



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GOVERNOR EXPECTS BETTER VOTER TURNOUT THAN LAST ELECTIONS

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, THIS (SUNDAY) AFTERNOON SAID HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE VOTER TURNOUT OF 412 495 AT 5.30 PM TODAY WHICH WAS 150 000 MORE OR 60 PER CENT HIGHER THAN THE CORRESPONDING FIGURE IN THE LAST DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS AND ALMOST AS MANY PEOPLE WHO HAD TURNED OUT TO VOTE AS IN THE ENTIRE 1991 DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER HIS VISIT TO THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS PRESS CENTRE AT CITY HALL, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "IN A SOPHISTICATED COMMUNITY LIKE HONG KONG, IT SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISING TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE TURNING OUT TO PUT THEIR OWN STAMP ON THE WAY THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD CONDUCTS ITS AFFAIRS. AND THAT'S INDEED WHAT WE'RE SEEING."

MR PATTEN SAID HE HOPED TO SEE A FAR BIGGER POLL THAN THE LAST DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS.

"I THINK THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR DISTRICT BOARDS AND I THINK IT WILL BE A GOOD SIGN FOR NEXT YEAR, FOR THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS," HE SAID.

IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AS TO WHY HE WAS FOCUSING ON TOTAL NUMBER, THE GOVERNOR SAID THE TEST OF WHETHER IT WAS A SUCCESSFUL ELECTION WAS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO TURNED OUT TO VOTE.

"WE WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL THIS YEAR IN OUR VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE SO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED TO VOTE, JUST LIKE THE CANDIDATES, IS FAR HIGHER," MR PATTEN SAID.

"THEREFORE, IN ORDER TO GET ABOUT THE SAME PERCENTAGE TURNOUT, YOU NEED TO GET A FAR LARGER NUMBER OF PEOPLE VOTING AND THAT IS WHAT IS HAPPENING.

"YOU CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS. SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING THE LAST FEW WEEKS THAT THE REGISTRATION FIGURES WERE THEMSELVES INFLATED BECAUSE A LOT OF PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE ON THE LIST WERE ON THE LIST.

"IN THAT CASE, IT MAKES THE FIGURES THAT WE ARE SEEING TODAY EVEN MORE REMARKABLE."

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TRANSCRIPT OF GOVERNOR'S MEDIA SESSION

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THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE MEDIA SESSION BY THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, AFTER HIS VISIT TO THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTION PRESS CENTRE THIS (SUNDAY) AFTERNOON:-

GOVERNOR: I THINK WHAT STRIKES ME MOST ABOUT TODAY IS HOW NORMAL AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD IT ALL IS. A SOPHISTICATED COMMUNITY LIKE HONG KONG, IT SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISING TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE TURNING OUT TO PUT THEIR OWN STAMP ON THE WAY THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD CONDUCTS ITS AFFAIRS. AND THAT'S INDEED WHAT WE'RE SEEING. BY 5.30 PM, ALMOST AS MANY PEOPLE HAD TURNED OUT TO VOTE AS IN THE ENTIRE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS LAST TIME. AT 5.30 PM, THE FIGURE OF TURNOUT WAS ABOUT 60 PERCENT HIGHER, PERHAPS IT WAS MORE THAN 60 PERCENT HIGHER THAN IN ABSOLUTE TERMS LAST TIME. SO, I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT WE'LL SEE A FAR BIGGER POLL THAN WE DID LAST TIME. AND I THINK THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR DISTRICT BOARDS AND I THINK IT WILL BE A GOOD SIGN FOR NEXT YEAR, FOR THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

QUESTION: SIR, IF THERE IS GOING TO BE A GOOD TURNOUT RATE, CAN YOU JUSTIFY THAT CHINA SHOULDN'T DISMANTLE THE THREE-TIER COUNCILS AFTER 1997?

GOVERNOR: THAT IS A MATTER FOR CHINESE OFFICIALS TO EXPLAIN AWAY. I WANT TO CONCENTRATE TODAY ON THE GOOD NEWS OF PEOPLE IN HONG KONG VERY CALMLY TURNING OUT. SO FAR, 150 000 MORE THAN THE SIMILAR TIME IN THE LAST DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS TO DETERMINE THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE.

