



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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HK TO GET 'COST-EFFECTIVE' AIRPORT RAILWAY IN 1997

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HONG KONG MUST HAVE THE AIRPORT RAILWAY IN 1997 TO RELIEVE CONGESTION IN THE NATHAN ROAD CORRIDOR AND TO PROVIDE A FAST AND EFFICIENT RAIL LINK TO THE NEW AIRPORT, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

THE AIRPORT RAILWAY, WHICH WILL BE BUILT BY THE MTRC IF A PROPOSED FINANCIAL PACKAGE IS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT, WILL RUN BENEATH THE HARBOUR FROM CENTRAL TO KOWLOON AND WILL CROSS TO NORTH LANTAU VIA THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING.

THE AIRPORT RAILWAY WILL HAVE TWO SERVICES, THE AIRPORT EXPRESS LINE (AEL) AND THE LANTAU LINE (LAL).

THE AEL WILL BE A HIGH-SPEED AIRPORT RAIL LINK, WITH STATIONS AT CENTRAL, WEST KOWLOON, TSING YI, AND CHEK LAP KOK AIRPORT.

THE LAL WILL BE A DOMESTIC SERVICE WITH A HIGHER PASSENGER CAPACITY, WITH STATIONS AT CENTRAL, WEST KOWLOON, TAI KOK TSUI, LAI KING, TSING YI, AND TUNG CHUNG.

THE TWO SERVICES WILL RUN ON MAINLY COMMON TRACKS BETWEEN CENTRAL AND TAI HO WAN ON NORTH LANTAU, DIVERGING THEREAFTER TO CHEK LAP KOK AND TUNG CHUNG.

MR LEUNG POINTED OUT THAT BOTH SERVICES WERE NEEDED IN 1997.

THE LAL WAS DESIGNED TO RELIEVE CONGESTION IN THE NATHAN ROAD CORRIDOR - TSIM SHA TSUI TO MONG KOK STATIONS - OF THE EXISTING MTR TSUEN WAN LINE, WHICH IS NOW OPERATING CLOSE TO THE ACCEPTABLE LIMIT OF 75,000 DURING MORNING PEAK HOUR, BEYOND WHICH SAFETY COULD BE COMPROMISED.

"THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MTRC ARE DOING WHAT THEY CAN TO CONTAIN CONGESTION IN THE NATHAN ROAD CORRIDOR," MR LEUNG SAID.

"BUT THE ONLY LONG-TERM SOLUTION IS TO BUILD A NEW AND FASTER MTR LINE WHICH CROSSES THE HARBOUR AND RELIEVES THE PRESSURE ON THE EXISTING SYSTEM. THE LAL WILL INTERCHANGE WITH THE TSUEN WAN LINE AT LAI KING, AND ITS EIGHT-MINUTE JOURNEY TO CENTRAL, COMPARED WITH 23 MINUTES ON THE TSUEN WAN LINE, IS EXPECTED TO TAKE 147,000 PASSENGERS A DAY OFF THE TSUEN WAN LINE IN 1997," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID THE AEL WOULD ALSO BE NEEDED BY 1997, IN TIME FOR THE OPENING OF THE NEW AIRPORT.

IT IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A FAST AND EFFICIENT RAIL LINK TO THE NEW AIRPORT, AND ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS IS PREFERABLE TO RELYING ENTIRELY ON ALTERNATIVE ROAD-BASED TRANSPORT MEANS.

MR LEUNG DISMISSED SUGGESTIONS THAT EXPENDITURE COULD BE REDUCED ON THE HK\$22.16 BILLION RAILWAY BY EITHER PARTIALLY OR WHOLLY DEFERRING IT.

/"VARIOUS IDEAS

"VARIOUS IDEAS FOR EITHER A PARTIAL OR A TOTAL DEFERRAL OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY HAVE BEEN MOOTED, AND NONE OF THEM MEET HONG KONG'S TRANSPORT NEEDS AS WELL, OR ARE AS COST-EFFECTIVE.

"IF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY TERMINATED AT WEST KOWLOON RATHER THAN ON HONG KONG ISLAND, FOR EXAMPLE, THIS WOULD REDUCE THE REVENUE EXPECTED FROM THE AIRPORT EXPRESS LINE BY 40 PER CENT, AND PROVIDE NO RELIEF FOR THE NATHAN ROAD CORRIDOR.

"NOR COULD WE TERMINATE THE RAILWAY AT TSING YI INSTEAD OF GOING ALL THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT.

"MOST OF THE REVENUE OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY WILL BE GENERATED BY THE AIRPORT EXPRESS LINE, AND THIS WOULD BE LOST IF THE LINE STOPPED AT TSING YI.

"WE WOULD ALSO NEED TO MOVE THE SITE FOR THE AIRPORT RAILWAY DEPOT FROM SIU HO WAN ON NORTH LANTAU. WE WOULD HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO PUT IT ON A PRIME DEVELOPMENT SITE ON THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION."

COMMENTING ON THE IDEA OF DEFERRING THE AIRPORT RAILWAY ALTOGETHER FOR A FEW YEARS, MR LEUNG SAID THIS WOULD ALSO BE MOST UNDESIRABLE.

"WE WOULD NEED A LARGE FLEET OF TAXIS, AIRBUSES AND DOUBLE-DECKER BUSES TO MAKE UP FOR THE LACK OF A RAILWAY.

"THEY WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE TO PROVIDE AND DIFFICULT TO WITHDRAW LATER. THEY WOULD ALSO BE VERY COSTLY IN TERMS OF INCREASED TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND INCREASED AIR POLLUTION.

"THE FACT IS, THAT OUR STUDIES HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE AIRPORT RAILWAY, FULLY IN PLACE FOR DAY ONE - THE OPENING DATE IN 1997 OF THE NEW AIRPORT - IS NOT ONLY THE BEST OPTION FROM A TRANSPORT POLICY POINT OF VIEW, BUT ALSO PROVIDES THE BEST POSSIBLE RETURN ON INVESTMENT."

