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# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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### Financial Secretary sets out his priorities

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The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, said today (Wednesday) that his first task as Financial Secretary was to make sure that Hong Kong's economy went on growing at a steady and sustainable pace.

Speaking at a luncheon meeting of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, Mr Tsang said the predictable, consistent and prudential approach to public finances adopted by the Government would remain unchanged.

"First, the rate of growth in public spending must stay firmly in line with the trend rate of growth of GDP. Second, we must stick to low and predictable taxes, balanced budgets and strong reserves," he said.

He said the linked exchange rate had given Hong Kong the certainty the economy needed and there would be no adjustments or tinkering of the mechanism.

Mr Tsang said he was every much aware that there was a deep anxiety in the community about unemployment.

"As Financial Secretary, I realise that behind the cold statistics of unemployment are men and women and their families who have lost their jobs, lost their monthly income and are probably worrying about making ends meet.

"There is a clear consensus that the Government should do everything in its power to promote full employment," he said.

He said the Government's response involved a three-part policy.

He said the first and most directly useful policy was job counselling and retraining which provided them with the skills they needed to match the jobs available.

Mr Tsang also called on employers and employees to change their attitudes on job placements.

"Rigidities in the labour market are, too often, rigidities in the mind-sets of employers as well as workers," he said.

He said employers, too often, had rigid stereotypes of the "ideal" recruit that are "needed".

"It is no use simply complaining about the difficulties of finding the right person to fill a job. There are plenty of people who, with some retraining, would be able to meet any reasonable requirements," he said.

He said the Government was examining the General Importation of Labour Scheme critically.

"We must not allow a scheme designed to strengthen our economy, by importing labour in areas of shortages, creates opportunities for illegal employment at the expense of our workers.

"At the same time, I have to emphasise the clear need for the flexibility to import workers to meet particular requirements. Imported labour has made a major contribution to our past growth and we cannot let a shortage of specific skills or particular types of labour act as a barrier to our future expansion," he said.

Mr Tsang stressed that the overall economy remained sound and vigorous.

"We are forecasting a five per cent real increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP); and a five per cent real growth is a healthy and sustainable rate of expansion for a mature economy like ours," he said.

Mr Tsang said he saw his primary tasks as Financial Secretary as helping Hong Kong to complete the transition to a service and technology-based economy as well as the transition to Chinese sovereignty and Hong Kong's future role as a Special Administrative Region.

"To ensure that we stay ahead of the game, I have set up a Task Force, which I personally chair, comprising key policy secretaries. Its mission is to come up with proposals for new policies and new institutions to promote the service industries," he added.

"As 1997 draws near, we need to achieve closer co-operation with our future sovereign power, while upholding the commitment to Hong Kong's separate systems enshrined in the Joint Declaration and promised in the Basic Law," he said.

"The tasks for all of us in the Government is to make a reality of 'one country, two systems'."

Mr Tsang said the Government would develop a close working relationship with the first fully-elected Legislative Council. He would also build on the spirit of co-operation and welcomed the Legislative Council's views on the Budget and other issues.

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### Complaint cases update

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In response to press enquiries, a spokesman for the Registration and Electoral Office said today (Wednesday) that so far the Boundary and Election Commission had received a total of 68 election-related complaints. Thirty-one were about election advertisements (25 on advertisements of functional constituency candidates and six on advertisements of geographical constituency candidates).

Action on 36 cases were completed.

Meanwhile, the Returning Officers received a total of 112 cases of complaints. One hundred and six cases were related to election activities launched by geographical constituency candidates while six were on activities by functional constituency candidates. Of the 106 cases, 88 were on election advertisement. Of the latter six cases, five were on election advertisement.

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### Report on VMs escape from detention centre released

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The report on the escape of 23 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) from Green Island Reception Centre (GIRC) on July 26 was released today (Wednesday), a Government spokesman said.

The report was compiled by the Board of Inquiry appointed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services to investigate into the circumstances of the escape. The three-member Board was chaired by a senior superintendent of the Correctional Services Department.

The Board found that the escape was successful because of a combination of factors including:

- \* GIRC was not a purpose-built detention facility. The ageing structure of the huts was vulnerable to deliberate tampering;
- \* Most of the escapees were double-backers who had stayed in GIRC for a long time and were therefore familiar with the overall conditions including the patrol schedule of the staff; and

- \* The terrain of GIRC was such that it created certain unavoidable blind spots for the staff on night duty.

The majority of the recaptured VMs claimed they escaped because they had waited in GIRC for too long. Some also complained about the poor living conditions in the detention centre.

The Board found no evidence to suggest laxity or negligence on the part of the staff in the performance of their duty.

The Board recommended that the physical security on the seaward embankment be strengthened by installing expanded metal and that all the walls of the accommodation be reinforced by mantling expanded metal and cement on the outside.

The Board also recommended that GIRC should be restricted to function as a quarantine centre for newly arrived VMs.

The spokesman said following the escape, all VMs detained in GIRC had been transferred to other detention centres and remedial measures had been taken to tackle the problem of blind spots.

"The Commissioner of Correctional Services is taking action to implement all the other recommendations," he said.

As at today, a total of 19 escapees have been recaptured and four are still at large. There are only two newly arrived VMs in GIRC now.

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#### Kowloon Walled City Park - a model of classical Chinese garden

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The Kowloon Walled City Park is a model of excellence of classical Chinese garden, the Secretary for Works, Mr James Blake, said today (Wednesday).

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the completion of Hong Kong's first authentic Chinese garden, Mr Blake noted: "The experience here is very similar to that in Chartres Cathedral in France. Like the plans of Gothic Cathedrals, a Chinese Garden is a cosmic diagram, revealing a profound and an ancient view of the world and of man's place in it.