QUESTION: GOVERNOR, WHY'RE YOU PLAYING WITH FIGURES. YOU FOCUS ON THE TOTAL NUMBER

GOVERNOR: THE TEST OF WHETHER IT WAS A SUCCESSFUL ELECTION IS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO TURN OUT TO VOTE. WE WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL THIS YEAR IN OUR VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE SO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED TO VOTE, JUST LIKE THE CANDIDATES, IS FAR HIGHER. THEREFORE, IN ORDER TO GET ABOUT THE SAME PERCENTAGE TURNOUT, YOU NEED TO GET A FAR LARGER NUMBER OF PEOPLE VOTING AND THAT IS WHAT IS HAPPENING. YOU CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS. SOME OF YOU WHO'VE BEEN COMPLAINING THE LAST FEW WEEKS THAT THE REGISTRATION FIGURES WERE THEMSELVES INFLATED BECAUSE A LOT OF PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE ON THE LIST WERE ON THE LIST. WELL, IN THAT CASE, IT MAKES THE FIGURES THAT WE ARE SEEING TODAY EVEN MORE REMARKABLE. OF COURSE, ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN DEMOCRACY, WHO BELIEVES IN PEOPLE BEING INVOLVED IN DETERMINING THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES WANT TO SEE AS MANY PEOPLE VOTE AS POSSIBLE. BUT IF YOU ASKED ME THIS MORNING, WHETHER I'D BE HAPPY BUT THIS TIME 150,000 MORE PEOPLE HAVE VOTED, I'D HAVE SAID YES, THANK YOU.

GOVERNOR URGES PUBLIC TO CAST THEIR VOTES

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, THIS (SUNDAY) MORNING SAID HE HOPED THAT AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE WOULD CAST THEIR VOTES IN THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS TODAY TO PUT THEIR STAMP ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS..

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING A TAI PO POLLING STATION, THE GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF POLLING BEING CARRIED OUT IN SUCH AN EFFICIENT MANNER AND THE VOTER TURNOUT SO FAR THIS MORNING.

"THE FIGURES THAT WE'VE GOT SO FAR SUGGEST THAT ABOUT 56 000 MORE PEOPLE HAVE VOTED BY 11.30 AM THAN WAS THE CASE LAST TIME AND IS ABOUT THE SAME PERCENTAGE," MR PATTEN SAID.

"SINCE THE REGISTER IS SO MUCH LARGER, A LOT MORE PEOPLE HAVE ACTUALLY GONE OUT TO VOTE."

MR PATTEN SAID IT WAS NOT SURPRISING IN THE COMMUNITY AS SUCCESSFUL AND PROSPEROUS AND STABLE AS HONG KONG, PEOPLE WANTED TO HAVE A SHARE IN DECIDING HOW THE COMMUNITY WAS RUN.

HE URGED REGISTERED VOTERS TO COME OUT TO VOTE TO GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE DISTRICT BOARDS WHICH ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION AT THE GRASS-ROOT LEVEL IN HONG KONG.

"THERE IS STILL A LONG TIME UNTIL 10.30 THIS EVENING AND I HOPE THAT THOSE WHO HAVEN'T YET GONE OUT AND VOTED, WILL DO SO IN THE HOURS THAT REMAIN."

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GOVERNOR VISITS TAI PO POLL STATION

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THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING A TAI PO POLLING STATION THIS (SUNDAY) MORNING:

GOVERNOR: I AM PLEASED TO SEE THE ADMINISTRATION OF POLLING BEING CARRIED OUT IN SUCH AN EFFICIENT MANNER AND THAT'S THE REPORT THAT WE ARE GETTING FROM RIGHT ACROSS THE TERRITORY. I HOPE THAT AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE WILL TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CAST THEIR VOTES IN THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS. THE DISTRICT BOARDS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR ADMINISTRATION AT THE GRASS-ROOT LEVEL IN HONG KONG. I KNOW THAT THERE'S BEEN AN ACTIVE CAMPAIGN AND I HOPE THAT PEOPLE WILL TAKE THE CHANCE THEY'VE GOT TODAY OF PUTTING THEIR STAMP ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THE FIGURES THAT WE'VE GOT SO FAR SUGGEST THAT ABOUT 56 000 MORE PEOPLE HAVE VOTED BY 11.30 AM THAN WAS THE CASE LAST TIME AND IS ABOUT THE SAME PERCENTAGE. BUT SINCE THE REGISTER IS SO MUCH LARGER, A LOT MORE PEOPLE HAVE ACTUALLY GONE OUT TO VOTE. BUT THERE IS STILL A LONG TIME TO GO UNTIL 10.30 THIS EVENING AND I HOPE THAT THOSE WHO HAVEN'T YET GONE OUT AND VOTED, WILL DO SO IN THE HOURS THAT REMAIN. SO, SO FAR AS I SAID, 56 000 MORE PEOPLE HAVE VOTED THAN LAST TIME AND I HOPE THAT CONTINUES TO BE THE CASE THROUGH OUT THE DAY.