MR LEUNG ALSO SAID THE AIRPORT RAILWAY WAS A COST-EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT PROJECT, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE MTRC WAS THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO ENABLE IT TO FINANCE THE PROJECT.

"HONG KONG IS REALLY GETTING 'ONE TRACK, TWO RAILWAYS'.

"BY ALIGNING THE TWO RAIL SERVICES ON LARGELY COMMON TRACKS, WE HAVE MANAGED TO BUILD AN ADDITIONAL CROSS HARBOUR RAIL LINK, WHICH WILL RELIEVE CONGESTION IN THE NATHAN ROAD CORRIDOR, PLUS A FAST RAIL LINK TO THE NEW AIRPORT, FOR ONLY 20 PER CENT MORE THAN IT WOULD HAVE COST TO BUILD EITHER RAILWAY ALONE."

MR LEUNG WENT ON TO OUTLINE THE FOUR-POINT SUPPORT PACKAGE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS DEVELOPED TO ENABLE THE MTRC TO FINANCE THE AIRPORT RAILWAY. UNDER THIS PACKAGE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD:

- * FORGO DIVIDENDS FROM THE MTRC BETWEEN 1997 AND 2001, AT AN ESTIMATED VALUE OF \$2.8 BILLION AT 1991 PRICES, TO ASSIST THE FINANCING OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY;
- * GRANT 61 HECTARES OF LAND TO THE MTRC FOR PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AT CENTRAL, WEST KOWLOON, TAI KOK TSUI, TSING YI AND TUNG CHUNG AIRPORT RAILWAY STATIONS;
- * SUBSCRIBE \$3 BILLION OF EQUITY TO THE MTRC IN 1993 FROM THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND, AND MAKE AVAILABLE ADDITIONAL CALLABLE EQUITY OF \$6.3 BILLION (BOTH FIGURES AT 1991 PRICES), TO BE DRAWN UPON ONLY IN SPECIFIC ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES; AND
- * UNDERTAKE TO COMPLETE ALL AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME PROJECTS REQUIRED FOR THE OPERATION OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY, AND REIMBURSE 80 PER CENT OF REVENUE LOST TO THE MTRC IF THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A DELAY IN ITS COMMISSIONING.

MR LEUNG SAID THE MTRC HAD AN EXCELLENT REPUTATION AS A BORROWER, AND THE AIM OF THE SUPPORT PACKAGE WAS TO MAINTAIN THE MTRC'S CREDIT RATING TO ENABLE IT TO BORROW SUCCESSFULLY FOR THE AIRPORT RAILWAY PROJECT.

"WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING IS NOT ONLY THE MINIMUM DEGREE OF SUPPORT NECESSARY TO ENABLE THE MTRC TO FINANCE THIS PROJECT, BUT IT IS ALSO PREFERABLE TO THE ONLY OTHER ALTERNATIVES.

"IF WE FUNDED CONSTRUCTION OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY THROUGH THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME, THIS WOULD INVOLVE A COMMITMENT ON PUBLIC FUNDS OF \$22 BILLION AT 1991 PRICES, AND TAKING AWAY RESOURCES FROM OTHER KEY AREAS BETWEEN NOW AND 1997.

"ALTERNATIVELY, IF WE GUARANTEED THE MTRC'S BORROWING IN FULL, OUR GUARANTEES WOULD NEED TO REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL ALL DEBT WAS REPAYED, WHICH COULD BE WELL AFTER 1997.

"THE MTRC'S CREDIT-RATING AGENCIES HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD MAINTAIN THE CORPORATION'S CURRENT CREDIT RATING ON THE BASIS OF THE PACKAGE WE ARE PROPOSING," MR LEUNG SAID.

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RESULT OF PRELIMINARY ALLOCATION OF IMPORTED WORKERS AVAILABLE SOON
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLETED INITIAL PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS FROM EMPLOYERS UNDER THE 1992 GENERAL LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BRANCH SAID TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT ALTOGETHER 8,350 COMPANIES HAD SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS TO IMPORT 92,631 FOREIGN WORKERS.

/"THE TOTAL

"THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS BEING APPLIED FOR FAR EXCEEDS THE APPROVED QUOTA OF ABOUT 12,000," HE SAID.

THE STEERING GROUP ON IMPORTATION OF LABOUR CHAIRED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER HAS COMPLETED DELIBERATIONS OF QUOTA ALLOCATION INVOLVING THREE MAIN STEPS.

THESE STEPS ARE: PRELIMINARY VETTING OF INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS, ALLOCATION BY INDUSTRY, AND ALLOCATION BY COMPANY WITHIN INDUSTRY.

THE OMELCO MANPOWER PANEL AND THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD (LAB) WILL BE BRIEFED ON THE LATEST SITUATION AND CONSULTED ON THE PRELIMINARY ALLOCATION OF QUOTA BY INDUSTRY EARLY NEXT WEEK.

"SUBJECT TO ANY COMMENTS THE MANPOWER PANEL AND THE LAB MAY HAVE, WE HOPE TO ANNOUNCE THE RESULT OF ALLOCATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THROUGH THE PRELIMINARY VETTING OF INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED WORKERS HAD BEEN SCALED DOWN TO 40,493 (FROM 4,558 COMPANIES).

AMONG THOSE DISQUALIFIED ARE CASES WHERE THE EMPLOYER: HAS ADVERSE RECORD, THAT IS, EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS; PROVIDES INACCURATE INFORMATION; HAS NOT REGISTERED VACANCIES WITH THE LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT; REFUSES TO EMPLOY LOCAL WORKERS WITHOUT GOOD REASONS OR SETS TOO RESTRICTIVE JOB REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL APPLICANTS; HAS ALREADY EMPLOYED MORE IMPORTED WORKERS THAN LOCAL WORKERS; AND DOES NOT MEET THE GOVERNMENT'S STIPULATED REQUIREMENTS WITH REGARD TO WAGE RATE OR LEVEL OF SKILL.

"EVEN AT 40,493 QUALIFIED APPLICATIONS, THE NUMBER OF WORKERS APPLIED FOR STILL EXCEEDS AVAILABLE QUOTA BY 3.4 TIMES," THE SPOKESMAN NOTED.

