



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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HONG KONG OFFICIAL SPEAKS OF RESILIENCE

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HONG KONG HAS THRIVED DESPITE SOME TUMULTUOUS EVENTS IN CHINA AND THE VICISSITUDES OF THE WORLD'S ECONOMY, SAID MR K.C. KWONG, HONG KONG'S DEPUTY COMMISSIONER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

SPEAKING AT A SEMINAR ORGANISED BY THE INFLUENTIAL CAMBRIDGE UNION SOCIETY, MR KWONG SAID HONG KONG'S UNIQUE GROWTH AND PROSPERITY HAD MADE IT THE WORLD'S ELEVENTH LARGEST TRADING TERRITORY WITH A PER CAPITA INCOME IN 1988 OF HK\$75,000.

THE FACTORS THAT ENABLED HONG KONG TO REACH THE POSITION IT NOW COMMANDS INCLUDE:-

- * ITS GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND A DEVELOPED INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH MAKE IT A NATURAL AND PRIMARY HUB IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC RIM;
- * THE DILIGENCE AND VERSATILITY OF ITS PEOPLE WHO HAVE ADAPTED WELL TO THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH BUSINESSES OPERATE;
- * THE MARKET-ORIENTED SYSTEM WHICH OPERATES UNDER THE RULE OF LAW; AND
- * THE PRAGMATISM OF BOTH CHINA AND HONG KONG IN HANDLING THEIR DELICATE INTERDEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP.

COMPLEMENTING THIS EXCEPTIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH WERE AMBITIOUS EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAMMES. MR KWONG SAID, BY 1995 TERTIARY EDUCATION PLACES WOULD BE INCREASED FROM THE PRESENT 14 PER CENT OF THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP TO 25 PER CENT. AND A TRAINING FUND WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO GIVE MANAGERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN EXPERIENCE IN NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

THESE STEPS WOULD HELP MATCH THE SKILLS SHORTAGE CREATED BY THE "BRAIN DRAIN" THROUGH EMIGRATION.

"THE NATIONALITY PACKAGE PROPOSED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS ANOTHER FACTOR. IT WILL PROVIDE AN 'INSURANCE POLICY' FOR MANY OF THE SKILLED, PROFESSIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PEOPLE AND GIVE THEM THE CONFIDENCE TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG." MR KWONG SAID.

MR KWONG STRESSED THAT THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION WAS THE BEST GUARANTEE FOR HONG KONG'S FUTURE. IT WAS AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT, LEGALLY BINDING, DEPOSITED AT THE UNITED NATIONS. CHINA ALSO HAD AN EXCELLENT RECORD IN ABIDING BY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS.

"IN MORE PRACTICAL TERMS, HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO CHINA CANNOT BE OVER-ESTIMATED," HE SAID. "HONG KONG ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT A THIRD OF CHINA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS AND TWO-THIRDS OF ITS OVERSEAS INVESTMENTS. IN ADDITION TO BEING A SHOP WINDOW TO CHINA, IT IS A GATEWAY FOR THE MAINLAND TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS. THE TERRITORY ALSO OFFERS INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL TECHNOLOGY AND SKILLS TO CHINA."

/MR KWONG

MR KWONG POINTED OUT THAT CHINA HAD MADE REPEATED PUBLIC ASSURANCES TO HONG KONG AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ITS DETERMINATION TO ADHERE TO THE POLICY OF "ONE COUNTRY TWO SYSTEMS". THE AGREEMENTS IN THE JOINT DECLARATION WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE BASIC LAW - THE MINI CONSTITUTION FOR HONG KONG POST-1997.

MR KWONG SAID THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE PROSPECT FOR HONG KONG'S CONTINUED PROSPERITY AND STABILITY WAS GOOD.

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MORE IMPROVEMENTS TO DIAMOND HILL ENVIRONMENT

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THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF RESIDENTS IN DIAMOND HILL SQUATTER AREAS IN WONG TAI SIN HAS BEEN FURTHER IMPROVED THROUGH JOINT EFFORTS MADE BY THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE, THE DISTRICT BOARD AND THE TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL PROJECT CONTRACTORS.

