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# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**Tuesday, December 5, 1995**

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Transcript of the CS's media session

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Following is the transcript of the remarks (English) by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, at the airport this (Tuesday) afternoon on her return from a visit to Europe and Singapore:

Chief Secretary: I am glad to be back. I'll say a few words first. I had very good visits to Milan, Rome and Paris and signed investment promotion and protection agreements with the Italian and French Governments. There's a good deal of interest in Hong Kong, in how we are preparing for the transition and both Italian and French officials reaffirmed their support for Hong Kong to achieve a smooth transition. There's considerable interest particularly in how we are preparing for Hong Kong after 1997 in the maintenance of the rule of law, continuity in the legislature and I was asked questions quite closely on recent statements concerning the possibility of the setting up of a shadow government, the threat to reinstate laws that have been repealed because they do not comply with the international covenant on civil and political right. So this was a good opportunity for me to bring French officials, Italian officials and businessmen up to date on where we are in Hong Kong and how we are co-operating with the Chinese on resolving transitional issues. I was also delighted to hear whilst I was abroad that the first informal get-together between senior Government officials and their Chinese counterparts went very well. They were conducted in a very cordial atmosphere and I understood that a range of topics were covered. In the light of this first get-together, clearly we would wish to arrange the next get-together as soon as possible. There are a number of detailed arrangements to be sorted out, but as soon as these are sorted out, we would of course announce the date and the officers who will take part in the get-together.

Question: (on Mr Xu Ze's remarks on the two power centres)

CS: Of course we welcome Mr Xu's assurance that there will not be established two centres of power. We have always said that we will co-operate fully with the Preparatory Committee, but it would have to be in circumstances where the effective administration of Hong Kong is not affected and Government's credibility is not undermined in any way.

End

## ACP contractors may be sued for breaching labour law

\* \* \* \* \*

Subject to the advice of the Attorney General's Chambers, the Government intends to prosecute a number of employers who bought in workers under the labour importation scheme for new airport related projects, for breaching the legislation, the Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joseph W P Wong said today (Tuesday).

Speaking at a special meeting of the Legislative Council's Panel on Manpower, Mr Wong said two of the cases involved Thai workers and three involved imported workers from China.

"A decision on whether or not to prosecute will be taken shortly," Mr Wong said.

The Panel was informed of the Government's plan to introduce further measures as soon as practicable to strengthen the monitory system which aims at preventing abuses of the Scheme and providing protection for imported workers. They include:

### Verification of Employment Contract

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To enable the imported workers to understanding fully their terms of employment, the Government will ask employers to give an undertaking to the Labour Department that the imported workers, before their arrival in Hong Kong, have already received a copy of the employment contract specifying the post and amount of wages.

The workers will be asked to present the contract to Immigration Department officers for inspection.

This arrangement is to ascertain that workers are fully aware of their job nature, salary and entitlements before they arrive in Hong Kong.

### Provision of Meals

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To stem out possible malpractice involving excessive deduction of wages for meals, the Government will revise the standard employment contract to the effect that employees should be responsible for their own meals; however, if meals are provided by the employer, they shall be provided free of charge.

The proposal will remove an existing condition of the ACP Scheme under which an employer can deduct up to a maximum of 15 per cent of a worker's monthly salary to pay for the meals provided.

#### Undertakings by Employers on Provision of Accommodation

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To ensure that workers are provided with reasonable accommodation, employers will be required to give an undertaking to the Immigration Department that up-to-standard accommodation will be provided to their imported workers and this has been made a condition for visa approval.

Prior to the issue of visas by the Immigration Department, the Labour Department will inspect the accommodation to ascertain that suitable and furnished accommodation which meets the standard set out in the employment contract has been made available for the workers before they arrive in Hong Kong.

End

#### Important step to open up government information further

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Dissemination of government information "turned a new page" today (Tuesday) with the launching of the Hong Kong Government Information Centre on the Internet.

The Hong Kong Government home page, a single access to all government and quasi-government information, also marks an important step to open up more government information to members of the public. It is an important tool to help build the image of Hong Kong overseas by tapping into the fast expanding Internet user group which is estimated at well over 40 million people.

The new home page can be accessed at <http://www.info.gov.hk/>. Internet users are welcome to send e-mail messages to [OPRS@isd.gcn.gov.hk](mailto:OPRS@isd.gcn.gov.hk) on the Internet.

In a media demonstration session today (Tuesday), the Secretary for the Treasury, Mr Kwong Ki-chi, said in order to navigate the information superhighway efficiently, it was necessary to have proper sign-posting to point people to where they wanted to go.

The Hong Kong Government home page on the Internet serves precisely that purpose. It facilitates searches of home pages developed by individual branches and departments.

He noted that more home pages were being developed by various departments under the wings of the Hong Kong Government home page.

