARGED FOR A PARTICULAR ROUTE," HE SAID.

IN THE DETERMINATION PROCESS, THE COMMISSIONER WOULD TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE TYPE OF AIR-CONDITIONED BUSES USED, PASSENGER EXPECTATIONS AND AFFORDABILITY, AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE AIR-CONDITIONED PUBLIC TRANSPORT MODES, FORECAST PATRONAGE AND REVENUE, FARES CHARGED ON ORDINARY BUS SERVICE IN THE SAME ROUTE OR COMPARABLE ROUTES AND OTHER RELEVANT TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS.

"ON THE AVERAGE, THE ACTUAL FARE CHARGED IS 40 PER CENT BELOW THE PERMITTED CEILING," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID FARES FOR AIR-CONDITIONED BUS SERVICES WERE REVIEWED REGULARLY TO ENSURE THEIR REASONABLENESS, HAVING FULL REGARD TO PASSENGER FEEDBACK INCLUDING COMPLAINTS AGAINST HIGH FARES ON CERTAIN ROUTES.

"THE MOST RECENT REVIEW COMPLETED IN MID-1992 CONFIRMS THAT THE PRACTICE OF FLEXIBLE PRICING WITHIN THE APPROVED FARE SCALES SHOULD BE MAINTAINED," HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE CONCLUSIONS WERE SUPPORTED BY THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

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PROVISION OF LOCKABLE DESKS IN SCHOOLS NOT PRACTICAL

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THE PROVISION OF LOCKABLE DESKS AND BOOKCASES IN SCHOOLS IS NOT CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE SINCE PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS ARE REQUIRED TO REFER TO THEIR TEXTBOOKS WHEN WORKING AT HOME.

IN ADDITION, THERE ARE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN SETTING ASIDE SUCH PRIVATE STORAGE SPACE IN SCHOOLS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AS THE MAJORITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSES ARE RUN IN TWO SESSIONS AND THE SCHOOLS ARE MADE AVAILABLE FOR OTHER USES OUTSIDE NORMAL SCHOOLING HOURS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO THE HON ERIC LI KA-CHEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/MR CHAN

MR CHAN NOTED THAT TEXTBOOK PUBLISHERS WERE AWARE OF THE NEED TO AVOID PUBLICATION OF THICK TEXTBOOKS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

"TEXTBOOKS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE NORMALLY PUBLISHED IN TWO VOLUMES, ONE FOR THE FIRST TERM AND ANOTHER FOR THE SECOND TERM, AT EACH LEVEL," HE SAID.

MR CHAN ALSO NOTED THAT SO FAR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY COMPLAINT FROM PARENTS CONCERNING EXCESSIVELY HEAVY SCHOOLBAGS CARRIED BY THEIR CHILDREN.

IF SUCH COMPLAINTS WERE RECEIVED, THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER CONCERNED WOULD VISIT THE SCHOOL IN QUESTION AND INVESTIGATE THE COMPLAINT.

AND IF THERE ARE VALID GROUNDS TO SUPPORT THE COMPLAINTS, THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL WOULD BE ADVISED TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S GUIDELINES ON REDUCING THE WEIGHT OF SCHOOLBAGS.

"GIVEN THE VERY CLEAR GUIDELINES ON THE SUBJECT AND IN THE ABSENCE OF COMPLAINTS, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS IT UNNECESSARY TO CONDUCT FURTHER REGULAR SURVEYS AT THIS STAGE," MR CHAN SAID.

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DIRECTIONAL SIGNS AT AIRPORT WILL BE INSTALLED
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ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSTALLING DIRECTIONAL SIGNS GUIDING DEPARTING PASSENGERS AT THE AIRPORT HAD BEEN FINALISED BY THE CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM, MRS CHAN SAID SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN OR AROUND APRIL AFTER THE COMPLETION OF NECESSARY RENOVATION WORKS.