IN CONSIDERING THE ALLOCATION OF INDUSTRY QUOTA, HE SAID, THE STEERING GROUP HAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- * VACANCIES - THE VACANCY PATTERN ENUMERATED FROM THE DECEMBER 1991 CENSUS SURVEY AS WELL AS THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF QUALIFIED APPLICATIONS WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT;
- * WAGE - THE PATTERN OF WAGE INCREASES IS A REFLECTION OF RELATIVE SHORTAGES WHILE WAGE LEVEL IS GENERALLY CORRELATED WITH THE LEVEL OF SKILL AND IS A PROXY OF LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY; AND
- * LABOUR UTILISATION - THE TWO IMPORTANT INDICATORS OF WHICH ARE THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT RATES. INDUSTRIES WITH RELATIVELY HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT OR UNDER-EMPLOYMENT RATES WOULD BE GIVEN A LOWER PRIORITY.

"SUBJECT TO FINALISATION OF THE INDUSTRY QUOTA, ALLOCATION TO INDIVIDUAL COMPANY WILL BY AND LARGE BE ON A PRO-RATA BASIS.

"TO AVOID FRAGMENTATION OF QUOTA AND TO FACILITATE ENFORCEMENT, THE STEERING GROUP IS CONSIDERING WHETHER ALLOCATION SHOULD BE MADE TO THOSE CASES ENTAILING ONE OR TWO IMPORTED WORKERS," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

FURTHER MEASURES TO CURB SMUGGLING

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) ANNOUNCED MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED IN FURTHERANCE OF ITS OBJECTIVE TO COMBAT SMUGGLING.

THE IMPORT AND EXPORT OF OUTBOARD ENGINES EXCEEDING 150 HORSEPOWER AND LEFT-HAND-DRIVE VEHICLES WILL BE PROHIBITED UNDER THE IMPORT AND EXPORT (GENERAL) REGULATIONS EXCEPT UNDER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH A LICENCE.

BY INTRODUCING AN IMPORT AND EXPORT LICENSING REGIME FOR LEFT-HAND-DRIVE VEHICLES, THE SUPPLY OF A POPULAR ITEM FOR SMUGGLING WOULD BE REDUCED WITHOUT AFFECTING LEGITIMATE TRADERS, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE CONTROL IMPOSED ON OUTBOARD ENGINES WOULD DEPRIVE THE SMUGGLERS OF THE HIGH-POWERED OUTBOARD ENGINES REQUIRED FOR OPERATION OF THEIR SPEEDBOATS, HE ADDED.

THE CARRIAGE OF OUTBOARD ENGINES EXCEEDING 150 HORSEPOWER ON VESSELS OF LESS THAN 250 GROSS TONS WITHIN HONG KONG WATERS WILL ALSO BE PROHIBITED UNDER THE IMPORT AND EXPORT (CARRIAGE OF ARTICLES) REGULATIONS EXCEPT IN CIRCUMSTANCES DEFINED IN THE LEGISLATION OR UNDER AUTHORITY OF A CARRIAGE LICENCE.

THIS WILL FACILITATE PROSECUTION IN THE EVENT THAT A CONSIGNMENT OF ENGINES IS SEIZED WITHIN HONG KONG WATERS.

THE NEW MEASURES WILL BE GAZETTED ON APRIL 24 AND EFFECTIVE FROM MAY 1 THIS YEAR.

ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE, MR K S TONG, WILL BE AVAILABLE AT 3.00 PM TODAY IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM (ROOM 920) OF HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL, TO ANSWER ANY PRESS ENQUIRIES.

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OPENING OF SHING MUN TUNNELS TO NT TAXIS APPROVED

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THE SHING MUN TUNNELS WILL BE OPENED TO NEW TERRITORIES (NT) TAXIS ON APRIL 29, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE INTERESTS OF NT RESIDENTS AND URBAN TAXIS AND THE IMPACT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF NT TAXIS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

/NT RESIDENTS

NT RESIDENTS WILL BENEFIT FROM THE DECISION BY BEING OFFERED A QUICKER ROUTE FROM THE NORTHERN NEW TERRITORIES TO SHA TIN OR TSUEN WAN WITH A CHOICE OF EITHER URBAN AND NT TAXIS THROUGH THE SHING MUN TUNNELS.

"THE OPENING OF THE SHING MUN TUNNELS TO NT TAXIS WOULD LINK UP THEIR PERMITTED OPERATION POINTS IN SHA TIN AND TSUEN WAN WITHOUT ENLARGING THEIR CATCHMENT AREAS," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

AS THE OPENING OF THE TUNNELS TO NT TAXIS IS INTENDED TO CATER FOR NT RESIDENTS, SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT ROUTINGS WILL BE DESIGNATED FOR NT TAXIS TO AVOID THEM PROVIDING A CHEAPER SERVICE BETWEEN THEIR PERMITTED POINTS IN SHA TIN AND TSUEN WAN THAN THEIR URBAN COUNTERPARTS.

THIS IS TO AVOID UNFAIR COMPETITION BETWEEN URBAN AND NT TAXIS.

"NT TAXIS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO USE THE TAI CHUNG KIU ROAD AND THE SLIP ROAD BETWEEN FO TAN ROAD AND TAI PO ROAD LEADING TO THE SHING MUN TUNNELS.

"INSTEAD, THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO USE THE TATE'S CAIRN HIGHWAY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE OPENING OF THE SHING MUN TUNNELS TO NT TAXIS WOULD HAVE MINIMAL EFFECT ON THEIR AVAILABILITY IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THIS IS BECAUSE THE DEMAND FOR TAXI SERVICE BETWEEN THE NORTHERN NEW TERRITORIES AND SHA TIN/TSUEN WAN IS NOT HIGH IN VIEW OF THE LONG DISTANCE.

THE REVISED PERMITTED AREAS FOR NT TAXIS IN SHA TIN AND TSUEN WAN WILL BE GAZETTED ON APRIL 24 THIS YEAR.

