



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of the Governor media session at Immigration Dept

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after visiting the Immigration Department this (Tuesday) afternoon:

Governor: I wanted to visit the Immigration Department today to express my gratitude and the rest of the Government's gratitude to all the officers who've worked here for the extraordinary job that they've done in recent weeks and months in processing so many naturalisation applications. It really has been a huge task. They've dealt, I think, with over 230,000 naturalisation applications since the beginning of the year. The numbers grew, or grew over short periods as the year went past. I think I'm right in saying that we got down to about 180,000 in the last month or so, 50,000 on the last day alone, 100,000 in the last week. So it's been a really enormous task for all our officers here. They've now got the job as you see of interviewing and carrying through the applications to I hope in most cases a successful conclusion. It's a very large job for them all and I'm sure that the whole community is very grateful for the work they're doing, for the long hours they're working in order to deal with these applications in the six-month period. It's important for us to get everything done in good time before the transfer of sovereignty in 1997. So I'm grateful to the Director and all his staff for the excellent job that they've done.

Question: Governor, why do you think there was such a huge spark towards the end? Do you think that things like the Preparatory Committee's vote to set up a provisional legislature might have triggered off some of the applications?

Governor: You'd have to speak to those who applied; there was plenty of time to talk to some of them in the queues and I'm sure that you managed to have one or two interviews. I don't think I can easily speculate about the reasons. I think the main reason why so many people applied at the last minute is because people do things at the last minute. I think it's also true that people in Hong Kong are understandably very concerned about ease of travel after 1997. This is a truly international community. It's a very open society. As one of the greatest trading cities in the world, people perfectly naturally think about their prosperity being very directly related to their ability to move around from country to country, from continent to continent as easily as possible. So I would guess that the overwhelming reason was people's concern that they should have travel made as easy after 1997 as possible.

Question: Mr Patten, you're going to London. Is it time to ask the Foreign Office or ask Mr Major to make good on his promise to mobilise international support should China break any of its promises re Hong Kong?

Governor: The commitment by the Prime Minister and by the British Government remains and there is no particular reason why I have to raise that again with the Prime Minister this Easter. Everybody knows what our position is. Everybody knows our strong determination to do everything we can to ensure that the Joint Declaration is fully implemented in the letter and the spirit. That commitment stands and that commitment will remain.

Question: When do you think that the Government will respond to the Preparatory Committee on the matter of co-operation with the PC?

Governor: Some of you alas weren't able to get up early enough this morning to ask me questions on this issue after the Executive Council meeting. But I answered a couple before. I slipped away to finish my work.

Question: But should we wait after your return from the Easter?

Governor: No. Let me answer the question because it's a good and important question. I don't say this in a provocative way, but we have been waiting since last October to hear from those who are working at the Preparatory Committee on things that they would like us to do to help them. So I don't think they will be expecting as it were a reply by return of post. It's equally true that there are issues on which we would like co-operation from them. There are things that would make our life a lot easier, for example, notice about when the Preparatory Committee and its sub-committees are going to meet and some indication of what their overall work plan is. Now there are some issues that have been raised with this which are urgent and which relate to meetings which are just the other side of Easter. So we'll want to respond on those issues as quickly as possible. But overall we'll respond when we'll have a chance of reviewing all the issues that have been raised with this. Some of them I have to say we want to go back and ask for more information from the Preparatory Committee about. But we'll give a comprehensive reply in due course and that will be within the parameters which we've laid down with which you are familiar and I don't need to repeat them. I imagine those parameters are acceptable to Chinese officials. For example, I recall Mr Xu last December making it absolutely clear that the Preparatory Committee wasn't seeking to challenge the authority of Government before 30th June 1997.

Question: Was the list presented an ultimatum or was it a request?