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QUESTION: MR PATTEN, DOES THE POLL GIVE A VERY SATISFYING DAY FOR YOU?

GOVERNOR: I HOPE IT'S A VERY SATISFYING DAY FOR HONG KONG. I THINK THAT IT'S THE MARK OF THE CIVILISED COMMUNITY LIKE THIS TO SEE HUSBANDS AND WIVES COMING IN WITH THEIR CHILDREN TO CAST THEIR VOTES. IT IS NOT SURPRISING IN THE COMMUNITY AS SUCCESSFUL AND PROSPEROUS AND STABLE AS HONG KONG, PEOPLE WANT TO HAVE A SHARE IN DECIDING HOW THE COMMUNITY IS RUN. AND WE ARE SAYING THAT IN PROCESS, IN PROCESS TODAY. IT IS A SIGHT WHICH, I THINK, SHOULD BRING GREAT PLEASURE TO EVERYBODY AROUND THE WORLD WHEREVER IT TAKES PLACE. THE MARK GIVEN OPEN, SELF-CONFIDENT, PLURAL SOCIETY.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, YOU YOURSELF VOTED IN ELECTIONS IN BATH.... WHAT IS THE TRICK?

GOVERNOR: I THINK THE TRICK IS TO GO ON TRYING TO TELL THE PEOPLE THE TRUTH AS YOU SEE IT, NOT TO PULL THE WOOL OVER THEIR EYES. BUT I MUSTN'T ALLOW MY EXPERIENCES TO SHAKE THE WAY I REACT TO DEMOCRATIC EVENTS IN HONG KONG. THE TRUTH TO TELL'S, I THINK, THAT VOTERS LIKE TO MEET THEIR CANDIDATES. SO, I THINK THEY LIKE TO HAVE SOMEBODY KNOCKING ON THE DOORS, INTRODUCING THEMSELVES. WHAT I'VE OBSERVED IS THAT NOT SURPRISINGLY, PEOPLE ARE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT ALL THE NORMAL SERVICES WHICH MAKE AN IMPACT ON THEIR DAILY QUALITY OF LIFE. THEY ARE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSPORT. THEY ARE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT PARKING. THEY ARE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEALTH SERVICE AND EDUCATION, AND WELFARE PROVISION. ALL THOSE SORT OF ISSUES WERE, I THINK, PEOPLE WANT TO FEEL INVOLVED IN THE DECISIONS THAT WERE TAKEN ON THEIR BEHALF AND INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMMES THAT ARE RUN WITH THEIR MONEY AS TAXPAYERS.

QUESTION: IS YOUR POLICY ADDRESS GOING TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE TWO FOREIGN SECRETARIES' MEETING?

GOVERNOR: I AM SURE THAT MR HURD WILL WANT TO CONVEY TO VICE PREMIER QIAN QICHEN THE MAIN THEMES IN MY ADDRESS WHICH WILL BE, OF COURSE, DELIVERED A FEW DAYS LATER. AND THAT'S WHAT WE'VE DONE IN THE PAST WHEN WE'VE BEEN ABLE, AT ONE OF THESE MEETINGS, TO FORE-SHADOW WHAT I AM GOING TO SAY IN MY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ADDRESS AND THAT WOULD BE THE CIVILISED AND COURTEOUS AND CO-OPERATIVE THING TO DO AGAIN THIS YEAR. AND I HOPE THAT VICE PREMIER QIAN WILL RECOGNISE WHAT WE ARE KEEN TO DO IS TO CONTINUE TO BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR HONG KONG'S FUTURE AS A STABLE AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY AND THAT WE ARE CONTINUING TO SHOW IN A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE WAY OUR DETERMINATION SO FAR AS POSSIBLE TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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PEOPLE BELIEVE IN FAIR AND OPEN ELECTIONS

