



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Visit by The Prince of Wales welcomed

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In response to the announcement in London today (Thursday) about the visit of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales to Hong Kong in June this year, a Hong Kong Government spokesman said,

"We warmly welcome the presence of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales as the representative of Her Majesty The Queen at the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong and associated events."

End

Garley fire preliminary hearing to be held on January 16

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The Commission of Inquiry into the Garley Building Fire will hold a preliminary hearing on January 16 (Thursday).

The commission of inquiry was set up on December 17 last year and Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing was appointed as the commissioner.

The terms of reference of the commission will be set out in a notice in the Government Gazette tomorrow (Friday).

"Mr Justice Woo has already started work on the inquiry and the purpose of the preliminary hearing is for any person who wishes to make representations to the commission to attend and inform the commissioner of his interest in the inquiry," a spokesman for the commission said.

"Any interested party should contact the Secretary to the commission on 2921 8833."

A hotline has also been set up to enable any member of the public to ring in with any information concerning the fire, the rescue operations or any suggestion or recommendation to prevent the recurrence of the tragedy.

The hotline - 2921 8833 - is manned from 9 am to 5.30 pm on Mondays to Fridays and from 9 am to noon on Saturdays.

The commission was appointed by the Governor-in-Council to conduct an independent inquiry into the No. 5 Alarm fire at Garley Building, Yau Ma Tei on November 20 last year.

The fire, which took the lives of 40 people, was the worst fire that happened in a high-rise building in Hong Kong's history.

The terms of the reference of the commission are as follows:

- (a) to inquire into the causes of the fire and the circumstances leading to the Garley Building tragedy on November 20, 1996;
- (b) to consider the response of the emergency services to the fire, and to advise on the adequacy and the co-ordination of that response; and
- (c) to make recommendations as to the actions needed to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

End

Hong Kong is committed to protect intellectual property rights

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Hong Kong is fully committed to the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), and will continue to maintain a strong, local IPR system to the highest international standards after the transfer of sovereignty, the Director of Intellectual Property, Mr Stephen Selby, said today (Thursday).

Speaking at a meet-the-media session, Mr Selby said much work had been done by his department in the past year in updating and modernising intellectual property legislation.

Mr Selby said the enactment of the Intellectual Property (World Trade Organisation Amendments) Ordinance 1996 in May last year was a good example of the territory's efforts in IPR protection.

"Its enactment enables Hong Kong to meet its obligations under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), of which Hong Kong is a founding member," he said.

Among the main features of the ordinance are new copyright piracy offence provisions to help tackle masterminds of cross-border piracy activities more effectively.

A Patents Bill which establishes an independent patent system in Hong Kong for the protection of inventions in line with international standards, was introduced into the Legislative Council in June last year.

In addition, three bills, namely, Copyright Bill, Registered Designs Bill and Trademarks Bill, had been drafted.

"Over 70 submissions had been received on the Copyright Bill when the consultation closed in November. We are particularly concerned to ensure that Customs has sufficient powers to enforce effectively against copyright piracy. Consultation on the Registered Designs Bill ended on January 6 while that on the Trademarks Bill will take place between January and February," Mr Selby said.

"The Government plans to have these three bills introduced into the Legislative Council in the first quarter of the year," he added.

On other developments over the past year, Mr Selby said closer co-operation had been forged between the Intellectual Property Department (IPD), the Customs and Excise Department and IPR-related enforcement agencies in China to combat piracy.

On the progress of computerisation, Mr Selby said IPD established a computerised Trade Mark Registry System in the past year and a Patents Computerisation System would be implemented in July this year.

Mr Selby said the department's registry performance in the past year had seen an increase in productivity.

"Workload-in-hand of trademark applications awaiting issue of first report was reduced from 16,000 in November 1995 to 12,000 in November 1996. This represents an increase of through-put of 25 per cent," he said.

Looking into 1997, Mr Selby said the department was planning to launch a major public campaign at a cost of \$1-2 million in conjunction with the private sector to promote understanding and protection of intellectual property rights.

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Athletes Fund now stands at \$13 million

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The Secretary for Broadcasting, Culture and Sport, Mr Chau Tak-hay, announced today (Thursday) that a total of \$5.136 million in donations to the Hong Kong Athletes Fund had been received by the Broadcasting, Culture and Sport Branch by the end of 1996.

Mr Chau said it was encouraging that the public had responded so well to the call for donations. "I would like to thank all those who have donated so far, in particular, Dr Stanley Ho, Dr Wilson T S Wang and the Hong Kong Jockey Club, who each contributed \$1 million; and Dr Albert Hung and Mr Robert Ng who each donated \$500,000.