Governor: No. How can you...? I said this morning and I'll repeat it that I saw one headline this morning which said: Chinese Co-operation Threat. Now I'm sure that was a sub-editor's imagination because how can you have a co-operation threat. If you want co-operation, you don't issue ultimatums, you don't make threats. You put out your hand and it's I hoped grasped warmly from the other side of the table. Of course, if Director Lu is able to come to Hong Kong, which we all hope he'll be able to do, we'd like to see him regularly, these are the sort of issues which I'm sure people would want to discuss with him. But I repeat, co-operation is a matter of give-and-take. This is co-operation, I hope, from both sides. Nothing we will do will first be contrary to the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. Second, nothing we will do will undermine the authority of Government and I'm sure that's something warmly endorsed by Chinese officials. And thirdly, nothing we will do will put a strain on the loyalty and morale and integrity of our civil service.

Question: The Government is announcing the release of a number of Vietnamese boat people following the Privy Council ruling. What message will it send to the camps?

Governor: I think that not least now that American legislation has so clearly bitten the dust which was sending out a wholly incorrect message to people in the camps. I think Vietnamese migrants in Hong Kong know perfectly well that the only future for them is to return to Vietnam. That's presumably one reason why the figures of returnees have been going up. That's an extremely important trip by a British minister to Vietnam next week which will both be seeking to expedite the process of repatriation and will also be seeking to deal with one of the issues that's come up in this, or the main issue that's come up in the Privy Council judgement which we want to see dealt with. The question of those people who may have had their applications to return rejected or may be thought to be in a category where the applications will be rejected and we want to take those issues up with Vietnam. But it's important to remember that even though some people may have to be released because of the Privy Council judgement, they don't have a right to stay in Hong Kong. They are released on recognisance and should like the others return to Vietnam as soon as possible.

Question: Governor, would you please try to rectify me if I'm incorrect? You talked in a recent interview with a Chinese newspaper concerning the handover ceremony. You say that Chinese and British sides will be going to agree to disagree to hold the ceremonies themselves, isn't it?

Governor: No, what I said was that it seemed to me that ideally, in a sensible world there would be a jointly agreed handover ceremony which would ensure that the SAR Government got off to the best possible start. The whole world will be looking at what happens in the middle of 1997 and I think frankly, the whole world as well as the community in Hong Kong will be somewhat surprised if we are not able to agree even on the mechanics of a handover ceremony. It's not the biggest problem that we have to tackle. I went on to say that is what we all hope will happen and that's what the British and Chinese Foreign Ministers presumably wish to see happen. I can certainly speak for Mr Rifkind in saying that's what he would like to see happen. But we would all be, I think, a little surprised, if we have to spend month after month talking about this. There're so many much more important issues for us to discuss. Still issues like right of abode which need to be sorted out. One of the issues which presumably last week's events here indicate that it is a very important one for people in Hong Kong. So the point I was making was that it would be very sad if we weren't able to agree a handover ceremony but we can't sacrifice everything else in order to have meeting after meeting after meeting after meeting. These things in any other circumstances would be very straight forward, would be very easy to resolve, would be settled in one or two meetings and I am sorry it proves so difficult with Chinese officials. One last question.

Question: On naturalisation ... These people will be placed in a very odd situation having to swear allegiance to the Queen in nearly a year before the territory reverts to Chinese rule. What advice do you have ...?

Governor: The advice I have for them is to look at the assurances which have been given on passport naturalisation and travel issues by Chinese officials, the assurances which have been given on a number of occasions not least in documentary form and to take those reassurances to heart when they fill out their application forms and when they go through the other processes of applying for naturalisation. I am sure that Chinese officials recognise what six million people in Hong Kong know perfectly well that this as I said earlier is an international community and that if it is to remain successful and stable and prosperous, it will remain an international community; an international community happens to travel rather a lot.

Question: Governor Patten, you said it's not the right time to bring it up with Mr Major about bringing international community in on the breaches of the Joint Declaration at this time...?

Governor: No, what I said was I saw no particular reason to reiterate a commitment which Mr Major has made vigorously in Hong Kong. It is a commitment which I've made, it's a commitment which the British Government has made. There is no particular reason why we need to keep on figuring such a commitment.