THE IMPROVEMENTS WERE OUTLINED TODAY (MONDAY) BY A SPOKESMAN FOR THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE.

A SERIES OF IMPROVEMENT MEASURES CONCERNING HYGIENE, POLLUTION, ROADS AND GENERAL SAFETY HAS BEEN COMPLETED AT CONSTRUCTION SITES INVOLVED IN THE TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL PROJECT IN RECENT WEEKS.

THE POLLUTION PROBLEM AT A STREAM IN THE DIAMOND NEW VILLAGE HAS ALSO BEEN EASED FURTHER FOLLOWING TWO CLEANSING OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT LAST WEEK BY CONTRACTORS HIRED WITH DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS.

RESIDENTS AND WORKERS IN DYEING FACTORIES ARE URGED TO EXERCISE MORE SELF-DISCIPLINE AND NOT TO DUMP RUBBISH INTO THE STREAM.

RUBBISH BINS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN STRAIGHT STREET BY THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

IN DIAMOND NEW VILLAGE, A TEMPORARY ROAD WITH RAILINGS ON BOTH SIDES HAS BEEN BUILT BETWEEN HAMMER HILL ROAD AND DIAMOND ROAD BY A HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT CONTRACTOR. LIGHTS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED ON THE RAILINGS FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF RESIDENTS.

ANOTHER ROAD HAS ALSO BEEN BUILT TO LINK STRAIGHT STREET WITH THE TEMPORARY ROAD.

IN THE THIRD LANE OF THE VILLAGE, A METAL FOOTBRIDGE OVER THE STREAM HAS BEEN BUILT UNDER THE SQUATTER AREAS IMPROVEMENTS SCHEME OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT.

A FOOTPATH WITH RAILINGS IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN TAI HOM ROAD AND TAI KWUN ROAD TO PROVIDE RESIDENTS WITH SAFER ACCESS BETWEEN LUNG POON COURT AND LUNG CHEUNG ROAD, WITHOUT HAVING TO PASS UNDER THE FLYOVERS NOW BEING CONSTRUCTED THERE.

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MEANWHILE, SAFETY MEASURES HAVE BEEN STEPPED UP AT THE FLYOVERS, INCLUDING SAFETY NETS TO PREVENT FALLING OBJECTS FROM INJURING PEDESTRIANS.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID OTHER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS BEING PLANNED INCLUDE INSTALLING ADDITIONAL STREET LIGHTS IN STRAIGHT STREET, CONSTRUCTING A CONCRETE FOOTPATH LINKING STRAIGHT STREET AND HAMMER HILL ROAD, AND PLACING MORE RUBBISH BINS IN DIAMOND NEW VILLAGE.

"ALTHOUGH THESE IMPROVEMENT MEASURES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, THE DISTRICT OFFICE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN THE DIAMOND HILL SQUATTER AREAS," HE ADDED.

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SAI KUNG DISTRICT FESTIVAL BEGINS ON WEDNESDAY

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A VARIETY SHOW AT THE SAI KUNG JOCKEY CLUB TOWN HALL WILL MARK THE OPENING OF THE 1990 SAI KUNG DISTRICT FESTIVAL ON WEDNESDAY (JANUARY 31).

AMONG THE PERFORMERS IN THE VARIETY SHOW WILL BE THE GUANGDONG DANCE AND DRAMA TROUPE.

THE PROGRAMME WILL INCLUDE CHINESE PLAYS, TRADITIONAL DANCES, HAKKA SONGS AND AN INSTRUMENTAL RECITAL.

A CEREMONY TO LAUNCH THE FESTIVAL WILL BE HELD BEFOREHAND, AND THEN THERE WILL BE A SPRING GATHERING.

OFFICIATING AT THE CEREMONY WILL BE THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICER, MR FREDERICK TONG; CHAIRMAN OF THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD, MR WILLIAM WAN; CHAIRMAN OF THE RECREATION AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, MR TANG PUI-TAT; AND LOCAL DIGNITARIES, MR LEE YUN-SAU AND MR PONG TING-YUEN.