The Director of Information Services, Mrs Irene Yau, said the home page was designed with different users in mind. Journalists, businessmen, academics and students, whether local or overseas, can easily find information they need on the home page.

The Government Information Centre offers 10 sections of current and background information about Hong Kong, with statistics and pictures.

The section "News Update" features important government press releases, statements and speeches by the Governor and senior officials.

Job-seekers might find the recruitment advertisements useful, while contractors and suppliers can find the latest tender notices on the Notice Board section. There is also a "How to Apply" series to provide guidance to users of government services.

The Hong Kong Government Information Centre also provides users with on-line access to other government departments and related organisations which already have their own home pages.

These include: the Civil Service Branch, Intellectual Property Department, Information Services Department, Information Technology Services Department, Office of the Telecommunications Authority, Radio Television Hong Kong, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Hong Kong Tourist Association and the Hospital Authority.

"We hope that this new service will eventually provide a useful and user-friendly alternative to the hotlines and other services through which the government seeks to inform the public," Mrs Yau added.

The Government Home Page has been jointly developed by the Information Services Department and the Information Technology Services Department, with the participation of the Efficiency Unit and the Government Supplies Department.

Also present at today's launching ceremony were the Director of Information Technology Services, Mr K H Lau, and the Deputy Director of Information Services (Overseas), Mr Robin Gill.

End

### Bills of Rights: South African Experience

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Eminent jurist, the Rt Hon Sydney Kentridge, Q C, will deliver the second Peter Allan Memorial Lecture in Hong Kong on Thursday (December 7) on the subject "Bills of Rights: The South African Experience".

Mr Kentridge was President Mandela's personal counsel and is now Member of the Constitutional Court of South Africa half-time. He still practises law and is recognised as a renowned advocate.

His speech in Hong Kong will be about the way the Constitutional Court interprets and deals with the new Bill of Rights in South Africa.

A spokesman for the Legal Department said the Peter Allan Memorial Lecture was set up last year in memory former Crown Solicitor and Commissioner of ICAC, Mr Peter Allan.

During his service with the Government, Mr Allan played a major part in promoting a broader understanding of the role of public law in the community.

To commemorate Mr Allan and in recognition of his contribution to the law in Hong Kong, a Fund was established by public donation, mainly from local lawyers.

The object of the Fund, which is administered by the University of Hong Kong, is to invite to Hong Kong on a regular basis eminent jurists of international stature to deliver lectures on public law, the spokesman said.

All interested members of the public are invited to the lecture, to be held at 6 pm on Thursday at the Rayson Huang Lecture Theatre, University of Hong Kong (main campus).

End

Code on Access to Information further extended

\* \* \* \* \*

The Government announced today (Tuesday) that a further 17 departments and four branches of the Government Secretariat would be subject to the Code on Access to Information from next Monday (December 11).

This will bring to 57 the total number of agencies covered by the code, which was first introduced nine months ago on a pilot scheme basis.

Under the code, anyone can seek information or copies of records held by government departments.

"A department can only refuse access to information in strictly defined circumstances, which must be explained in the event of a refusal," a spokesman for the Efficiency Unit of the Government Secretariat said.

"Anyone who thinks that a department has not complied with the code can ask for a review, or can complain to the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints."

It was also announced that the full text of the code, together with the Government's internal guidelines on how it should be interpreted, had been published on the Internet. The Internet address for the Code on Access to Information is <http://www.info.gov.hk/access/index.htm>.

The spokesman said that this was a logical way of publicising the code, given the rapidly increasing number of Internet users, and since the World-Wide Web was a popular source of information for students and journalists, two groups of people who appeared to be making increasing use of the code to support their research activities.

The additional branches and departments to become subject to the code on December 11 are:

- Civil Service Branch
- Financial Services Branch
- Housing Branch
- Trade and Industry Branch
- Agriculture and Fisheries Department
- Census and Statistics Department
- Civil Engineering Department
- Department of Health
- Education Department

Government Flying Service  
Industry Department  
Information Technology Services Department  
Lands Department  
Marine Department  
Official Receiver's Office  
Registration and Electoral Office  
Technical Education and Industrial Training Department  
Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority  
Trade Department  
Transport Department  
Water Supplies Department

End

Smooth traffic continues on Tuen Mun Road

\* \* \* \* \*

Traffic on both directions of Tuen Mun Road continues to flow smooth this (Tuesday) morning.

"The Kowloon-bound travelling times on Tuen Mun Road and Castle Peak Road remain normal this morning as reflected by KMB routes 60M and 52M which took 37 minutes and 58 minutes respectively to complete their journey," the Transport Department's Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West, Mr Chow Ying-shun, said at the department's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre.

About 70,000 passengers were carried by 640 bus trips from Tuen Mun/Yuen Long to Tsuen Wan and urban areas this morning.