"The sensuous impressions lead on to the cerebral pleasure. It is this pleasure which creates the desire to relax and be held by the Mother Nature."

Mr Blake added that the Architectural Services Department had succeeded in conveying the profound meaning of Chinese philosophy in a three-dimensional form.

"The department has courageously broken away from the limitations of tradition and has addressed a new function and meaning to the classical Chinese garden. It is this new interpretation that gives Kowloon Walled City Park the freshness of design," he added.

Also speaking at the ceremony, the Secretary for Recreation and Culture, Mr James So, said the adoption of the Jiangnan style in the overall design of the park was unique and represented a breakthrough in traditional park design in Hong Kong.

He noted that the cramped and poorly constructed buildings had been replaced by a well designed Chinese theme park which was a successful blend of the history and atmosphere of the former Walled City.

"The display of the South Gate remnants, with the original stone plaques of the Walled City and the pre-war concrete remains, demonstrates explicitly the evolution of the City site," he said.

"The yamen building, which is one of the very few surviving examples of its kind in South China, has been restored and preserved in-situ. All those significant surviving relics, including stone tablets, cannon, column bases and others, have been salvaged and are now put on display in the park.

"Under the future management of the Urban Council and Urban Services Department, I am sure that this unique theme park will soon establish itself as a landmark in Hong Kong, of which all of us can be proud and which will provide both interest and enjoyment to those who visit it."

The Director of Architectural Services, Mr Kenneth Chan, said the park's design emphasised an integrated development for promoting cultural awareness, education, leisure activities and tourism.

Mr Chan also pointed out that close co-ordination from the Antiquities and Monuments Office of the Recreation and Culture Branch and the Urban Council, and the dedication of his project team, had all contributed to the project's success.

"Credit must also go to the experts and master craftsmen of various skills from China, who have offered us valuable technical assistance.

"We are confident that the park will add further international attention to our prosperous city. The vanishing of the squatter area has not brought an end to the history of the Kowloon Walled City. Instead, memories of the past, both good and bad, have been enshrined in the new park," he added.

The park, scheduled to be opened to the public at the end of this year, was officially handed over to the Recreation and Culture Branch today.

The project, starting in August last year, has taken less than 14 months to complete at a cost of \$61 million.

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#### Traffic on Tuen Mun Road improving

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Traffic on Tuen Mun Road in both directions is generally smooth today (Wednesday), a Transport Department spokesman said.

Sheung Shui-bound traffic along San Tin Highway has improved following the opening of a temporary lane, which is converted from a cycle track, from Au Tau Roundabout to Sha Po Roundabout.

The temporary lane was closed at 6.30 pm due to low visibility. It will be re-opened for private cars and taxis tomorrow morning at 6 am.

As the Kowloon-bound carriageway of Tuen Mun Road remains partially open, existing special traffic and public transport arrangements for Tuen Mun and Yuen Long will continue tomorrow except for the special LRT feeder bus service Route A57 (serving between Tuen Mun Town Centre and Tuen Mun Ferry Pier) which will be suspended.

The travelling times on Tuen Mun Road as reflected by KMB 60M in the morning and evening peak hours are:

Tuen Mun bound	37 - 104 minutes
Tsuen Wan bound	30 - 107 minutes

The number of bus and ferry passengers to and from Tuen Mun during the morning and evening peak hours are 74,100 and 57,100 respectively with breakdowns below:

	Morning Peak Hours (6 am to 9 am)	Evening Peak Hours (5 pm to 8 pm)
* Ferries to Central	4,900	
* Ferries to Tsuen Wan	1,200	
* Buses to Tsuen Wan	68,000	
* Ferries from Central		5,000
* Ferries from Tsuen Wan		2,100
* Buses to Tuen Mun		50,000
Total:	74,100	57,100

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Display of S6 vacancies in district education offices

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A list showing Secondary 6 vacancies throughout the territory is being displayed at all district education offices for public information until the end of September.

A spokesman for the Education Department said the list of S6 school place vacancies in Hong Kong would be updated weekly.

Secondary 5 leavers with the minimum S6 entry requirement who have not secured an S6 place after the completion of Stage V of the Secondary Six Admission Procedure may apply to the schools with vacancies direct. "But admission will be at the discretion of the schools," the spokesman said.

The current list contains a total of 84 Secondary 6 vacant places.

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Welfare payment arrangements for public holidays

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Recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance under the bank payment system may receive their payments on Friday (September 8) if their pay-days fall on the coming public holidays (September 9 and 10).

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department said today (Wednesday) that special payment arrangements would also be made for recipients of Social Security Allowance whose pay-days fell on September 9 and 10.

Those who have bank accounts in Hong Kong Bank or Hang Seng Bank will receive their payments on Friday (September 8) whereas those with accounts in other banks will receive their payments next Monday (September 11).

In case of doubt, recipients are advised to contact their social security field units.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$million</u>	<u>Time</u> <u>(hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative</u> <u>change</u> <u>(\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,989	0930	-786
Closing balance in the account	1,711	1000	-786
Change attributable to :		1100	-786
Money market activity	-783	1200	-783
LAF today	+505	1500	-783
		1600	-783

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 122.4 \*+0.2\* 6.9.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.82	2 years	2708	6.06	100.20	6.04
1 month	5.79	3 years	3807	6.16	99.72	6.36
3 months	5.79	5 years	5006	6.60	98.91	6.99
6 months	5.79	5 years	M501	7.90	102.16	7.48
12 months	5.83					

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$12,411 million

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