ABOUT 900 PEOPLE ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE PART IN THE OPENING CEREMONY.

THE DISTRICT FESTIVAL IS ORGANISED BY A PREPARATORY COMMITTEE WITH THE AIM OF CULTIVATING RESIDENTS' SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.

/MANY OTHER

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MANY OTHER EVENTS, SUCH AS CANTONESE OPERA AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES, WILL BE HELD BEFORE THE FESTIVAL CLOSES ON FEBRUARY 4.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT FESTIVAL OPENING CEREMONY AT THE SAI KUNG JOCKEY CLUB TOWN HALL, CHAN MAN STREET, SAI KUNG TOWN ON WEDNESDAY (JANUARY 31) AT 7 PM.

THE VARIETY SHOW WILL BEGIN AT 8 PM.

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PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROVIDES TIMELY HELP

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THE CHAN FAMILY IS AT LAST ABLE TO STAND ON THEIR OWN FEET. THEIR CHILDREN HAVE RECENTLY SECURED RESPECTABLE JOBS UPON THE COMPLETION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION.

A FAMILY OF FOUR. THE CHAN FAMILY IS SIMILAR TO ANY OTHER FAMILY OF THE SAME SIZE IN THE TERRITORY. EXCEPT THAT THEY HAD BEEN LIVING ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OVER THE PAST DECADE.

AS THE CHAN'S CHILDREN HAVE GROWN UP AND SECURED EMPLOYMENT, THE FAMILY WITHDREW THEIR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE APPLICATION LAST AUTUMN.

IN ANOTHER CASE, A WIDOW WITH FOUR CHILDREN RECENTLY ALSO WITHDREW FROM FURTHER ASSISTANCE.

THE WOMAN HAD NO OTHER SOURCE OF INCOME SINCE THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND IN THE EARLY 80'S.

WITH THE HELP OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, THE FAMILY HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR LIVING WITH PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND WAS ALLOCATED A PUBLIC HOUSING UNIT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT'S COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING PROGRAMME.

THE WOMAN WITHDREW HER APPLICATION FOR FURTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE LAST DECEMBER ON THE GROUNDS THAT HER CHILDREN ARE NOW GROWN UP AND SHE HAS CONFIDENCE TO TAKE UP OPEN EMPLOYMENT TO SUPPORT HER FAMILY.

COMMENTING ON THE CASE OF THE CHAN FAMILY, AN SWD SPOKESMAN SAID THEIR DIFFICULTIES WERE FIRST MADE KNOWN TO THE DEPARTMENT IN THE LATE 70'S.

"AS THE FATHER WAS BEDRIDDEN AND THE CHILDREN WERE ONLY PRIMARY STUDENTS, PUBLIC ASSISTANCE WAS IMMEDIATELY RENDERED TO THEM.

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"IT IS VERY ENCOURAGING TO LEARN THAT ALL THE CHILDREN HAD RECEIVED PROPER EDUCATION UP TO TERTIARY LEVEL." THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"IT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S ULTIMATE GOAL TO PROVIDE TIMELY ASSISTANCE TO ENSURE THAT NEEDY FAMILIES ARE TAKEN CARE OF." HE ADDED.

THE AIM OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IS TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE WHO REQUIRE IMMEDIATE HELP TO TIDE OVER DIFFICULT PERIODS.

OVER THE YEARS, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE HAD BENEFITTED FROM THE SCHEME AND WERE ABLE TO TIDE OVER ALL SORTS OF DIFFICULTIES. MANY OF THEM HAD SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAWN FROM FURTHER ASSISTANCE AFTER RESTORING THE ABILITY TO STAND ON THEIR OWN FEET.