The KMB special route 60P carried about 290 passengers from Tuen Mun to Sheung Shui between 7 am and 9 am.

In addition, HYF had operated 29 ferry trips carrying about 4,100 passengers from Tuen Mun to Central/Wan Chai.

End

### Civil Aviation Department organises air search and rescue

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The annual search and rescue exercise organised by the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) to provide training and familiarisation in search and rescue techniques for members of local and foreign rescue units started today (Tuesday).

The three-day exercise began with a static display of search and rescue aircraft and equipment at the Hong Kong International Airport this morning and a short range exercise at the Shek Kong Airfield in the afternoon. A long range exercise will swing into action in the South China Sea tomorrow (Wednesday).

The short range exercise included water bombing demonstration, winching of simulated survivors, electronic search of distress beacon and a tandem jump of paramedic personnel from a C130 aircraft.

A CAD official responsible for organising and co-ordinating the exercise said the main event would be the long range exercise which was aimed at testing the alertness, co-ordination and communication facilities of various participants.

The exercise will be activated this (Tuesday) evening, simulating an aircraft in distress about 130 kilometres Southwest of Hong Kong, and aircraft, helicopters and ships will be despatched to search and locate the targets in the South China Sea.

In addition to CAD, other participants include the United States Air Force, Marine Department, Government Flying Service, Royal Air Force, United States Coast Guard, United States Navy, Japanese Maritime Safety Agency, Guangdong Maritime Emergency Search and Rescue Centre, Royal Navy, Civil Aid Services and Government Information Services.

A number of personnel from organisations and countries in the Asia-Pacific Region including Guangdong Maritime Emergency Search and Rescue Centre; Zhuhai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou Airport Authorities; Thailand; and Singapore have also attended as observers.

End

ExCo approves taxi fare increases

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The Governor in Council today (Tuesday) approved a fare increase of 8.5 per cent for urban and New Territories (NT) taxis to take effect on February 4, 1996.

The revised fares will be tabled in the Legislative Council on December 13.

Under the new fare structure, flagfall charges for the first two kilometres will be increased from \$13 to \$14 for urban taxis, and from \$11 to \$11.8 for NT taxis.

For every subsequent 0.2 kilometre, the fares for both urban and NT taxis will go up by 10 cents to \$1.2 and \$1.1 respectively.

The waiting time charge will rise by 10 cents per minute to \$1.2 for urban taxis and \$1.1 for NT taxis.

A government spokesman said that in considering the fare increase applications, the Executive Council had taken into account such factors as the financial position of the taxi trade, the level and quality of taxi services, the fare differential between taxis and other modes of public transport, and public acceptability of the fare increase.

He pointed out that the approved rate of increase was slightly below the projected inflation rate.

"An annual moderate increase would also help the taxi trade maintain a healthy financial position and most taxi passengers have the choice of using less expensive modes of public transport," the spokesman added.

The Executive Council also agreed that the current level of \$5 for telephone booking surcharge and baggage surcharge for urban taxis and \$4 for NT taxis should remain unchanged for the time being.

End

Pilot community development projects will undergo review

\* \* \* \* \*

The Executive Council decided today (Tuesday) that a review should be carried out in early 1997 by an independent team on the two pilot Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs) being conducted in Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po to determine whether there is a need for this type of service in old urban areas.

A government spokesman said: "the review will address the concern that gaps might exist in the provision of welfare services in old urban areas. In the light of this concern we have advanced the review by one year."

He said the review team for the two pilot projects would be headed by a non-official and would include representatives from the Administration and the welfare sector, as well as independent members of the community.

"Details of the review would be worked out nearer the time, but it is expected to focus on the effectiveness of the two pilot projects and the applicability of this type of service within the context of the overall provision of welfare services in old urban areas."

The Executive Council decided that there was no need to extend NLCDP service to rural areas, new towns and public housing estates (PHEs) not yet affected by redevelopment as proposed by the welfare sector. It also decided that there was no need to conduct an overall review of the service.

Pending the results of the review on the two pilot projects, NLCDP teams whose service areas are to be cleared shortly would be given a choice to continue to provide NLCDP service in PHEs undergoing redevelopment or temporary housing areas (THAs) which qualify for the service under the existing policy, or to serve in other welfare projects.

The spokesman said the decision was taken after considering all views expressed by the welfare sector, the Legislative Council, District Boards and residents' groups on the NLCDP service.

He explained that the decision not to extend NLCDP service to new towns, rural areas and PHEs not undergoing redevelopment was taken against a background of substantial expansion in welfare services over the past 20 years and as communities generally became more stable and established.

The spokesman added that in future, applications from concerned agencies for redeployment to areas qualified for NLCDP service or to other welfare services would be considered by the Subventions and Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee.