Question: Do you think that this issue has become even more important because the civil service will be caught in-between? What happens now if there is a Joint Declaration breach with the provisional LegCo, then it is actually sucking in Hong Kong's civil service in the whole issue?

Governor: No. I read what's apparently people said while taking tea and then I read explanations of what it'd actually been meant. And I read remarks which were said to be clearing up any confusions about what had been said. And I remain though I think a lot of people did a trifle confused. But I hope that the civil service itself won't be too bothered about what happened last week as I have said on many occasions that one of the reasons for Hong Kong's success is the integrity and morale and commitment and professionalism of our civil service and anybody who wants Hong Kong to remain as a greatest city as it is today will recognise the importance of those qualities continuing after 1997.

Question: Governor, are you still concerned about your visit to London? Will you step up security...?

Governor: I trust...

End

Transcript of the Governor's media session after ExCo

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after attending the Executive Council meeting this (Tuesday) morning:

Governor: I'll save you the problem of going out to the airport this evening. As you know, I'm going to Europe and having a couple of days over the Easter weekend with my family, and then having meetings in London and Northern Ireland. And I'm back on the week on Sunday.

Question: Could you tell us about the Preparatory Committee list and what you are going to do about it?

Governor: We're studying the proposals on the list. We've been awaiting the list for some time and we'll want to give it proper consideration. As you know, we've set out the general principles within which we're very keen to co-operate. That is in compliance with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. Secondly, the importance of maintaining the authority of Government and that was a proposition which I noted was confirmed by the Head of the Political Affairs Department of the Hong Kong and Macau Office, Mr Xu, back in December. So there should be no argument about that because he made it absolutely clear that there could only be one Government, only one power centre before 1997, 30th of June. And thirdly, the other criterion that we've made abundantly plain is that nothing should be done which would cause divided loyalties among our first class civil service whose morale and integrity and professionalism we're keen to maintain. So within those parameters we'll be considering the proposals on the list and we'll make clear to the Chinese side in due course what our own thoughts are on these matters.

Question: Does the list include the assistance to the provisional legislature?

Governor: If you start asking me "does the list include this" and "does the list include that", I might as well tell you what the list amounts to and that would be to breach the undertaking that we've agreed with the Chinese side.

Question: ... to the provisional legislature?

Governor: You know perfectly well what our position is on the legislature. I've made it clear again and again and again; and our position on that won't change. There is a Legislative Council in Hong Kong which was freely and fairly elected. It meets every Wednesday in a building not very far from here. And that continues to be the position.

Question: What can the British Government do to prevent the setting up of the provisional legislature?

Governor: What can the British Government do? If the Chinese side are determined to set up a provisional legislature, then they have to explain why they're doing that and how that contributes to Hong Kong's well-being to the people of Hong Kong, to the British Government and to international opinion.

Question: How could you reconcile a demand to give support to a provisional legislature and at the same time, as you say, it is a violation of the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law?

Governor: But the assumption behind your question is one that bears no relation to the answers that I've given. I've made it clear again and again and again. You know perfectly well what my position is, what the Government's position is, that we'll do nothing whatsoever, that's nothing, spelt N-O-T-H-I-N-G, nothing whatsoever to take away from, to undermine, the authority, the legitimacy of Hong Kong's Legislative Council. And that has been our position; it's the position of the British Government; it's the position of the Hong Kong Government and it will remain our position.

Question: NCNA's vice director, Mr Zhang Junsheng, yesterday said he hoped the Government would not help anything in the list selectively. What is your opinion on that?

Governor: My opinion on that is that we're the Government, we'll co-operate according to the criteria that I've just mentioned. And those criteria should be wholly acceptable to Chinese officials. If you go through them one at a time, just tell me which ones Chinese officials may not be able to accept. That was a very curious headline in one of the papers today which went something like this: Chinese Co-operation Threat. Seems to me to be rather a confusion of words to talk about threats and co-operation in the same breath. But I take it it was the sub-editors doing rather than any Chinese officials. On which note ... Yes, sorry.