THESE INCLUDE:

- *) THE ERECTION OF SIGNBOARDS ALONG THE MAIN APPROACH ROAD TO THE DEPARTURE HALL WHICH WILL INDICATE WHICH CHECK-IN AREAS ARE DESIGNATED TO WHICH AIRLINE; AND
- *) THE INSTALLATION OF SIGNS ALONG THE FRONTAGE OF THE DEPARTURE HALL INDICATING THE LOCATIONS OF THE 12 CHECK-IN AREAS.

THESE ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE UNDER THE ADVICE FROM THE TRANSPORT AND ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1993

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EFFORTS TO HELP ACCUSED UNDERSTAND CHARGES

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING THE INTRODUCTION OF BILINGUAL CHARGE SHEETS FOR ACCUSED PERSONS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SIMON IP SIK-ON TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR ASPREY SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT AN ACCUSED PERSON SHOULD UNDERSTAND FULLY THE MATTER WITH WHICH HE WAS CHARGED.

"THERE ARE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES TO BE OVERCOME, IN PARTICULAR THE PREPARATION OF PRECISE AND ACCURATE TRANSLATION OF CHARGES IN THE ABSENCE OF A CHINESE VERSION OF ALL THE LAWS OF HONG KONG.

"HOWEVER, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS ARE PROGRESSING WITH THE BILINGUAL LEGISLATION PROGRAMME AND WILL CONTINUE TO ACCORD PRIORITY TO THIS IMPORTANT TASK," HE SAID.

AT PRESENT, CHARGE SHEETS ARE PREPARED BY THE POLICE IN ENGLISH.

FOR AN ACCUSED PERSON WHO DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ENGLISH, AN INTERPRETER IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO EXPLAIN THE CHARGE TO HIM IN A LANGUAGE WHICH HE UNDERSTANDS.

THE POLICE HAVE A DUTY TO ENSURE THAT THE ACCUSED UNDERSTANDS THE CHARGE, MR ASPREY SAID.

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BALANCE SHEET OF EXCHANGE FUND PUBLISHED ANNUALLY

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THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERED NOT NECESSARY FOR THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS OF THE EXCHANGE FUND TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR NENDICK SAID THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS OF THE EXCHANGE FUND WERE AUDITED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT AND A BALANCE SHEET OF THE EXCHANGE FUND WAS PUBLISHED ANNUALLY.

THE BALANCE SHEET OF THE EXCHANGE FUND SHOWED THE OVERALL SIZE OF THE FUND, THE AMOUNT OF FOREIGN CURRENCY RESERVES HELD, THE LIABILITIES AND THE ACCUMULATED EARNINGS OF THE FUND.

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ACTION UNDER WAY TO EXEMPT LOW-TRANSMITTING
POWER DEVICES FROM LICENSING
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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE SENSIBLE TO EXEMPT LOW-TRANSMITTING POWER DEVICES, SUCH AS CORDLESS MICROPHONES, FROM THE CURRENT LICENSING REQUIREMENT.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIMOTHY HA WING-HO, MRS CHAN SAID ACTION TO ACHIEVE THE EXEMPTION WAS ALREADY IN HAND.

SHE SAID TO EFFECT THIS CHANGE REQUIRED AN EXEMPTION FROM LICENSING ORDER TO BE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE.

"WE ARE CURRENTLY PREPARING SUCH AN ORDER COVERING NOT ONLY CORDLESS MICROPHONES, WHICH MEET REQUIRED SPECIFICATIONS, BUT ALSO OTHER LOW POWER DEVICES, SUCH AS CERTAIN TYPES OF WIRELESS OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID THE ADMINISTRATION INTENDED TO SUBMIT THIS ORDER TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR.