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THE VERY SATISFACTORY VOTER TURNOUT RATE SO FAR THIS MORNING EVIDENTLY DEMONSTRATES THAT THE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THE ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS ARE WHAT THEY WANT AND THAT THEY ARE FAIR AND OPEN, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID THIS (SUNDAY) MORNING.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE PRESS CENTRE FOR THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS, MRS CHAN SAID SHE WAS PLEASED WITH THE GOOD TURNOUT AND HOPED THAT THE GOOD TURNOUT RATE WOULD PERSIST FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.

"THE COMMUNITY ALSO OBVIOUSLY ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO THE WORK OF THE DISTRICT BOARD IN ADVANCING THEIR INTEREST AND LOOKING AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT, LOOKING AFTER SOCIAL SERVICES, MEDICAL SERVICES AND HEALTH SERVICE, MRS CHAN SAID.

SHE CALLED ON THOSE WHO HAD NOT YET VOTED TO TURN UP AT THEIR RESPECTIVE POLLING STATIONS.

"I BELIEVE IT IS EVERYBODY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO VOTE FOR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DISTRICT BOARD," THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD SPARED NO EFFORT AND NO EXPENSE THIS YEAR IN HELPING TO ENSURE THAT THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS WOULD BE A SUCCESS.

"WE'VE ALREADY INCURRED AN EXPENDITURE OF \$9 MILLION. TODAY WE HAVE ABOUT 6,000 OF OUR CIVIL SERVANT COLLEAGUES TURNING UP TO MAN POLLING STATIONS AND COUNTING STATIONS.

"WE'VE MADE PARTICULAR EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT POLLING STATIONS ARE ACCESSIBLE TO HANDICAPPED AND DISABLED PEOPLE," SHE ADDED.

CHIEF SECRETARY SPEAKS AT ELECTION PRESS CENTRE

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA AT THE PRESS CENTRE ON SUNDAY (SEPTEMBER 18).

MRS CHAN : GOOD MORNING EVERYONE. I AM VERY HAPPY TO SEE YOU ALL AFTER AN ABSENCE OF TWO AND A HALF WEEKS. AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE CUT SHORT MY LEAVE SPECIALLY TO COME BACK TO PARTICIPATE IN TODAY'S VOTING FOR THE DISTRICT BOARDS. OBVIOUSLY, A LOT OF OTHER HONG KONG PEOPLE SHARE MY VIEW AND HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE VOTING SO FAR. IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS, I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT MORE PEOPLE HAVE VOTED AT THIS TIME OF THE DAY THAN FOR THE ELECTIONS IN 1991. SO OBVIOUSLY WE'RE VERY PLEASED. I HOPE THE SAME GOOD TURNOUT RATE WILL PERSIST FOR THE REST OF TODAY. BUT THERE'RE STILL MANY HOURS TO GO BEFORE POLLING CLOSES AT 10.30PM. AND I WOULD URGE EVERYBODY WHO HAS NOT YET VOTED TO PLEASE TURN UP AT THEIR RESPECTIVE POLLING STATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS SPARED NO EFFORT AND NO EXPENSE THIS YEAR IN HELPING TO ENSURE THAT THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS WOULD BE A SUCCESS. WE'VE ALREADY INCURRED AN EXPENDITURE OF \$9 MILLION. TODAY WE HAVE ABOUT 6,000 OF OUR CIVIL SERVANT COLLEAGUES TURNING UP TO MAN POLLING STATIONS AND COUNTING STATIONS. WE'VE MADE PARTICULAR EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT POLLING STATIONS ARE ACCESSIBLE TO THE HANDICAPPED AND DISABLED PEOPLE. AND THERE ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, 22 POLLING STATIONS WHERE PEOPLE CAN VOTE OUTSIDE OF THEIR CONSTITUENCIES FOR THEIR CONVENIENCE. SO I REPEAT AGAIN, THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET VOTED PLEASE DO TURN OUT AND VOTE BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT IS EVERYBODY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO VOTE FOR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DISTRICT BOARD. THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME, ALL MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT BOARD WILL BE ELECTED AND DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO RETURN 10 MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE 1995 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

QUESTION : MRS CHAN, WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE TO THE INCREASED TURNOUT SO FAR TODAY ?