Question: Do you define that assistance to the provisional legislature as a kind of act that will help demanding the authority of the Hong Kong Government ...?

Governor: If you believe that as we all do, as Britain does, as international opinion does, that there is a Legislative Council in Hong Kong which is freely and fairly elected, which is doing its work within the terms of the Joint Declaration and that it's holding the Government to account as it's supposed to do, then it inevitably raises question marks in your mind about what on earth it is that a provisional legislature is supposed to be doing. And you also conclude, I'm sure, that since Chinese officials themselves have made it absolutely plain that the Hong Kong Government and its institutions are responsible for Hong Kong until 30th June 1997, that they too would have concerns about that matter.

End

214 VMs to be released tomorrow

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A government spokesman today (Tuesday) announced that as a consequence of the Privy Council judgment, it had been decided that 214 Vietnamese Migrants (VMs) would be released from detention tomorrow.

There may also be a need to release a further 40 VMs. Their cases are now being examined and a decision will be made as soon as possible.

Those released will be initially accommodated in the New Horizons Refugee Centre. They will be transferred to the Pillar Point Refugee Centre as soon as accommodation there is made habitable.

The appellants involved in the Privy Council case argued that in essence it was the policy of the Vietnamese Government not to accept back non-nationals of Vietnam, and that the Vietnamese Government regarded them as "non-nationals".

Under the circumstances, they said, even if they volunteered to go home, they would not be cleared for return, the purpose of their detention (that is, pending removal) could not therefore be achieved and they could no longer be lawfully detained.

The Privy Council accepted these arguments and ordered the release of the four VM appellants.

The spokesman said in the light of the ruling, the Government had no option but to order the release of those VMs who, under the terms of the Privy Council judgment, could no longer be lawfully detained.

"We have to act in accordance with the law, as determined by the highest court of the land," he said.

"The release of these VMs does not mean that they will be settled in Hong Kong. We will continue to pursue with the Vietnamese authorities the question of their repatriation to Vietnam.

"If and when the Vietnamese Government agree to take them back, we will redetain them and effect their repatriation to Vietnam, under the voluntary return programme or under the Orderly Repatriation Programme."

The VMs to be released have either been rejected for return by the Vietnamese Government or otherwise come within the terms of the Privy Council judgment. Each case has been carefully examined in the light of their individual circumstances.

The VMs will be released on recognisance, but they will have no residence rights in Hong Kong.

The spokesman said: "We shall continue to make every effort to secure their removal to Vietnam.

"This issue will be at the top of the agenda of Foreign Office Minister, Mr Jeremy Hanley, when he visits Hanoi next week.

"As many of those released claim to have links with Taiwan, we are also urgently checking whether Taiwan will accept them," he said.

It is possible that unless the law is changed by legislative enactment, more VMs will fall within the terms of the Privy Council's judgment and thus have to be released.

"We intend to bring forward urgent legislation, which will provide that a court should not find that a VM has been rejected for repatriation to Vietnam unless and until the Vietnamese Government has formally notified us of the rejection," the spokesman said.

"We hope to introduce this legislation into the Legislative Council later this month."

End

New franchise to Citybus granted

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The Governor-in-Council has approved the grant of a new franchise to Citybus Limited (Citybus) which confers upon the company the right to operate a public bus service for 10 years from September 1, 1996.

A government spokesman said today (Tuesday) that a number of changes and several new provisions were incorporated into the new franchise, including a new requirement for a mid-term review.

"The mid-term review is to be conducted after the fourth year of the new franchise.

"Based on the outcome of such a review, the Governor-in-Council may, if necessary, and with the consent of Citybus, amend the terms of the franchise," he said.

The spokesman said the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group reached a common view on the grant of this new franchise last month.