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COLLABORATION IN CONTRACT RESEARCH DEPENDS
ON ACCEPTABILITY OF COMPANIES
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THE SCOPE FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY R AND D CORPORATION LTD AND LOCAL INDUSTRY IN THE CASE OF CONTRACT RESEARCH WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE COMPANIES COMMISSIONING THE PROJECTS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

LIKewise, THE POSSIBILITY OF JOINT EXPLOITATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS WOULD DEPEND ON SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS BEING MADE WITH REGARD TO THE RELEVANT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, HE ADDED.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHAN SAID THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY R AND D CORPORATION LTD WAS REGISTERED AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE ON DECEMBER 8 LAST YEAR.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE INITIAL ORGANISATION AND POSSIBLE FUNCTIONS OF THE CORPORATION, BUT AS THESE HAVE YET TO BE DEVELOPED INTO SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONAL PLANS, IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER, AND HOW, THE GOVERNMENT'S ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE REQUIRED.

"WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CORPORATION INTENDS TO CO-OPERATE WITH OTHER EDUCATIONAL, RESEARCH, INDUSTRIAL, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, BOTH LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS," MR CHAN SAID.

"THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENCOURAGE THE CORPORATION TO LIAISE CLOSELY WITH SIMILAR UNDERTAKINGS SET UP BY THE OTHER LOCAL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS."

THE RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL, WHICH APPROVES AWARDS FROM FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN BY THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, ALSO ENCOURAGES GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AND INDUSTRY, HE ADDED.

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COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS

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SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES ARE LIABLE AT COMMON LAW FOR ANY PERSONAL INJURIES SUSTAINED BY TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND OTHER PERSONS PARTICIPATING IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THEIR SCHOOLS IF THEY WERE FOUND TO HAVE BEEN NEGLIGENT.

AND IN THE CASE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN SAID AS EMPLOYERS, BOTH THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE LIABLE TO PAY COMPENSATION UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE TO EMPLOYEES WHO SUFFER PERSONAL INJURIES BY ACCIDENT IN THE COURSE OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT.

THE OWNERS OR OCCUPIERS OF PREMISES IN WHICH THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE CONDUCTED ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO SEE THAT ALL USERS WILL BE REASONABLY SAFE IN USING THE PREMISES UNDER THE OCCUPIERS LIABILITY ORDINANCE.

"THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS ISSUED A BOOKLET TO ALL SCHOOLS TO HELP THEM ORGANISE SPORTING AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS SAFELY," MR CHAN SAID.

"SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS ARE FURTHER REMINDED THROUGH REGULAR SCHOOL CIRCULARS OF THE NEED TO OBSERVE THESE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS."

AS REGARDS COMPENSATION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS GRANTED \$208,000 TO ONE STUDENT IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN CONNECTION WITH AN ACCIDENT WHICH AROSE DURING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. THERE WAS NO CASE INVOLVING STAFF.

IN THE CASE OF AIDED SCHOOLS, THERE WERE FOUR CASES INVOLVING COMPENSATION IN 1989/90, ONE IN 1990/91 AND THREE IN 1991/92. THE AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION PAID RANGED FROM \$300 TO \$28,081 IN 1989/90, \$1,550 IN 1990/91, AND FROM \$68 TO \$39,000 IN 1991/92.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ALSO RECORDED AN ADDITIONAL 223 INCIDENTS IN AIDED SCHOOLS WHERE CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION COULD HAVE BEEN MADE - 37 IN 1988/89, 67 IN 1989/90, 55 IN 1990/91 AND 64 IN 1991/92.

"NO COMPENSATION WAS PAID FOR THESE POTENTIAL CLAIMS, EITHER BECAUSE NO CLAIM WAS ACTUALLY LODGED OR, WHERE CLAIMS WERE LODGED, THEY WERE FOUND TO BE UNJUSTIFIED," MR CHAN SAID.

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INCREASING LOAN RATIO HAS NO IMPACT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH
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THE INCREASING HONG KONG DOLLAR LOAN TO DEPOSIT RATIO IS NOT LIKELY TO CREATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE TERRITORY OR ON MAJOR LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR NENDICK SAID THE INCREASE IN THE RATIO WAS A REFLECTION OF THE DIVERSIFICATION BY HONG KONG BANKING SECTOR OF ITS SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL LOAN BUSINESS.