MRS CHAN : OF COURSE, THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS AND THE BASE IS LARGER THAN FOR THE PREVIOUS ELECTIONS. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, I THINK IT IS EVIDENT OF THE COMMUNITY'S BELIEF IN FAIR AND OPEN ELECTIONS. THE COMMUNITY ALSO OBVIOUSLY ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO THE WORK OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS IN ADVANCING THEIR INTEREST AND LOOKING AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT, LOOKING AFTER SOCIAL SERVICES, MEDICAL SERVICES, HEALTH SERVICES. AND I AM HOPEFUL THAT THE VOTER TURNOUT THIS YEAR WILL BE A SATISFACTORY ONE.

QUESTION : MRS CHAN, DO YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE SHOULD VOTE TODAY AS OFFICIALS OF BEIJING WOULD WANT TO KEEP THE EXISTING STRUCTURES ?

MRS CHAN : I THINK THE VOTER TURNOUT, THE VERY SATISFACTORY VOTER TURNOUT RATE SO FAR, EVIDENTLY DEMONSTRATES THAT THE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THE ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS ARE WHAT THEY WANT, THAT THEY ARE FAIR AND OPEN AND THEY WANT TO HAVE A SAY IN WHO REPRESENTS THEM AT THE DISTRICT BOARD LEVEL. AND I AM SURE THIS IS ALSO A GOOD SIGNAL FOR THE 1995 ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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BEC CLOSELY MONITORS ELECTION ACTIVITIES

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THE THREE-MEMBER BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION (BEC) TODAY (SUNDAY) TOURED A NUMBER OF POLLING STATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY TO ENSURE THAT THE ELECTIONS ARE CONDUCTED OPENLY, FAIRLY AND HONESTLY.

ON THREE DIFFERENT ROUTES, THE BEC CHAIRMAN, MR JUSTICE WOO KWOK-HING, AND MEMBERS PROFESSOR LEUNG CHI-KEUNG AND MR NORMAN LEUNG, SAW HOW DIFFERENT ELECTION ACTIVITIES WERE LAUNCHED IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE POLLING STATION FOR TSIM SHA TSUI EAST CONSTITUENCY, MR JUSTICE WOO URGED ELECTORS TO EXERCISE THEIR CIVIC RIGHT AND VOTE.

"I HOPE THAT MANY MORE PEOPLE WILL COME OUT SO THAT WE CAN HAVE A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR."

HE ALSO TOURED AROUND POLLING STATIONS IN KOWLOON CITY AND SHA TIN. PROFESSOR LEUNG VISITED STATIONS IN YUEN LONG, TUEN MUN AND WAN CHAI WHILE MR LEUNG VISITED EASTERN, KWUN TONG, SAI KUNG AND TAI PO DISTRICTS.

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DB ELECTIONS: IMPORTANT STEP IN EVOLUTION
OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

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THIS YEAR'S DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE EVOLUTION OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG, SENIOR MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, BARONESS DUNN, SAID TODAY (SUNDAY).

"FOR THE FIRST TIME, ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS WILL BE ELECTED BY DIRECT ELECTIONS.

"THEY HAVE AN IMPORTANT TASK, NOT JUST IN IMPROVING AND RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT, IMPROVING HONG KONG'S QUALITY OF LIFE, THEY WILL ALSO GO ON TO VOTE 10 MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL," SHE ADDED.

BARONESS DUNN SAID SHE WAS PLEASED WITH THE VOTER TURNOUT THIS MORNING AND TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO URGE ALL ELECTORS TO TAKE ACTIVE PART IN TODAY'S ELECTIONS AND CAST THEIR VOTES.

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FS ENCOURAGES ELECTORS TO VOTE

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR HAMISH MACLEOD, TODAY (SUNDAY) ENCOURAGES ALL REGISTERED ELECTORS TO COME OUT TO VOTE, TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER CASTING HIS BALLOT, SIR HAMISH SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ELECTORS TO CHOOSE THOSE WHOM THEY BELIEVE WOULD SERVE THE DISTRICT WELL.