End

Statutory control of optometrists comes into effect

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Those who practise as optometrists are now required by law to be registered, a spokesman for the Secretariat of the Optometrists Board said today (Tuesday).

The enforcement and disciplinary provisions in the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance in relation to optometrists and the Optometrists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation came into effect yesterday (Monday). It is now a criminal offence for a person to practise the profession of optometrists without being registered.

The spokesman said: "Registered optometrists are obliged to display their certificates of registration in a conspicuous position in their practising premises.

"Moreover, they should always comply with the provisions in the Code of Practice for optometrists and are advised to study the code carefully and to acquaint themselves thoroughly with its contents.

"This is to avoid the danger of inadvertently transgressing accepted codes of professional ethical behaviour which might lead to disciplinary action by the Optometrists Board."

Under the Optometrists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation, optical shops are required to submit to the Secretary of Optometrists Board the particulars of its directors, managers and employees who are practising the profession of optometrist.

Copies of the prescribed form can be obtained from:

The Secretariat of the Optometrists Board
second floor, 182 Queen's Road East,
Shun Feng International Centre,
Wan Chai,
Hong Kong

Enquiries can be made on 2527 8363 or 2527 8360.

End

Concrete collapse to be fully investigated

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The Buildings Department has launched a full investigation into the cause of a large piece of concrete falling from a building in Jordan Road last (Monday) night.

The Assistant Director of Buildings (Structural Engineering), Mr Cheung Kwok-ming, said today (Tuesday) that a preliminary inspection by the department's structural engineers confirmed that there was no signs of structural dangers to the building.

"Our staff will also carry out a full survey of the whole building to identify any further problems," Mr Cheung said.

He said a government contractor was now erecting scaffoldings at the two sides of the building to facilitate the investigation. Any loosened materials will be removed and properly secured.

"If necessary, the Buildings Department will serve a statutory order on the owners requiring them to carry out repair works," he said.

Mr Cheung emphasised that the responsibility of maintaining the building in good condition rests with the owners.

He urged members of the public to pay attention to the most common defects in buildings, such as spalled concrete, cracks in building, bulged wall finishes, or loosened window frames.

"If residents locate these problems in their buildings, they should immediately consult the Buildings Department for follow-up action. Our 24-hour hotline is 26261234.

"To protect their own life and property, residents should employ professionals to carry out timely repair and maintenance works to their buildings.

"The Government is drafting a legislation requiring property owners to carry out mandatory inspection to their buildings to ensure public safety. This will be released for public consultation when the proposals are finalised," Mr Cheung said.

End

STI concludes official visit to China

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The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue, returned to Hong Kong tonight (Tuesday) after a two-day official visit to Beijing.

"I have gained a better understanding of the work of those Chinese government bodies involved in trade and industry," Miss Yue said.

"I have also had very useful exchange of view on matters of mutual interest with Chinese officials in these organisations.

"We have discussed among other things, ways to strengthen co-operation between China and Hong Kong on, for example, protection of intellectual property rights and the industrial application of science and technology.

"We have also exchanged views on the renewal of China's most-favoured-nation trading status in the United States."

This was Miss Yue's first official visit to Beijing after she became Secretary for Trade and Industry last November.

Miss Yue led a delegation of six comprising officials from the Trade and Industry Branch, Trade Department and Industry Department.

The Hong Kong delegation had called on the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation, State Economic and Trade Commission, State Science and Technology Commission, State Planning Commission, Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and China Academy of Science.

End

HK's IPR protection refers to in US trade report

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The Hong Kong Government notes that a reference has been made to Hong Kong's intellectual property rights (IPR) protection in the National Trade Estimates (NTE) Report recently published by the US Trade Representative.

The Report states that Hong Kong's intellectual property laws are among the best in the world.

"We are also pleased to note that due recognition has been given to the recent initiatives taken by the Hong Kong Government in enforcing IPR protection in Hong Kong," a spokesman for the Trade and Industry Branch said today (Tuesday).