There are at present 54 NLCDP teams. Each team comprises one Assistant Social Work Officer and two Social Work Assistants. The annual total subvention for the service is about \$54 million.

End

#### Fire-fighters commended for distinguished performance

\* \* \* \* \*

Three Fire Services members were awarded the Director's Commendation and another four the Chief Fire Officer's Commendation for their distinguished performance displayed at a fire-fighting and rescue operation in Aberdeen on August 13.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony today (Tuesday), the acting Director of Fire Services, Mr John Tsang Kwong-yu, praised the three officers for their outstanding leadership in the operation.

"They demonstrated their high standard of professionalism, courage and resourcefulness at the incident," he said.

The Chief Fire Officer (Hong Kong), Mr Paul Chan Hoi, also commended another four personnel for their skill, bravery and resourcefulness in handling the same incident.

A major landslide occurred on the hillside at Shum Wan Road, Aberdeen shortly after 4 am on August 13, pushing three shipyards away from their original locations.

Immediately after the landslide, a fire broke out at a timber yard adjacent the ruined shipyards and caused serious threat to the wooden structures nearby.

As two persons were reported missing, a team of Fire Services personnel mounted a search and rescue operation at once whilst another team and a fireboat concentrated their effort in fighting the fire.

The continual heavy rainfall and unstable ground made the rescue and fire-fighting operation complicated and difficult.

The recipients of the Director's Commendation are a Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mr Pik Ying-keung, and Station Officers Mr Chu Kam-hung and Mr Yik Kwok-hung.

The recipients of the Chief Fire Officer's Commendation are an Assistant Divisional Officer, Mr Tam Tai-keung and Firemen Mr Chan Lung-hau, Mr Luk Man-leung and Mr Lai Yiu-shun.

End

#### First Nepali takes command of Gurkha Infantry Battalion

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History will be made tomorrow (Wednesday) when, for the first time in 180 years, a Nepali officer takes command of a Gurkha infantry battalion.

The handover of command will take place at 9 am tomorrow outside the guardroom at the 1st Battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles (1RGR) in Malaya Lines in Sek Kong.

With effect from tomorrow, Lieutenant Colonel Bijaykumar Rawat takes over as commanding officer of the 1RGR from Lieutenant Colonel Nick Hinton.

Lt Col Rawat enlisted in the Brigade of Gurkhas in October 1972 and served in the 1st Battalion 2nd King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles from 1973 to 1980.

He was commissioned in 1981 from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst where he was awarded the Sword of Honour.

From August 1994 to September 1995, Lt Col Rawat assumed the appointment of Second in Command of 1 RGR and now returns to the Territory as commanding officer of the battalion.

Lt Col Hinton returns to the United Kingdom on promotion as full Colonel to take up a post with the Ministry of Defence.

End

Contract awarded for government facilities at Chek Lap Kok

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The Government has awarded an Airport Core Programme (ACP) contract for the supply and installation of communication equipment for the Aviation Meteorological Data Processing System (METPS) for the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

The contract, valued at \$2.65 million, has been awarded to Automated Systems (Hong Kong) Limited by the Royal Observatory.

The communication equipment will link up the data servers and workstations of the METPS and facilitate communications between the METPS and interfacing systems of the Civil Aviation Department and the Airport Authority.

It will also facilitate the dissemination of meteorological information to airlines and other relevant users via telephone lines and modems.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

\* \* \* \* \*

Tender date	5 Dec 1995	5 Dec 1995
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q549	H579
Issue date	6 Dec 1995	6 Dec 1995
Maturity date	6 Mar 1996	5 Jun 1996
Coupon	---	---
Amount applied	HK\$6,200 MN	HK\$4,800 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN	HK\$800 MN
Average yield accepted	5.50 PCT	5.49 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.52 PCT	5.50 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 4 PCT	About 30 PCT
Average tender yield	5.53 PCT	5.53 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning December 11, 1995

Tender date	12 Dec 1995
Paper on offer	EF bills
Issue number	Q550
Issue date	13 Dec 1995
Maturity date	13 Mar 1996
Tenor	91 days
Amount on offer	HK\$1,500 + 300 MN

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

\* \* \* \* \*

	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
	-----	-----	-----
Opening balance in the account	1,560	0930	-287
Closing balance in the account	1,832	1000	-287
Change attributable to :		1100	-287
Money market activity	-298	1200	-298
LAF today	+570	1500	-298
		1600	-298

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 122.5 \*+0.1\* 05.12.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.62	2 years	2711	5.60	100.08	5.63
1 month	5.62	3 years	3810	6.15	101.02	5.84
3 months	5.55	5 years	5009	6.95	102.98	6.31
6 months	5.53	7 years	7211	6.82	101.08	6.73
12 months	5.51	5 years	M502	7.30	102.84	6.72

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$11,856 million

Closed December 5, 1995

End