WHEN ASKED TO PREDICT THE FINAL TURNOUT RATE IN THE ELECTIONS, SIR HAMISH SAID: "WE HAVE A RECORD NUMBER OF CANDIDATES, WE HAVE A RECORD NUMBER OF VOTERS, CERTAINLY WE WILL EXPECT TO GET A RECORD NUMBER OF TURNOUT."

CASTING HIS VOTE EARLY THIS MORNING, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, ALSO REMINDED ALL REGISTERED ELECTORS, ESPECIALLY THOSE BETWEEN 18 AND 21 WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT AND CAST THEIR VOTES.

"DISTRICT BOARDS ARE VERY IMPORTANT, PEOPLE SHOULD ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE WHO COULD REPRESENT THEM AT DISTRICT LEVEL, TO HELP IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOOD," HE ADDED.

BOTH SECRETARIES CAST THEIR VOTES AT THE POLLING STATION PUT UP AT ABERDEEN INDOOR GAMES HALL.

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AG CALLS ON VOTERS TO TAKE PART IN DB ELECTIONS

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ELECTION IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE A SAY IN THE WAY THEY WANT THEIR COMMUNITY RUN, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID TODAY (SUNDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER CASTING HIS VOTE AT THE GERMAN SWISS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, MR MATHEWS CALLED ON ELECTORS TO TAKE PART IN DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS.

"THE ELECTIONS THIS YEAR TAKES ON A GREATER SIGNIFICANCE AS ALL SEATS ARE DIRECTLY ELECTED, THE VOTING AGE HAS BEEN LOWERED, SO IT HAS EXPANDED THE WHOLE POOL OF ELECTORATE FAIRLY CONSIDERABLY.

"AND OF COURSE DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WILL FORM THEIR OWN COLLEGE TO ELECT 10 TO LEGCO," HE SAID.

WHEN ASKED TO PREDICT THE TURNOUT RATE, MR MATHEWS SAID THE FIGURES SEEMED TO BE VERY ENCOURAGING AND HE HOPED THE TREND WOULD CARRY ON THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

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SCA URGES ELECTORS TO VOTE

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THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR NICHOLAS NG, TODAY (SUNDAY) URGES ALL VOTERS TO CAST THEIR VOTES AT THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER CASTING HIS BALLOT, MR NG SAID DISTRICT BOARDS ARE VERY IMPORTANT AND PEOPLE SHOULD SUPPORT THEM.

"DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS IS A MILESTONE IN OUR REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, ALL THE SEATS ARE TO BE ELECTED.

"WE ALSO HAVE LOWERED THE VOTING AGE TO 18 AND WE HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS AND I ENCOURAGE THEM ALL TO COME OUT TO VOTE TODAY," MR NG SAID.

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VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS VOLUNTEER FOR TRANSFER

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IN ANSWER TO PRESS ENQUIRIES, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (SUNDAY) THAT 40 OF THE GROUP OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE HONG KONG FOR VIETNAM ON SEPTEMBER 22 AND 23 UNDER THE ORDERLY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED VOLUNTARILY TO VICTORIA PRISON.

THEY COMPRISE 39 PEOPLE FROM HIGH ISLAND DETENTION CENTRE AND ONE RETURNEE WHO WAS AT CHI MA WAN DETENTION CENTRE.

IT WAS ANNOUNCED ON SEPTEMBER 16 THAT 82 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO VICTORIA PRISON TOMORROW FOR DOCUMENTATION AND OTHER PROCEDURES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN PREPARATION FOR THEIR RETURN HOME THIS WEEK.

"WE ARE OBVIOUSLY PLEASED THAT HALF OF THE RETURNEES HAVE ALREADY VOLUNTEERED TO BE MOVED AHEAD OF THE TRANSFER EXERCISE," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"IT WAS ALWAYS OUR HOPE THAT THE TRANSFER WOULD TAKE PLACE IN A PEACEFUL MANNER AND THIS DEVELOPMENT BODES WELL FOR THE REPATRIATION EXERCISE AS A WHOLE," HE ADDED.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH LAST FRIDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATES FOR THE EXERCISE, ADDITIONAL COUNSELLING WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, AND BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

"COUNSELLING OF THE RETURNEES WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THEIR RETURN HOME TO VIETNAM," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE OTHER RETURNEES AT HIGH ISLAND COULD STILL VOLUNTEER TO MOVE TO VICTORIA PRISON TODAY," HE ADDED.