"We are, however, disappointed to see some claims have been made about the involvement of Hong Kong businessmen in copyright piracy activities on the mainland. We urge those who made such claims to come forward with substantiating hard evidence.

"Operating within the rule of law, the Hong Kong Customs will pursue every lead with vigour.

"Furthermore, to help tackle cross-border copyright piracy more effectively, the Government introduced a bill into the Legislative Council last October which, when enacted, would make it an offence for any person who procures, aids or abets any person, in Hong Kong or elsewhere, to manufacture outside Hong Kong or import into Hong Kong pirated copyright works.

"The bill has been thoroughly discussed by the relevant Bills Committee of LegCo and is expected to be passed later this month.

"In addition, the Hong Kong Customs will continue to step up co-operation and liaison with the relevant IPR enforcement agencies on the mainland."

The NTE Report is an annual inventory of foreign trade barriers which the office of the US Trade Representative is required by law to prepare for submission to the US President and Congress.

While such inventory may facilitate the US Administration to identify trade barriers for negotiation on their reduction or elimination, the US law does not require any specific action, such as Section 301 actions, on those barriers covered by the report.

End

Report on Shum Wan Road landslide released

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The Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) today (Tuesday) released a report on the investigation into the landslide which occurred at Shum Wan Road in Aberdeen on August 13 last year.

Elaborating on the main findings, head of GEO, Dr Andrew Malone, said the landslide was triggered by the collapse of a small road embankment on Nam Long Shan Road.

"This happened during a severe rainstorm and at the time when Nam Long Shan Road was carrying a large volume of running water.

"The collapse allowed water to escape from the road causing an exceptionally large landslip in the natural hillside below the road," he said.

The report, comprising Volume I and Volume II, contains respectively the views of an independent reviewer, Sir John Knill, and the findings of a comprehensive investigation by GEO into the incident.

"Sir John agrees with GEO's report on all essential matters," Dr Malone noted.

He said he shared Sir John's view on the need to highlight the role of roads in acting as catchments for collecting and channelling water into the upper part of potentially unstable slopes.

"Roads in hilly areas can turn into rivers during severe rainstorms. Drains should be designed with ample capacity and kept clear of rubbish," he said.

Commenting on suggestions from members of the public that illegal dumping and construction traffic might have caused the failure, he said these factors were examined but not found to be significant.

Copies of the report are available at the reception counter of the Civil Engineering Department, ground floor, Civil Engineering Building, 101 Princess Margaret Road, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon.

End

Four Queen's Counsel appointed

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The Chief Justice, Sir Ti Liang Yang, is pleased to announce that the Queen has appointed Mr Winston Poon Chung-fai, Mr Michael F Ozorio, Mr John A Scott and Mr Andrew A Bruce as Her Majesty's Counsel for Hong Kong.

A ceremony will be held at 10 am on May 11 in No 1 court of the Supreme Court to call within the Bar the four new Queen's Counsel.

The Court, which will include members of the Bench at all levels, will be presided by the Chief Justice.

Mr Poon, aged 49, was called to the English Bar in 1975 and admitted to the Hong Kong Bar in 1976. He has since been in practice in Hong Kong. His practice has been in the area of company law.

Mr Poon was also active in the Bar Council. He was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Hong Kong Bar Association between 1992 and January 1996. He has also been a member of the Insolvency Sub-Committee of the Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong since 1990.

Mr Ozorio, aged 42, was called to the Bar in the United Kingdom in 1976 and admitted to the Hong Kong Bar in 1977. He specialises in cases involving personal injuries, fatal accidents and medical negligence.

He was a member of the Hong Kong Bar Committee between 1990 and 1992. He has also been a member of the Personal Injuries Sub-Committee of the Hong Kong Bar Association since 1993.

Mr Scott, aged 38, was called to the Bar in the United Kingdom in 1982 and admitted to the Hong Kong Bar in 1986. His practice has mainly been concerned with commercial litigation. He specialises in building and engineering disputes cases and company law.