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HOTLINE TO FIGHT CROSS-BORDER SMUGGLING

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A HOTLINE LINK BETWEEN THE ANTI-SMUGGLING TASK FORCE AND THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN GUANGZHOU WAS LAUNCHED TODAY (THURSDAY) AS PART OF A CONTINUOUS EFFORT WAGED BY BOTH SIDES TO COMBAT CROSS-BORDER SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BY A POLICE SPOKESMAN TODAY FOLLOWING A THREE-DAY VISIT TO THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE BY A NINE-MEMBER DELEGATION LED BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE GUANGDONG PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU, MR CHEN WENLI.

THE DELEGATION LEFT FOR GUANGZHOU THIS AFTERNOON.

/DURING THEIR

DURING THEIR VISIT, THE DELEGATION MEMBERS HAD HELD TALKS WITH SENIOR POLICE OFFICIALS ON PLANS FOR FUTURE JOINT OPERATIONS AGAINST SMUGGLING SYNDICATES.

THE GUANGDONG SECURITY OFFICIALS HAD ALSO VISITED VARIOUS SMUGGLING "BLACKSPOTS" IN THE TERRITORY.

THE VISIT IS PART OF A REGULAR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE BETWEEN THE TWO LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES IN THE BATTLE AGAINST SMUGGLERS.

THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, MR EDDIE HUI KI-ON, PAID A SIMILAR VISIT TO SHENZHEN ON MARCH 11 DURING WHICH BOTH SIDES HAD HAD VERY CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS ON WAYS TO FURTHER ENHANCING CO-OPERATION IN COMBATING SMUGGLING.

THE SETTING UP OF A HOTLINE BETWEEN ANTI-SMUGGLING OFFICERS FROM BOTH PLACES WAS ONE OF THE MANY AGREED ACTIONS DURING THE MARCH 11 VISIT.

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HK TO PURSUE ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION IN THE ESCAP REGION

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IT WAS HONG KONG'S POLICY TO PARTICIPATE AND CONTRIBUTE FULLY IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION FORUMS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE, MR DONALD TSANG, TOLD PARTICIPANTS OF THE 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP) IN PEKING TODAY.

"WHILE WE GIVE OUR SUPPORT TO REGIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION, WE SEE SUCH CO-OPERATION AS COMPLEMENTARY, NOT A SUBSTITUTE, TO THE OPEN MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM.

"OUR PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION MUST THEREFORE BE CONSISTENT WITH THE PRECEPTS OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT)," HE SAID.

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S ESCAP PLENARY SESSION IS "REGIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION IN THE ESCAP REGION".

HEADING THE HONG KONG DELEGATION AT THE SESSION IS OMELCO MEMBER MR EDWARD HO. OTHER MEMBERS ARE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS MR YIP HAK-KWONG, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY MISS WENDY CHEUNG SUK-TING AND MR TSANG WHO PRESENTED THE HONG KONG STATEMENT.

MR TSANG POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC LINKS WITH ASIA PACIFIC COUNTRIES WERE EVER GROWING, ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS TRADE, INVESTMENT, FINANCES, TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

"IN THE COMING DECADE, HONG KONG WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE FULL USE OF ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION AND ITS ROLE AS A TRADE AND FINANCIAL CENTRE IN THE ASIA PACIFIC.

"THE ASIA PACIFIC HOLDS VAST OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL OF US, AND IN THE PURSUIT OF REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE ASIA PACIFIC HONG KONG IS DETERMINED TO PLAY A ROBUST PART," MR TSANG SAID.

HE TOLD THE MEETING THAT HONG KONG CONTINUED TO BE AN ATTRACTIVE LOCATION FOR INVESTMENT FROM OTHER TERRITORIES IN THE REGION BECAUSE OF THE BENEFIT OF A LOW TAX REGIME AND AN EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE.

TOTAL REGIONAL INWARD INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY REACHED US\$3 BILLION AT THE END OF 1990, ACCOUNTING FOR 78 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL FOREIGN INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT IN THE TERRITORY.

IN THAT YEAR, JAPAN RANKED NUMBER ONE AMONG ALL COUNTRIES INVESTING IN HONG KONG'S INDUSTRY, ACCOUNTING FOR 32 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL INVESTMENT VALUE. THE UNITED STATES CAME SECOND WITH 31 PERCENT AND CHINA THIRD WITH 11 PERCENT.

"TWO DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CLEAR IN RELATION TO HONG KONG'S FOREIGN INVESTMENT. FIRST, MORE INVESTMENT IS NOW IN THE SERVICE SECTORS. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION WHICH HONG KONG IS GOING THROUGH.

"SECONDLY, CHINA IS FAST BECOMING AN IMPORTANT INVESTOR IN HONG KONG," MR TSANG SAID.

A SURVEY CONDUCTED IN THE MIDDLE OF LAST YEAR SHOWED THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE 606 COMPANIES HAVING THEIR REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS LOCATED IN HONG KONG WERE FROM THE ASIA PACIFIC.

TALKING ABOUT THE TERRITORY'S INVESTMENT IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION, MR TSANG EMPHASISED THAT FOR HONG KONG, INVESTMENT WAS VERY MUCH A TWO-WAY STREET.

"IN ADDITION TO ITS EXTENSIVE INVESTMENTS IN SOUTH CHINA, HONG KONG CONTINUES TO LOOK OUTWARDS FOR INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS MANY OF ITS HOME-GROWN BUSINESSES HAVE GONE MULTINATIONAL.

"AND NATURALLY THEIR INVESTMENTS OVERSEAS RADIATE THROUGH MANY OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN ECONOMIES.

"LABOUR AND SPACE INTENSIVE OPERATIONS OF OUR INDUSTRY, IN PARTICULAR, ARE STEADILY MIGRATING TO NEW MANUFACTURING BASES IN NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES.