TOMORROW'S EXERCISE WILL INVOLVE THE TRANSFER OF REMAINING MIGRANTS AT HIGH ISLAND, AND THE WHOLE GROUP AT VICTORIA PRISON WILL THEN LEAVE HONG KONG ON SEPARATE FLIGHTS ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY.

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METHADONE BENEFITS SOCIETY

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METHADONE PATIENTS ARE USEFUL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY AND CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SOME SERVICE THAT BENEFITS THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, THE COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS, MR ALASDAIR SINCLAIR, TOLD THE CARITAS LOK HEEP CLUB'S 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TODAY (SUNDAY).

"METHADONE PATIENTS DESERVE TO BE VALUED AND RESPECTED AS MUCH AS ANY HUMAN BEINGS.

"HOWEVER, SOME MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HAVE A NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THEM AND THIS IS UNJUSTIFIED," THE COMMISSIONER SAID.

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"METHADONE PROGRAMME BENEFITS THE WIDER SOCIETY, BUT NOT ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC RECOGNISE THAT.

"SOMETIMES, THEIR FRUSTRATION WITH ILLICIT DRUG USE IS DIRECTED AGAINST THE RESPONSE TO THAT PROBLEM - THE PROVISION OF METHADONE TREATMENT," MR SINCLAIR REMARKED.

"METHADONE PROVIDES STABILITY IN THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO DEPEND ON NARCOTIC DRUGS, AND SAVES THEM FROM THE DANGERS OF CRIME AND DISEASE," HE ADDED.

HE APPEALED TO THE CARITAS LOK HEEP CLUB TO HELP IMPROVE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND REACH OUT TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING TO STAY OFF DRUGS.

THE COMMISSIONER ALSO THANKED THE CLUB FOR SUPPORTING AND PROVIDING A RANGE OF SERVICES FROM WHICH A LARGE NUMBER OF EX-DRUG ABUSERS HAD BENEFITED.

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PRE-QUALIFICATION SUBMISSIONS INVITED
FOR SHENZHEN RIVER WORKS

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GOOD PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS ON THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE SHENZHEN RIVER REGULATION PROJECT STAGE I, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (SUNDAY).

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE PROJECT WAS NOW AT THE STAGE OF INVITING TENDERS IN ORDER THAT CONSTRUCTION WORKS MAY START EARLY NEXT YEAR.

HE ADDED THAT STAGE I OF THE PROJECT WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN ONE SINGLE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT INVOLVING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW RIVER CHANNELS AT LIU POK AND LOK MA CHAU WITH A TOTAL LENGTH OF 3.3 KILOMETRES AND RIVER BED EROSION PROTECTION WORKS IN THE VICINITY OF LO WU STATION.

THE SHENZHEN RIVER REGULATION OFFICE OF THE SHENZHEN MUNICIPALITY, WHICH REPRESENTS THE HONG KONG AND SHENZHEN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AS THE CONTRACT EMPLOYER FOR THE STAGE I WORKS, IS INVITING PRE-QUALIFICATION SUBMISSIONS FROM SUITABLE CONTRACTORS FOR THE WORKS CONTRACT.

AS THE SHENZHEN RIVER IS A BOUNDARY RIVER, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE WORKS AREA OF THE CONTRACT WOULD INEVITABLY STRADDLE THE EXISTING BORDER.

THE REGULATION OFFICE WILL SEND INVITATIONS THIS WEEK TO SUITABLE CONTRACTORS IN CHINA AND THOSE HONG KONG CONTRACTORS ON THE PORT WORKS AND ROADS AND DRAINAGE DIVISION OF LIST I, GROUP C OR OF LIST II OF WORKS BRANCH APPROVED CONTRACTORS LISTS, FOR APPLICATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION.

/"ONLY CONTRACTORS

"ONLY CONTRACTORS WHOSE MAIN PRESENCE AND HEAD OFFICE ARE EITHER IN HONG KONG OR CHINA ARE INVITED TO APPLY FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS.