"THIS WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY AN INFLOW OF FUNDS INTO HONG KONG DOLLARS, PARTICULARLY FROM CHINA," HE SAID.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO STATISTICS TO CONFIRM THIS, IT IS BELIEVED THAT A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE INCREASE IN LOAN BUSINESS WAS FOR FINANCING INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF HONG KONG BUSINESSES IN CHINA.

"THIS IS A PHENOMENON REFLECTING THE CLOSE ECONOMIC LINKS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA.

"HONG KONG DOLLAR BANKING BUSINESS CAN NO LONGER BE SEEN IN GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION," MR NENDICK SAID.

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PROCEDURE FOR ROAD REINSTATEMENT TO BE CHANGED
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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH UTILITY COMPANIES WITH A VIEW TO HANDING OVER MORE RESPONSIBILITY TO THEM IN FUTURE FOR PERMANENT REINSTATEMENT IN BOTH FOOTWAYS AND CARRIAGEWAYS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR S K KWEI, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT PRESENT, PERMANENT ROAD REINSTATEMENT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT TO REPLACE TEMPORARY REINSTATEMENT AFTER COMPLETION OF UTILITY OPENINGS.

MR KWEI SAID THIS HAD OFTEN GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THE ROAD WAS RE-OPENED AGAIN.

"CURRENTLY SOME UTILITY COMPANIES AND GOVERNMENT UTILITY DEPARTMENTS HAVE ALREADY AGREED TO CARRY OUT PERMANENT REINSTATEMENT IN FOOTWAYS. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 40 PER CENT OF ALL UTILITY OPENINGS," HE SAID.

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FATAL WORK ACCIDENTS STATISTICS

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THERE WERE THREE FATAL ACCIDENTS INVOLVING WORKERS FALLING THROUGH LIFT SHAFTS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES LAST YEAR, COMPARED WITH FIVE SUCH ACCIDENTS EACH IN 1990 AND 1991.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID THERE WAS ONE FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING BULLDOZERS AND EXCAVATORS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES IN EACH OF THE PAST THREE YEARS.

IN ADDITION, THERE WAS ONE FATAL ACCIDENT CAUSED BY ACCIDENTAL CUTTING OF CABLES AND GAS PIPES DURING ROAD WORKS IN 1990. THE FOLLOWING TWO YEARS SAW NO SUCH ACCIDENT.

IN 1990 AND 1991, THERE WAS ONE ACCIDENT EACH INVOLVING THE COLLAPSE OF TOWER CRANES.

THE ACCIDENT IN 1990 RESULTED IN ONE WORKER BEING KILLED AND THREE OTHERS BEING INJURED. NO INJURY WAS REPORTED IN THE 1991 INCIDENT, MR CHAN ADDED.

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CHANGES TO APPROVED ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE TABLED

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A SUMMARY OF ALL CHANGES TO THE APPROVED ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1992/93 WAS TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

EXPLAINING THE CHANGES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K Y YEUNG, SAID SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION OF \$181.9 MILLION WAS APPROVED.

HE SAID IT WAS FULLY OFFSET, EITHER BY SAVINGS UNDER THE SAME OR OTHER HEADS OF EXPENDITURE, OR BY THE DELETION OF FUNDS UNDER THE ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS SUBHEADS.

DURING THE PERIOD, NON-RECURRENT COMMITMENTS WERE INCREASED BY \$4.8 MILLION, NEW NON-RECURRENT COMMITMENTS OF \$69.1 MILLION WERE APPROVED, AND APPROVED NON-RECURRENT COMMITMENTS OF \$67.6 MILLION WERE REVOTED.

A NET DECREASE OF 1,574 POSTS WAS APPROVED.

"THIS WAS MAINLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE DELETION OF POSTS AS A RESULT OF CIVIL SERVANTS HAVING OPTED FOR SERVICE WITH THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID ITEMS IN THE SUMMARY HAD BEEN APPROVED EITHER BY FINANCE COMMITTEE OR UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY.