"THIS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION ARE ALREADY CO-OPERATING ACCORDING TO EACH OTHER'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE," HE SAID

TURNING TO HONG KONG'S TRADING RELATIONS WITH THE REGION, MR TSANG SAID HONG KONG WAS NOW THE FOURTH LARGEST TRADING ENTITY IN ASIA PACIFIC AND 10TH IN THE WORLD.

HE ATTRIBUTED THIS PHENOMENAL GROWTH TO THE SUCCESS OF HONG KONG IN USING IMAGINATIVELY ITS GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION BETWEEN THE FAST EXPANDING CHINESE MARKET AND OTHER ECONOMIES IN THE REGION.

AS HONG KONG'S INDUSTRY MOVED UPMARKET, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FROM ADVANCED COUNTRIES BECAME AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF THE TERRITORY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

TO THIS END, MR TSANG WELCOMED TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE FROM ALL OVERSEAS INVESTORS.

HE INVITED PARTICIPATION BY COUNTRIES IN THE REGION IN THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECT IN HONG KONG.

"SOME CONTRACTS FOR OUR CONSULTANCY AND CONSTRUCTION WORK HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO LEADING COMPANIES IN THE REGION.

"WE ARE PLEASED THAT HONG KONG CAN CONTINUE TO PROVIDE DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES TO COUNTRIES IN THE REGION AND IN THE PROCESS CAN BENEFIT FROM THE TECHNOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE OF OUR ASIA PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS," MR TSANG SAID.

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BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL GAZETTED

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THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, WHICH SEEKS TO ENABLE REPORTING BY EXTERNAL AUDITORS ON THE INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS OF BANKS, IS GAZETTED TODAY (THURSDAY).

"BANKING SUPERVISORS WORLDWIDE HAVE INCREASINGLY RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING THE QUALITY OF AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS' INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"EFFECTIVE SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ENSURING THAT THE BUSINESS IS PRUDENTLY RUN AND THAT VARIOUS LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS ARE COMPLIED WITH," HE ADDED.

CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE BANKING SUPERVISOR AND AUDITORS WILL ENABLE KNOWLEDGE AND OPINIONS TO BE POOLED, AVOIDING UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION OF WORK AND REDUCING COST, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM CONDUCTED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BANKING INDUSTRY AND THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS FOR REPORTING BY EXTERNAL AUDITORS UNDER THE ORDINANCE HAS RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

FOR INSTANCE, UNDER THE EXISTING SYSTEM, THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO REQUIRE THE AUDITOR OF AN INSTITUTION TO REVIEW THE SYSTEMS OF THE INSTITUTION DESIGNED FOR PRODUCING PRUDENTIAL DATA AND GIVE AN OPINION ON THE ADEQUACY OF THESE SYSTEMS.

/THE CERTIFICATES {.....

THE CERTIFICATES SUBMITTED BY AUDITORS UNDER THE PRESENT SECTION 63 FOCUS ONLY ON THE ACCURACY OF COMPILATION OF THE RETURNS OF THE INSTITUTIONS, RATHER THAN ON THE RELIABILITY OF THE UNDERLYING SYSTEMS.

NEITHER ARE AUDITORS REQUIRED TO CERTIFY THE QUALITY OF OTHER INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS TO ENABLE, FOR EXAMPLE, ADEQUATE PROVISIONING AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE OTHER DUTIES IMPOSED BY THE ORDINANCE.

ALSO THE COMMISSIONER'S EXISTING POWER TO APPOINT A SECOND AUDITOR UNDER SECTION 59 COVERS AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS ONLY, BUT NOT REVIEW OF THE INSTITUTION'S INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS. IT IS ALSO UNCLEAR TO WHOM THE SECOND AUDITOR IS TO REPORT.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID CLAUSES 2, 4 AND 5 WERE INTENDED TO PROVIDE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO STRENGTHEN AUDITORS' ROLE IN REPORTING ON THE INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS OF AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS.

CLAUSE 4 PROVIDES A GENERAL POWER TO THE COMMISSIONER TO REQUIRE AN INSTITUTION TO PROVIDE HIM WITH A REPORT BY AN AUDITOR ON MATTERS PERTINENT TO THE EXERCISE OF HIS FUNCTIONS UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

"THIS WOULD INCLUDE A REPORT ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF AN INSTITUTION'S INTERNAL CONTROLS. SUCH REPORTS WOULD BE COMMISSIONED ON A SELECTIVE BASIS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

CLAUSE 5 ENABLES THE COMMISSIONER TO REQUIRE REPORTS, WHICH WOULD BE CARRIED OUT ON A REGULAR, ANNUAL BASIS, ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS - THOSE WHICH ENABLE AN INSTITUTION TO COMPILE ITS PRUDENTIAL RETURNS CORRECTLY, COMPLY WITH ITS DUTIES UNDER THE BANKING ORDINANCE AND, FOR HONG KONG INCORPORATED INSTITUTIONS ONLY, MAINTAIN ADEQUATE PROVISIONS.

OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY BE THE SUBJECT OF A REPORT BY THE AUDITORS INCLUDE WHETHER THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ANY MATERIAL CONTRAVENTION BY THE INSTITUTION OF ITS DUTIES UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID A NUMBER OF OTHER CHANGES TO THE ORDINANCE WERE BEING SOUGHT.

CLAUSE 3 SEEKS TO STREAMLINE THE ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY THE COMMISSIONER REPORTS A BANKING CRISIS TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL UNDER SECTION 52(1)(D) WITH A VIEW TO TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION, FOR EXAMPLE THE PRESENTATION OF A WINDING UP PETITION TO THE HIGH COURT.

AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE NORMAL SEVEN DAYS' NOTICE TO THE INSTITUTION CONCERNED, THIS PROVISION WOULD ALLOW THE COMMISSIONER TO GIVE A SHORTER NOTICE, PROVIDED HE HAD THE CONSENT OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO DO SO AND THAT TO DO SO WAS REASONABLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE COMMISSIONER WOULD STILL BE REQUIRED TO GIVE WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE INSTITUTION CONCERNED AND TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF ITS REPRESENTATIONS IN THE REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL.