"THEY SHOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO COMPLY WITH THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT OF THE SHENZHEN SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRE-QUALIFICATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE SHENZHEN RIVER REGULATION OFFICE ON THE FIFTH FLOOR, HONGTAO BUILDING, 2 BAOAN ROAD, SHENZHEN, AND THE LAND DRAINAGE DIVISION OF THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 11TH FLOOR, 405 NATHAN ROAD, YAU MA TEI, KOWLOON.

THE APPLICATIONS TOGETHER WITH SPECIFIED DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE SHENZHEN RIVER REGULATION OFFICE BEFORE 11.30 AM (BEIJING TIME) ON OCTOBER 18.

IT IS HOPED THAT THE QUALIFIED CONTRACTORS WILL BE INVITED TO TENDER FOR THE CONTRACT AT THE END OF THIS YEAR.

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NEW RESOURCE BOOK ON GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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A NEW RESOURCE BOOK JUST PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ADVOCATES A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO GUIDANCE WORK FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS.

UNDER THE APPROACH, HEADTEACHERS, DISCIPLINE TEACHERS, GUIDANCE TEACHERS AND CLASS TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS WORK IN A CONCERTED WAY TO HELP PUPILS RESOLVE THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS.

THE RESOURCE BOOK IS BEING DISTRIBUTED TO ALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS ALONG WITH PAMPHLETS ON STUDENT GUIDANCE SERVICE AND POSTERS TO PROMOTE THE WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO GUIDANCE.

IT PROVIDES TEACHERS WITH SUGGESTIONS ON GUIDANCE SKILLS ON COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS; TECHNIQUES IN MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR; PRACTICAL TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND STUDENTS' GENERAL ABILITIES AND LEARNING STYLES; THE PREPARATION OF ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES TO HELP NEW STUDENTS INTEGRATE INTO SCHOOL AND TECHNIQUES IN HANDLING THEIR FAILURE TO HAND IN HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SAID: "IT IS HOPED THAT THROUGH REFERENCE TO SUGGESTIONS IN THE RESOURCE BOOK, STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS/TEACHERS AND DISCIPLINE TEACHERS WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO SHARE WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES PROPER WAYS TO HANDLE STUDENT BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS. THUS CONCERTED EFFORTS COULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE OPTIMAL EFFECTIVENESS IN STUDENT GUIDANCE."

THE RESOURCE BOOK IS IN LOOSE-LEAF FORMAT TO ENABLE INSERTION OF ADDITIONAL PAGES WHICH WILL BE PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO SCHOOLS FROM TIME TO TIME TO HELP STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS/TEACHERS AND DISCIPLINE TEACHERS BUILD UP A WEALTH OF READILY APPLICABLE PROGRAMMES AND GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES FOR DAY-TO-DAY REFERENCE.

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MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

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MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE REMINDED TO TAKE EXTRA CARE IN HANDLING FIRES WHEN THEY VISIT THE COUNTRYSIDE DURING THE MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL HOLIDAY PERIOD.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT'S COUNTRY PARKS PROTECTION OFFICER, MR EDMOND LAM, TODAY (SUNDAY) SAID: "VISITORS SHOULD REFRAIN FROM RELEASING ANY HUNG MING LANTERN AND BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL WITH BARBECUE FIRE AND HAND-HELD CANDLE-LIT LANTERNS."

ACCORDING TO MR LAM, THE ANNUAL MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL IS ONE OF THE HIGH FIRE RISK PERIODS. HE CALLED ON VISITORS TO BE ALERT TO THE FIRE RISK WHEN THEY VISITED COUNTRY PARKS DURING THE FESTIVAL PERIOD.

MR LAM SAID IT WAS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE FORESTS AND COUNTRYSIDE ORDINANCE AND THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE TO LIGHT FIRE ILLEGALLY OR TO RELEASE A HUNG MING LANTERN IN A COUNTRY PARK OR AREA OF OPEN COUNTRYSIDE.

"ILLEGAL LIGHTING OF FIRE INSIDE COUNTRY PARKS MAY LEAD TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$5,000 AND ONE YEAR'S IMPRISONMENT," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THERE WERE SIX PROSECUTIONS AGAINST THE ILLEGAL USE OF FIRE IN COUNTRY PARKS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AND OFFENDERS WERE FINED A TOTAL OF \$4,500.