Mr Scott is a part-time Chairman of the Building Appeals Tribunal and also a member of the Bar Council and the Civil Procedure Sub-Committee of the Bar Council.

Mr Bruce, aged 45, was admitted to practise as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of South Australia in 1977. He joined the Attorney General's Chambers in November 1982. His practice has been mainly in the criminal sphere.

Between 1991 and 1994, Mr Bruce was head of the Extradition Unit of Attorney General's Chambers which involved the conduct as counsel of judicial review and habeas corpus application. At present, Mr Bruce is head of the Bill of Rights team of the Attorney General's Chambers.

End

Marine Department appeals for witnesses to collision

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The Inquiry Officer in charge of the investigation into a collision of a Zhuhai-bound catamaran and a tug boat off south Lantau Island near Shek Kwu Chau on March 8 is anxious to meet the passengers on board the ferry and other independent witnesses.

The collision occurred about 10 am when the catamaran, Hai Wai, with about 160 passengers and eight crew members, collided with a tug towing a barge off Shek Kwu Chau.

Three ferry passengers were slightly injured. They were treated at St John Hospital on Cheung Chau.

Of the 160 passengers, 36 returned to Hong Kong with the Hai Wai and the others continued their journey to Zhuhai by another ferry sent to the scene by the operator.

The Inquiry Officer, Captain Li Yiu-kwong, a surveyor with the Marine Department, is anxious to contact any passengers on board the ferry and any independent witnesses to the incident. They are advised to contact Captain Li on 2852 4513 or by fax on 2545 0556.

End

Civil Service Training head appointed

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The Government today (Tuesday) announced that Principal Training Officer, Mrs Mary Szeto Nguan Ming-hiang, has been appointed as Director of the Civil Service Training and Development Institute with effect from yesterday (Monday).

The Institute, a merger of the Civil Service Training Centre and Senior Staff Course Centre, was established on the same day.

The Director of the Institute is responsible to the Secretary for the Civil Service for the formulation and implementation of civil service training policy, and supervising and setting the strategic direction of the development of the Institute as a training centre of excellence.

Following is a brief biographical note on Mrs Szeto:

Mrs Mary Szeto Nguan Ming-hiang

Aged 53, Mrs Szeto first joined the Hong Kong government as an Examinations Officer in 1972.

She was transferred to the Senior Training Officer rank in 1981, and rose to her present rank of Principal Training Officer in January 1996. She was the Head of the Civil Service Training Centre between June 29, 1992, and March 31, 1996.

End

Special traffic scheme on Island Eastern Corridor

* * * * *

Special traffic management scheme will be implemented on the Island Eastern Corridor (IEC) during the coming Easter holiday to facilitate the re-construction of bituminous noise reducing surfacing works, the Transport Department announces today (Tuesday).

Resurfacing works will be carried out on a 900-metre section of the westbound carriageway between Provident Centre and North Point Estate along IEC from 8 pm on Thursday (April 4) to 8 pm on Monday (April 8).

"To avoid severe traffic congestion in the area, partial lane closure and contra-flow traffic management scheme will be implemented," said a spokesman for the department.

During the works period, two of the three westbound traffic lanes of the affected section on IEC will be closed to vehicular traffic and the contra-flow lane is made available by opening up the gaps in the central divider and diverting some of the westbound traffic to use the fast lane in the eastbound carriageway .

"The contra-flow lane arrangement will provide two traffic lanes in each direction," the spokesman said.

The contra-flow lane, however, will be temporarily closed between 12 am and 7 am daily, therefore, the affected section of IEC will remain one lane for westbound traffic and two lanes for eastbound traffic during the closure.

To enhance road safety, the spokesman said the contra-flow lane of IEC will be designated a prohibited zone for all vehicles exceeding seven metres in length and the speed limit of the IEC in both directions between Provident Centre and North Point Estate will be reduced to 50 kilometres per hour.