"THE FLEXIBILITY COULD PROVE TO BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL WHEN IT IS NECESSARY TO TAKE ACTION TO PRESERVE THE ASSETS OF A FAILING INSTITUTION," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

CLAUSE 8 INTRODUCES A NEW SECTION 92(4A) AND PROVIDES A DEFENCE FOR CERTAIN PERSONS WHO HAVE PUBLISHED AN ADVERTISEMENT THAT CONTAINED FALSE INFORMATION IN BREACH OF SECTION 92(5)(C).

"IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO HOLD PERSONS SUCH AS THE ADVERTISING MEDIA RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLISHING FALSE INFORMATION GIVEN THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CHECK THE VERACITY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY OVERSEAS DEPOSIT-TAKERS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SYSTEM OF REPORTING BY EXTERNAL AUDITORS REPRESENT PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ONGOING EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG'S SYSTEM OF BANKING SUPERVISION CONTINUES TO MEASURE UP TO THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

"THE CURRENT PROPOSALS RESULT FROM OVER A YEAR'S HARD WORK IN CONSULTATION WITH THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF BANKS, THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES ASSOCIATION AND THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS AND HAVE BEEN REFINED WITH THEIR ASSISTANCE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THEY WILL ENABLE BOTH BETTER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING AND AUDITORS OF AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS AND ASSIST IN EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS HAD IN PARTICULAR PROVIDED VALUABLE INPUT IN THE PROCESS WHICH REPRESENTED AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD IN FOSTERING A CLOSER LINK BETWEEN THE AUDITORS AND THE COMMISSIONER IN THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS.

"THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL HAVE ALSO BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE BANKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND HAVE BEEN WELCOMED," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE BILL IS SCHEDULED FOR INTRODUCTION INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON APRIL 29.

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BILL TO CLEAR CLOUDS OVER EMERGENCY BOARDING OF VESSELS BY FIREMEN
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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO AMEND THE FIRE SERVICES ORDINANCE TO ENABLE THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES AND HIS OFFICERS TO CARRY OUT FIRE-FIGHTING AND OTHER EMERGENCY DUTIES ON BOARD A VESSEL ON THE OCCASION OF A FIRE OR OTHER CALAMITY.

THE FIRE SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 GAZETTED TODAY (THURSDAY) IS INTENDED TO REMOVE THE AMBIGUITY ON WHETHER MEMBERS OF THE FIRE SERVICES HAVE POWERS TO BOARD A VESSEL ON THE OCCASION OF A FIRE OR OTHER CALAMITY.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID UNDER THE EXISTING ORDINANCE, MEMBERS OF THE FIRE SERVICES ARE GIVEN THE POWERS OF ENTRY TO PREMISES AND THING FOR THE PURPOSE OF FIRE-FIGHTING OR MINIMISING THE EFFECT OF CALAMITY.

"HOWEVER, IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE TERM 'THING' INCLUDES A VESSEL SINCE THE TERM IS NOT CLEARLY DEFINED.

"TO REMOVE THE AMBIGUITY, IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE POWER OF ENTRY ONTO 'VESSELS' SHOULD BE SPECIFIED IN THE ORDINANCE."

THE OPPORTUNITY IS ALSO TAKEN TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF VESSELS TO EXCLUDE WARSHIPS TO BRING IT IN LINE WITH THE DEFINITION GIVEN IN THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE.

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JUMBO BDTC AND BNO PASSPORTS INTRODUCED

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JUMBO 48-PAGE HONG KONG BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN (BDTC) AND BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) [BN(O)] PASSPORTS WITH MACHINE READABILITY WILL BE ISSUED FROM MAY 1.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY (THURSDAY), A SPOKESMAN FOR THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT SAID THE NEW-STYLE PASSPORTS HAD A BURGUNDY-RED SOFT COVER AND WERE SLIGHTLY THICKER THAN THE STANDARD 32-PAGE MACHINE-READABLE PASSPORTS ISSUED SINCE JUNE 1, 1990.

THE FEE FOR A 48-PAGE BDTC PASSPORT IS HK\$400 WHILE THAT FOR A 48-PAGE BN(O) PASSPORT IS 22.5 POUNDS STERLING WHICH IS LEVIED IN POUND STERLING UNDER THE CONSULAR FEES ACT 1980 BUT PAYABLE IN HONG KONG DOLLARS.

THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT THE LARGER-SIZED PASSPORT FOLLOWED THE EXAMPLE OF BRITISH PASSPORTS ISSUED BY THE UK GOVERNMENT AND WAS BEING INTRODUCED FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF TRAVELLERS.

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ROADWORKS TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION OF SEWAGE PIPELINE

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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO CARRY OUT A SERIES OF ROADWORKS NEAR TA KWU LING TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF A SEWAGE-DISPOSAL PIPELINE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THIS IS PART OF THE PROPOSED NORTHEAST NEW TERRITORIES LANDFILL PROJECT.

THE WORK WILL START IN NEXT JANUARY AND BE COMPLETED AROUND FEBRUARY 1994.

A NOTICE CONCERNING THE PROPOSED WORKS IS GAZETTED TODAY (THURSDAY).

A PLAN SHOWING THE PROPOSED WORKS CAN BE SEEN AT THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT OFFICES DURING OFFICE HOURS:

- * CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT OFFICE, PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL;
- * DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, NORTH, SIXTH FLOOR, NORTH DISTRICT GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, 3 PIK FUNG ROAD, FANLING; AND
- * NORTH DISTRICT OFFICE, THIRD FLOOR, NORTH DISTRICT GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, 3 PIK FUNG ROAD, FANLING.

ANY PERSON OBJECTING TO THE PROPOSAL MUST SEND HIS OBJECTION IN WRITING TO THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, EAST WING, SECOND FLOOR, LOWER ALBERT ROAD, CENTRAL NOT LATER THAN JUNE 15, THIS YEAR, DESCRIBING HIS INTEREST AND MANNER IN WHICH HE ALLEGES HE WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL.