"Their generous donations will help greatly to support the development of Hong Kong athletes in the coming years."

To encourage further contributions from the community and to show the Government's firm commitment to local athletes' development, Mr Chau said the Government had already agreed to inject \$8 million into the Fund.

"The total amount in the Fund is therefore now more than \$13 million," he said. "The Government has not set a 'cut-off' date for donations to the Fund, and further contributions from the community are welcome."

The eligibility criteria and the procedure for applications to the Athletes Fund will be announced shortly by the Hong Kong Sports Development Board, which has agreed to manage the operation of the Fund. It is intended that grants from the Fund would be awarded starting the coming academic year.

End

Bill to revise administration of justice provisions

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The Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 1997 will be gazetted tomorrow (Friday) and introduced into the Legislative Council on January 22, 1997.

The Bill seeks to revise, improve or repeal a number of legislative provisions relating to the administration of justice and other matters which contain colonial connotations or are obsolete.

One of the main objectives of the Bill is to amend the law to modernise the judicial qualifications for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court, a District Judge, an adjudicator of the Small Claims Tribunal and a Coroner, so that they refer to common law jurisdictions rather than Commonwealth jurisdictions.

It also aims to amend the Defamation Ordinance to provide for the functions of the judge and jury in a trial on indictment for criminal libel as well as to amend the Magistrates Ordinance to permit a police officer or bailiff to make a statutory declaration as proof of service of a summons to a person where the summons is left with a third person at the recipient's last or most usual place of abode.

A number of Ordinances which have become obsolete will also be repealed under the Bill.

The Bar Association and the Law Society have been consulted on the draft Bill.

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Curtain raised for building safety

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Curtain for the 1997 Building Safety Campaign will be raised this Saturday (January 11) with a roving exhibition to be launched at Dragon Centre in Sham Shui Po.

The Building Safety Campaign is an annual event organised by the Buildings Department to bring home the importance of building safety and to educate members of the public on the needs and standards in maintaining their buildings, said a spokesman for the department.

"Other highlights of the campaign include a new 30-second film to remind residents of the need to maintain the interior and exterior of their properties. It will be broadcast on the television from this Saturday, with the same message to go on the radio some time next week.

"We have also produced a booklet entitled 'Maintaining Your Building' to guide residents on proper ways to maintain their properties for public safety and their own benefit. Copies will be distributed free at the roving exhibition.

"In addition, posters on building maintenance will be distributed to owners' incorporations and property management companies to further spread out the message," he said.

Comprising 10 well-designed and colourful panels, the exhibition at Dragon Centre illustrates the most common building defects with lively graphics and photographs.

It also spells out the legislative requirements on building maintenance and repair, as well as providing hints and advice to building owners for compliance with the statutory orders issued by the Buildings Department.

Two panels are devoted to fire safety in buildings, highlighting on the danger of making illegal alterations to means of escape and fire-resistance facilities, and the need for remedial actions.

The exhibition at Dragon Centre will run until January 13 (Monday). It will be open to public daily from 10 am to 10 pm and admission is free.

The exhibition will also be held at the following venues :

<u>Venue</u>	<u>Date</u>
Tai Yau Arcade in Wan Chai	January 14-20
Times Square in Causeway Bay	January 21-23
Kowloon City Plaza in Kowloon City	January 25-27
New Town Plaza in Shatin	January 28-30
Metro Plaza in Kwai Fong	January 31- February 2

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority interbank liquidity

		TIME	AGGREGATE BALANCE OF SETTLEMENT ACCOUNTS
OPENING AGGREGATE BALANCE	459 MN	0930 HR	9,318 MN
CLOSING AGGREGATE BALANCE	436 MN	1000 HR	11,352 MN
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100 HR	18,430 MN
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+12 MN	1200 HR	27,973 MN
LAF REVERSAL	+7,811 MN	1500 HR	32,199 MN
LAF TODAY	- 7,846 MN	1600 HR	34,743 MN

LAF RATE 4.00% BID/6.00% OFFER TWI 125.6 *+0.3* 9.1.97

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF Bills		EF Notes/MTRC Notes				
Terms	Yield	Terms	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 Week	4.39	2 Years	2811	5.72	100.21	5.67
1 Month	4.44	3 Years	3910	6.28	100.58	6.14
3 Months	4.55	5 Years	5112	6.57	99.36	6.84
6 Months	4.76	7 Years	7311	6.80	98.59	7.18
12 Months	5.11	10 Years	1610	7.37	100.23	7.47
		5 Years	M503	7.35	101.50	7.08

TOTAL TURNOVER OF EF BILLS AND NOTES - \$19,095 MN

CLOSED JANUARY 9, 1997

End