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MOTION TO WITHDRAW GOVERNOR'S POLITICAL PROPOSALS DEFEATED

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A MOTION MOVED BY DR THE HON PHILIP WONG NOT TO INTRODUCE THE GOVERNOR'S POLITICAL PROPOSALS WAS DEFEATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A TOTAL OF 14 MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE DEBATE WHICH LASTED MORE THAN ONE HOUR. THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THERE WAS ALSO AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE RAISED BY THE HON ELSIE TU ON THE AVAILABILITY OF RENTAL HOUSING. TWELVE MEMBERS SPOKE. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

A TOTAL OF 10 BILLS WERE PASSED BY THE COUNCIL.

OF THEM, FOUR WERE PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

THEY WERE PENSIONS MODIFICATION BILL 1992, PENSIONS ORDINANCE AND REGULATIONS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1992, REGISTRAR GENERAL (ESTABLISHMENT) (TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS AND REPEAL) BILL AND COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992.

SIX OTHER BILLS WERE PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENT.

THEY WERE DISTRICT COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, MERCHANT SHIPPING (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, THEFT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND TRUSTEE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992.

FOUR MOTIONS UNDER THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE MOVED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND ONE MOTION UNDER THE DRUG TRAFFICKING (RECOVERY OF PROCEEDS) ORDINANCE BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY WERE PASSED.

IN ADDITION, TWO BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

THEY WERE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO.4) BILL 1992 AND TELEVISION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1993

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POLITICAL ARGUMENTS COULD BE RESOLVED: GOVERNOR

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, IS CONFIDENT THAT IN HONG KONG AND WITH GOOD WILL IN LONDON AND PEKING, THE SERIOUS AND IMPORTANT ARGUMENTS ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT COULD BE RESOLVED IN THE INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING WAN CHAI DISTRICT, HE SAID THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD IN DUE COURSE HAVE TO CONSIDER LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS PUT TO IT BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

"I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THAT WILL LEAD TO AN OUTCOME WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO EVERYONE," HE SAID.

"THIS IS A POINT I MADE IN MY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SPEECH LAST OCTOBER, NOT JUST A POINT I MADE YESTERDAY.

"IT WOULD BE VERY CURIOUS TO START ON THIS ARGUMENT HOPING THAT ONE WOULD FINISH UP WITH AN OUTCOME WHICH IS UNACCEPTABLE TO HONG KONG, OR TO THE PRESENT OR FUTURE SOVEREIGN POWERS," HE ADDED.

"I THINK THAT EVERYONE OUTSIDE RECOGNISES THAT THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION SECURING HONG KONG'S WAY OF LIFE FOR 50 YEARS AFTER 1997 IS AN ISSUE FOR BRITAIN, CHINA AND HONG KONG.

"AND I DON'T THINK THAT PEOPLE WANT TO STRAY OVER THAT BOUNDARY LINE," HE SAID.

MR PATTEN REITERATED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO SEE THE SERIOUS ARGUMENT, THE SERIOUS DISCUSSION ABOUT HONG KONG'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT CAUGHT UP IN ARGUMENTS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

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GOVERNOR VISITS WAN CHAI

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, VISITED WAN CHAI TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO LOOK AT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA.

ACCOMPANIED BY REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MR PAUL WONG AND THE DISTRICT OFFICER, MR PETER MANN, THE GOVERNOR FIRST VISITED ST JAMES' SETTLEMENT IN STONE NULLAH LANE.

AFTER A BRIEFING ON THE SETTLEMENT'S SERVICES, HE WENT TO A DAY-CARE ELDERLY CENTRE AND A SHELTERED WORKSHOP FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED.

THE GOVERNOR THEN TOURED THE WAN CHAI TEMPORARY MARKET AND WAS INFORMED THAT THE WET GOODS HAWKERS, WHO USED TO TRADE ALONG WAN CHAI ROAD, CAUSING ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, HAD BEEN MOVED TO THE MARKET IN APRIL 1991.