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GRADING OF BEACH WATER QUALITY ANNOUNCED

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) TODAY (THURSDAY) ANNOUNCED GRADES ON THE BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER QUALITY OF ALL BATHING BEACHES IN HONG KONG.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GRADING SYSTEM IS TO INFORM SWIMMERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC ABOUT THE STATE OF BACTERIOLOGICAL POLLUTION AT VARIOUS BEACHES.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID STARTING FROM THIS WEEK, THE GRADING WILL BE ANNOUNCED BIWEEKLY DURING THE BATHING SEASON, TO COINCIDE WITH THE FREQUENCY AT WHICH BEACH WATERS ARE USUALLY SAMPLED.

THE GRADING IS BASED ON THE MOST RECENT E.COLI DATA OBTAINED BY THE EPD IN ITS ROUTINE MONITORING PROGRAMME.

AS WITH LAST YEAR, THE GRADING ALSO INCLUDES AN ESTIMATE OF THE RISK OF SUFFERING SOME MINOR SKIN OR GASTROINTESTINAL COMPLAINTS AS A RESULT OF SWIMMING AT A BEACH THAT HAS SOME DEGREE OF POLLUTION.

THE ESTIMATE IS BASED ON A LARGE BODY OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION GATHERED IN HONG KONG IN RECENT BATHING SEASONS.

THE GRADING OF SOME BEACHES MAY VARY DURING SUMMER. THIS REPRESENTS A NATURAL FLUCTUATION IN THE BACTERIOLOGICAL QUALITY OF BATHING WATERS IN MOST CASES, AS RAIN AND TIDES BRING MORE OR LESS POLLUTION TO THE BEACHES.

/HOWEVER, THE

HOWEVER, THE GRADES GIVE A GOOD GENERAL PICTURE OF THE WATER QUALITY AT BATHING BEACHES AT THE TIME OF REPORTING AND FORM THE BEST AVAILABLE FORECAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

"BEACHES WITH HIGHLY DEVELOPED HINTERLANDS ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE POLLUTED THAN THE GRADES SUGGEST DURING AND AFTER HEAVY RAIN. BATHERS SHOULD AVOID SUCH BEACHES FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS AFTER A STORM, LONGER IF THE WEATHER REMAINS OVERCAST OR LESS IF THERE IS STRONG SUNSHINE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE SYSTEM FOR GRADING BEACH WATER QUALITY IS AS FOLLOWS :

- * GRADE "1" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS GOOD. THE E. COLI COUNT IS NO MORE THAN 24 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED RISK OF MINOR ILLNESS TO SWIMMERS IS UNDETECTABLE.
- * GRADE "2" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS FAIR. THE E. COLI COUNT IS NO MORE THAN 180 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED HEALTH RISK IS NO MORE THAN 10 CASES OF MINOR ILLNESS PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.
- * GRADE "3" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS POOR. THE E. COLI COUNT IS NO MORE THAN 610 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED HEALTH RISK IS NO MORE THAN 15 CASES OF MINOR ILLNESS PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.
- * GRADE "4" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS VERY POOR. THE E. COLI COUNT IS MORE THAN 610 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED HEALTH RISK IS MORE THAN 15 CASES OF MINOR ILLNESS PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.

THE DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO CLOSE A BEACH TO SWIMMERS IS BASED ON A JUDGEMENT OF WHAT DEGREE OF POLLUTION IS ACCEPTABLE.

NORMALLY, THE CLOSURE OF A BEACH WOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL OR REGIONAL COUNCIL IF A GRADE "4" OCCURRED REPEATEDLY, SO THAT THE AVERAGE HEALTH RISK OVER THE BATHING SEASON EXCEEDED 15 CASES PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.

SIMILARLY, THE REOPENING OF A CLOSED BEACH WOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED IF A GRADE "3" OR BETTER WERE CONSISTENTLY OBTAINED.

AT PRESENT, TWO BATHING BEACHES, NAMELY CASTLE PEAK AND OLD CAFETERIA, HAVE BEEN DECLARED UNSUITABLE FOR SWIMMING PURPOSES, BASED ON THE WATER QUALITY DURING PAST SEASONS.

THEY ARE POLLUTED BY FAECAL WASTES AND FAIL TO ACHIEVE CONSISTENTLY THE HONG KONG STANDARDS. THE PUBLIC ARE ADVISED NOT TO SWIM AT THESE TWO BEACHES.

IN ADDITION, ROCKY BAY BEACH HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR SWIMMING PURPOSES BY THE URBAN COUNCIL. THESE THREE BEACHES ARE IDENTIFIED BY AN "X" IN THE FOLLOWING LIST.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 1992

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THE GRADES ON THE BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER QUALITY OF VARIOUS BEACHES IN HONG KONG TODAY ARE LISTED BELOW :

BEACH	PRESENT GRADING
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(AS AT APRIL 16)

HONG KONG SOUTH

BIG WAVE BAY	3
CHUNG HOM KOK	2
DEEP WATER BAY	1
HAIRPIN	2
MIDDLE BAY	1
REPULSE BAY	1
SHEK O	2
SOUTH BAY	1
ST. STEPHEN'S	2
TURTLE COVE	2
STANLEY MAIN	2
ROCKY BAY	X
TO TEI WAN*	1

TUEN MUN DISTRICT

OLD CAFETERIA	X
NEW CAFETERIA	3
CASTLE PEAK	X
KADOORIE	3
BUTTERFLY	3

/SAI KUNG

SAI KUNG DISTRICT

CAMPERS	1
CLEAR WATER BAY 1ST BEACH	2
CLEAR WATER BAY 2ND BEACH	1
HAP MUN BAY	1
KIU TSUI	1
PAK SHA CHAU	1
SILVERSTRAND	3
TRIO (HEBE HAVEN)	2

ISLANDS DISTRICT

CHEUNG SHA UPPER	1
CHEUNG SHA LOWER	2
DISCOVERY BAY*	3
HUNG SHING YEH	1
KWUN YAM WAN	2
TONG FUK	1
LO SO SHING	1
PUI O	1
SILVERMINE BAY	4
TUNG WAN, CHEUNG CHAU	2
TUNG O*	1

TSUEN WAN DISTRICT

ANGLERS'	4
APPROACH	3
CASAM	3

GEMINI	3
HOI MEI WAN	3
LIDO	3
TING KAU	3
TUNG WAN, MA WAN	2

NOTE : "X" THE BEACH HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR SWIMMING PURPOSES.
 * NON-GAZETTED BEACH.