In addition, a buffer area will be created on the middle lane of the eastbound carriageway of IEC near Man Hong Street Interchange to provide a cushion for cross over traffic into the contra-flow lane.

Therefore, the slip road leading from Man Hong Street to IEC eastbound will have to be closed for vehicular traffic throughout the works period.

As an alternative, motorists in Hong Kong heading for Shau Kei Wan direction could use Java Road and King's Road.

Vehicles on Man Hong Street heading for Eastern Harbour Crossing may use King's Road, Kornhill Road, Shau Kei Wan Road, Tai Hong Street and IEC westbound.

Meanwhile, from 8 pm on Thursday to 3 pm on Saturday (April 6), the slip road leading from Tong Shui Road to IEC westbound and the slip road leading from King's Road near its junction with Healthy Street Central to IEC westbound will be closed to facilitate the works on the westbound slow and middle lanes of the affected section.

Vehicles on King's Road westbound heading for IEC westbound may use King's Road and Tsing Fung Street flyover during the above road closure.

On public transport diversions, the spokesman said Cross Harbour routes 601, 680 and 690 heading for Eastern Harbour Crossing will be diverted via King's Road, Kornhill Road, Shau Kei Wan Road, Tai Hong Street and IEC.

Furthermore, Cross Harbour route 118 on its journey to Siu Sai Wan will be diverted via Java Road, King's Road, Kornhill Road, Shau Kei Wan Road and Chai Wan Road.

To facilitate preparation works associated with the affected road section, such as painting the road markings, setting-up of proper traffic signs, guarding and lighting, the fast lanes on both directions of IEC between Provident Centre and North Point Estate will be temporarily closed from 9 am to 8 pm on Thursday.

The spokesman appealed to motorists to drive with caution particularly along the affected section of IEC and to strictly follow the directions as indicated by the traffic signs and road markings.

"If the resurfacing works cannot be implemented due to inclement weather, the traffic management scheme will be terminated and traffic arrangement in IEC will be reverted back to normal," he said.

For enquiries and complaints, please call the Highways Department's site staff at 9483 2820

End

Advanced welfare payment for public holidays

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Recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) under the bank payment system may receive their payments tomorrow (Wednesday) if their pay days fall on the coming public holidays (April 4 to 8).

"Special payment arrangements will also be made for recipients of Social Security Allowance whose pay days fall between this period," a Social Welfare Department spokesman said.

"Those who have bank accounts in Hongkong Bank or Hang Seng Bank can receive their payments on April 3 whereas those with accounts in other banks will receive their payments on April 9 after the public holidays," he added.

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

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

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Tender date	2 Apr 1996
Paper on offer	EF bills
Issue number	Q614
Issue date	3 Apr 1996
Maturity date	3 Jul 1996
Coupon	-
Amount applied	HK\$6,630 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.08 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.09 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 39 PCT
Average tender yield	5.15 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 8 Apr 1996

Tender date	9 Apr 1996	9 Apr 1996
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q615	H662
Issue date	10 Apr 1996	10 Apr 1996
Maturity date	10 Jul 1996	9 Oct 1996
Tenor	91 days	182 days
Amount on offer	HK\$1,500+300MN	HK\$800+160MN
End		

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
Opening balance in the account	2,551	0930	+252
Closing balance in the account	2,483	1000	+252
Change attributable to :		1100	+252
Money market activity	+252	1200	+252
LAF today	-320	1500	+252
		1600	+252

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.6 *-0.1* 2.4.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.96	2 years	2802	5.16	98.74	5.97
1 month	4.97	3 years	3901	5.57	98.60	6.21
3 months	5.09	5 years	5103	6.75	100.47	6.75
6 months	5.17	7 years	7302	6.02	95.12	7.04
12 months	5.47	5 years	M502	7.30	101.65	6.99

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$9,819 million

Closed April 2, 1996

End