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FROM THE TOP OF CENTRAL PLAZA IN HARBOUR ROAD, WHICH COMMANDS A PANORAMIC VIEW OF WAN CHAI, MR PATTEN WAS BRIEFED ON HOW THE DISTRICT HAD EVOLVED FROM AN OLD RESIDENTIAL AREA INTO ONE OF ASIA'S FASTEST GROWING COMMERCIAL CENTRES.

DURING THE TOUR, MR PATTEN WAS BRIEFED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MRS PEGGY LAM, AND THE DISTRICT OFFICER ON THE PROGRESS OF THE VARIOUS PRIVATE AND PUBLIC TREE-PLANTING PROJECTS.

AFTER PLANTING THE 600TH TREE IN THE DISTRICT AT THE JUNCTION OF JOHNSTON ROAD AND LUARD ROAD, THE GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED BY WHAT THE DISTRICT BOARD WAS DOING TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT AND HE HOPED MORE OF THAT COULD BE DONE IN THE TERRITORY.

BEFORE ENDING HIS TOUR, MR PATTEN ATTENDED A TEA RECEPTION WHERE HE MET DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND OTHER LOCAL DIGNITARIES.

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LAN KWAI FONG INQUIRY

OUTLINE OF WORK DONE ON WEDNESDAY
(JANUARY 13) UP TO 4.30 PM

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1. HEARING AT COURT NO. 10 IN THE SUPREME COURT BY MR JUSTICE BOKHARY.

(NOTE: THREE WITNESSES WERE EXAMINED IN "OPEN" SESSION AND ONE IN "CLOSED" SESSION DURING THE DAY. IN ADDITION, A REPRESENTATION BY THE LAN KWAI FONG ASSOCIATION WILL BE HEARD IN "OPEN" SESSION STARTING AT 5 PM.)

2. FURTHER FACT-FINDING WORK FOR THE INTERIM REPORT.

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AIR QUALITY REPORT FOR DECEMBER

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RELEASED AIR QUALITY INFORMATION FOR DECEMBER.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE ANNOUNCEMENT SERVED TO MAKE THE PUBLIC MORE AWARE OF THE AIR QUALITY LEVELS TO WHICH THEY MIGHT BE EXPOSED.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT NORMALLY GIVES MONITORING RESULTS OBTAINED AT ITS MONG KOK, CENTRAL/WESTERN AND KWAI CHUNG MONITORING STATIONS.

THESE LOCATIONS ARE TYPICAL OF THREE OF THE IMPORTANT LAND USE TYPES FOUND IN THE TERRITORY -

- * LOCATIONS CLOSE TO ROAD TRAFFIC IN BUILT-UP URBAN DISTRICTS,
- * COMBINED COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS, AND
- * DISTRICTS CLOSE TO INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

THE REPORTED AIR POLLUTANTS INCLUDE SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SO₂), NITROGEN DIOXIDE (NO₂), RESPIRABLE SUSPENDED PARTICULATES (RSP) AND TOTAL SUSPENDED PARTICULATES (TSP).

THE GASEOUS POLLUTANTS ARE MONITORED CONTINUOUSLY WHILE PARTICLE SAMPLES ARE COLLECTED FOR 24 HOURS; ONCE EVERY SIX DAYS.

THE CONCENTRATIONS OF THE GASEOUS SPECIES - SO₂ AND NO₂ - SHOWED SIGNIFICANT INCREASE ON DECEMBER 7 AND BETWEEN 26 AND 29.

ON THESE DAYS THE LOW WINDSPEED CREATED STAGNANT CONDITIONS. THIS INHIBITED THE DISPERSION OF EMITTED SO₂ AND ALLOWED INCREASED FORMATION OF NO₂.

THE CONCENTRATION OF NO₂ AT MONG KOK ON DECEMBER 7 ROSE TO JUST ABOVE THE 24-HOUR AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVE VALUE OF 150 UG PER CUBIC METER.

ONLY ONE EXCEEDANCE A YEAR IS ALLOWED BY THE AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVES. THIS WAS THE THIRD REPORTED FOR THE SITE.