SILVERMINE BAY BEACH AND ANGLERS' BEACH ARE GRADED "4" ON THIS OCCASION. THE VERY POOR WATER QUALITY AT THESE TWO BEACHES IS DUE TO THE RECENT HEAVY RAINFALL WHICH HAD CAUSED POLLUTANTS IN THE BEACH HINTERLAND TO BE FLUSHED INTO THE SEA WATER.

IN ADDITION TO THIS REGULAR REPORTING SYSTEM, AN ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER QUALITY OF ALL THE BATHING BEACHES IN HONG KONG WILL CONTINUE TO BE PREPARED BY EPD AFTER EACH BATHING SEASON.

THIS WILL ADVISE THE BEACH MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES ON THE SUITABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL BEACHES FOR SWIMMING PURPOSES.

THE ANNUAL REPORT, ENTITLED "BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER QUALITY OF BATHING BEACHES IN HONG KONG, 1991", FOR THE BATHING SEASON OF 1991 IS ON SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, GPO BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT MR PAUL HOLMES, ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EPD, ON TEL. 835-1003.

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EXOTIC BONSAI SHOW OPENS TODAY
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MORE THAN 300 EXOTIC POTTED PLANTS WENT ON DISPLAY AT THE TAOIST CHING CHUNG KOON TODAY (THURSDAY).

PRESENTED IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE BONSAI STYLE, THE PLANTS WILL BE ON DISPLAY IN THE 1992 TUEN MUN BONSAI SHOW WHICH WILL LAST UNTIL APRIL 26 (SUNDAY).

A 200-YEAR-OLD MINIATURE BUDDHA PINE HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS THE KEY EXHIBIT.

/APART FROM

APART FROM THE RICH COLLECTION OF POTTED PLANTS FROM THE MONASTERY, THE SHOW ALSO FEATURES WINNING ENTRIES AT A BONSAI COMPETITION HELD EARLIER IN TUEN MUN SCHOOLS. THERE IS ALSO A PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAY OF LAST YEAR'S EXHIBITS.

THE 11-DAY EXHIBITION WILL BE OPEN TO PUBLIC FROM 8 AM TO 6 PM DAILY. ADMISSION IS FREE. A PHOTO CONTEST WILL ALSO BE HELD.

OFFICIATING AT TODAY'S OPENING CEREMONY WAS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR HO CHE-LEUNG.

OTHER GUESTS INCLUDED THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR PETER LEUNG, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, MR YIP SHUI-MING, AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL SERVICES, MR DAVID CHIU.

THE ANNUAL FUNCTION IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE TAOIST CHING CHUNG KOON, THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE AND SEVERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, WITH SPONSORSHIP FROM THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION, THE MTRC, THE LIGHT RAIL DIVISION OF KCRC, KOWLOON MOTOR BUS, CHINA MOTOR BUS, HONG KONG FERRY (HOLDING) CO. AND THE STAR FERRY CO.

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LAND TO BE RESUMED IN SHA TIN

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TO RESUME LAND AT WONG UK IN SHA TIN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF OPEN SPACE.

THE LAND COMPRISE THREE PRIVATE BUILDING LOTS, SIX PRIVATE MIXED LOTS OF BUILDING LAND AND AGRICULTURAL LAND MEASURING 1,470 SQUARE METRES.

THE LAND WILL BE REVERTED TO THE GOVERNMENT ON THE EXPIRY OF THREE MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF POSTING OF NOTICES ON THE LOTS.

DETAILS OF THE RESUMPTION WERE GAZETTED TODAY (THURSDAY).

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120 VIETS RETURN HOME

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A GROUP OF 120 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS TODAY (THURSDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

COMPRISING 39 MEN, 35 WOMEN, 22 BOYS AND 24 GIRLS, THE GROUP WAS THE 99TH BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

THIS BROUGHT TO 3,361 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY THIS YEAR, AND TO 17,340 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES SINCE THE PROGRAMME STARTED IN MARCH 1989.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 1992

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MORE RECREATIONAL AMENITIES FOR KWAI CHUNG RESIDENTS

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KWAI CHUNG RESIDENTS WILL HAVE MORE RECREATIONAL AMENITIES WHEN WORKS FOR AN INDOOR RECREATION CENTRE AND A LOCAL OPEN SPACE ARE COMPLETED NEXT YEAR.

OCCUPYING AN AREA OF ABOUT TWO HECTARES AT LAI CHO ROAD, THE INDOOR RECREATION CENTRE WILL BE FULLY AIR-CONDITIONED.

IT WILL CONSIST OF A GAMES HALL, A DANCE ROOM, A FITNESS TRAINING ROOM, THREE SQUASH COURTS, CHANGING ROOMS AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICES.

AT AN ADJOINING OPEN SPACE, A FIVE-A-SIDE SOCCER PITCH TOGETHER WITH LANDSCAPED AREA AND PAVILION WILL BE PROVIDED.

WORKS FOR THE PROJECT ARE SCHEDULED TO START THIS JULY AND BE COMPLETED BY AUGUST NEXT YEAR.

THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE WORKS.

TENDERS WILL CLOSE AT NOON ON MAY 8.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	DATE	\$ MILLION
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CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON	15.4.92	700
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	16.4.92	-82
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		+82
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		NEUTRAL

TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 113.0 *+0.0* 16.4.92

/HCNG KONG

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 1992

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.96 PCT	19 MONTHS	2311	6.25	101.85	5.07
1 MONTH	3.80 PCT	22 MONTHS	2402	5.50	100.04	5.55
3 MONTHS	3.75 PCT					
6 MONTHS	3.87 PCT					
12 MONTHS	4.40 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 9,354 MN

CLOSED 16 APRIL 1992

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