AT PRESENT THE DEPARTMENT HAS ABOUT 60,000 ACTIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASES WITH A TOTAL OF ABOUT 90,000 RECIPIENTS.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENT COMPRISES FIVE SCHEMES. THEY ARE THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME, SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCES SCHEME (COMPRISING OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AND DISABILITY ALLOWANCE), CRIMINAL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT INJURIES COMPENSATION SCHEME, TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SCHEME AND EMERGENCY RELIEF.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISH TO APPLY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CAN APPROACH THE DEPARTMENT'S 34 FIELD UNITS LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

THEY CAN ALSO TELEPHONE THE DEPARTMENTAL HOTLINE 3432255 FOR DETAILS.

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FAMILY DAY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

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SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT STAFF ARE ORGANISING A FAMILY DAY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES SO THAT THEY CAN SHARE THE JOY OF THE LUNAR NEW YEAR.

ABOUT 200 FAMILIES, WITH 400 CHILDREN, HAVE BEEN INVITED TO ATTEND TWO FAMILY EVENTS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY (FEBRUARY 1), IN TUEN MUN AND IN SHEUNG SHUI.

THE DEPARTMENT'S REGIONAL OFFICER (EAST NEW TERRITORIES), MR ANTHONY CHAN, SAID STAFF HOPED THE EVENTS COULD PROMOTE A BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS.

"MORE IMPORTANT, THEY WANT TO PROVIDE A GOOD TIME FOR THE UNDER-PRIVILEGED, ESPECIALLY THE CHILDREN AMONG THEM.

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"TOYS DONATED BY OUR COLLEAGUES AND BENEVOLENT TOY MANUFACTURERS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO CHILDREN ATTENDING THE EVENTS," HE SAID.

THE PROGRAMME FOR EACH EVENT WILL INCLUDE SINGING AND DANCING PERFORMANCES BY DEPARTMENT STAFF. MAGIC AND ACROBATIC SHOWS. AND A BUFFET LUNCH. THERE WILL ALSO BE A LUCKY DRAW WITH ATTRACTIVE PRIZES.

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CHILDREN'S CHOIR TO GIVE NEW YEAR CONCERT

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THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT CHILDREN'S CHOIR WILL GIVE A LUNAR NEW YEAR CONCERT ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 3) AT THE AP LEI CHAU COMMUNITY HALL, AP LEI CHAU ESTATE.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE ONE-HOUR CONCERT, BEGINNING AT 2.30 PM. WILL INCLUDE CHORUS SINGING. INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMANCES AND RECITATIONS. THERE WILL BE A SELECTED STRING OF REVELLING LUNAR NEW YEAR SONGS.

THE 50-STRONG CHOIR, COMPRISING CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN SIX AND 15 YEARS OLD IN THE DISTRICT, WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1978. IT HAS SINCE GIVEN NUMEROUS PERFORMANCES AT DISTRICT FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT FESTIVAL, AND HAS STAGED ITS OWN CONCERTS.

THE CONCERT HAS BEEN ORGANISED BY THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT ARTS AND CULTURE ASSOCIATION WITH SPONSORSHIP FROM THE DISTRICT BOARD. ADMISSION IS FREE.

ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE ON TEL. 5550187 AND 5520595.

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TOILET, REFUSE COLLECTION POINT PROJECT IN HUNG HOM

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THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLIC LATRINE IN HUNG HOM.

LOCATED IN HOK YUEN STREET, THE EXISTING PUBLIC TOILET WILL BE DEVELOPED INTO A REFUSE COLLECTION POINT AND PUBLIC TOILETS.

THE PROJECT INCLUDES THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-STOREY REFUSE COLLECTION POINT AND PUBLIC TOILETS WITH ANCILLARY FACILITIES SUCH AS AN OFFICE, A STORE ROOM, A SWITCH ROOM, THE PUMP ROOMS AND A WATER SCRUBBER.

PILE FOUNDATION WORKS AND DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING PUBLIC LATRINE ARE ALSO INCLUDED IN THE CONTRACT.

WORK IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN IN APRIL AND BE COMPLETED IN JULY NEXT YEAR.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON FEBRUARY 23.

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