LEVELS OF RESPIRABLE SUSPENDED PARTICULATES MEASURED DURING THE MONTH REMAIN BELOW THE AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVE VALUE.

AT MONG KOK, THE LEVELS OF TOTAL SUSPENDED PARTICULATES EXCEEDED THE APPROPRIATE 24-HOUR AIR QUALITY LIMIT OF 260 UG PER CUBIC METER ON DECEMBER 23.

ONLY ONE EXCEEDANCE A YEAR IS ALLOWED BY THE AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVES, THIS WAS THE FOURTH MEASURED.

THE FOUR POLLUTANTS DISCUSSED HAVE DIFFERENT ORIGINS. SO₂ MOSTLY ORIGINATES FROM THE COMBUSTION OF SULPHUR CONTAINING FOSSIL FUELS.

NO₂ IS FORMED EITHER DIRECTLY DURING COMBUSTION OR, BY THE ATMOSPHERIC OXIDATION OF NITRIC OXIDE (NO) WHICH IS ALSO PRODUCED DURING COMBUSTION. VEHICLE EXHAUST IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF NO AND NO₂.

VEHICLE EXHAUST IS ALSO A MAJOR SOURCE OF AIRBORNE PARTICLES; OTHER SOURCES INCLUDE INDUSTRY, FURNACES AND BOILERS, CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, THE SEA AND SOIL DUST.

THE DEPARTMENT AT PRESENT MONITORS AIR QUALITY CONTINUOUSLY AT 11 STATIONS, INCLUDING THE THREE MENTIONED ABOVE. SHORT-TERM MEASUREMENT CAMPAIGNS ARE ALSO UNDERTAKEN AS AND WHERE THE NEED ARISES.

NEEDY FAMILIES GIVEN RED PACKETS

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ABOUT 400 SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND LIVING ON HONG KONG ISLAND TODAY (WEDNESDAY) GOT A \$200 RED PACKET FROM THE TANG SHIU-KIN AND HO TIM CHARITABLE FUND.

A FURTHER 3,150 SUCH FAMILIES LIVING IN THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HARBOUR WILL RECEIVE THEIR RED PACKETS IN THE COMING FEW DAYS.

MORE THAN 650 ELDERLY, COMPRISING PATIENTS OF THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS AND RESIDENTS OF HO'S CLANSMAN ASSOCIATION HOSTEL FOR THE ELDERLY, WILL RECEIVE A \$100 RED PACKET BEFORE THE CHINESE NEW YEAR.

OFFICIATING AT A DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY AT PO LEUNG KUK WERE A FOUNDER OF THE FUND, DR HO TIM; DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR IAN STRACHAN; ACTRESS, MISS MICHELLE KHENG; SONG COMPOSER, MR MICHAEL LAI; AND MEMBERS OF THE FUND'S COMMITTEE.

THE FUND, WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, PROVIDES IMMEDIATE FINANCIAL HELP TO INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES IN COPING WITH HARDSHIP BROUGHT ABOUT BY UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES.

GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE TO GIVE A CHILD EDUCATION, TO BUY SPECIAL EQUIPMENT OR TO MEET HIGH MEDICAL COSTS OR OTHER NEEDS.

PAYMENTS ARE ALSO MADE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS ARISING FROM PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS. IN PARTICULAR, THE FUND HELPS VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS.

APPLICATIONS FOR HELP FROM THE FUND CAN BE MADE TO THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS, PO LEUNG KUK OR THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,500
REVERSAL OF LAF	NIL
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	1,500
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	NIL
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,500
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 114.7	*+0.3* 13.1.1993

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1993

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.22 PCT	13 MONTHS	2402	5.50	100.92	4.68
1 MONTH	3.38 PCT	16 MONTHS	2405	5.50	100.85	4.89
3 MONTHS	3.73 PCT	19 MONTHS	2408	4.375	98.92	5.15
6 MONTHS	3.98 PCT	22 MONTHS	2411	4.625	98.82	5.37
12 MONTHS	4.57 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 12,026 MN

CLOSED 13 JANUARY 1993

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