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CONTENTS PAGE NO.

CHANGES IN DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTION SYSTEM ANNOUNCED 1

FUTURE OF COMMERCIAL SOUND BROADCASTING IN HK 3

PROVISIONAL RESULTS OF RETAIL SALES SURVEY FOR DECEMBER RELEASED 4

LOW ELECTION TURNOUT UNSATISFACTORY: SCA 7

INCUMBENT MEMBERS DOMINATE UC/RC ELECTIONS 7

SCA APPEALS TO ELECTORS 8

ELECTORS URGED TO GO TO POLLS 9

MORE MODERN VESSELS ADDED TO MARINE POLICE FLEET 10

IMMIGRATION OFFICERS ON UK ATTACHMENT 11

RE-OPENING OF PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD FLYOVER 11

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR CATERING INDUSTRY 12

BOE MEMBERS VISIT SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR DISABLED 13

MUSIC FUND GRANTS FOR 1989-90 14

SAI KUNG CHILDREN'S CHOIR TO GIVE CONCERT 15

WORKS TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENT AT SAI TSO WAN LANDFILL 15

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF TOLO HIGHWAY 16

CHANGES IN DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTION SYSTEM ANNOUNCED

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE A NUMBER OF CHANGES TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE GREATER SCOPE AND STANDING FOR THE MORE SUBSTANTIAL AND WELL-RUN INSTITUTIONS AND A STRENGTHENING OF THE AUTHORISATION CRITERIA FOR DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTIONS.

THE CHANGES SHOULD FACILITATE THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG AS A FINANCIAL CENTRE, AND ENHANCE THE PROTECTION AFFORDED TO DEPOSITORS.

ANNOUNCING THIS AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY (THURSDAY), THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING, MR TONY NICOLLE, SAID THESE CHANGES WERE MADE FOLLOWING A REVIEW OF THE SYSTEM AND LENGTHY CONSULTATIONS WITH THE INDUSTRY.

MR NICOLLE SAID THE EXISTING THREE-TIER SYSTEM OF DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTIONS, WHICH HAD BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE 1981, COMPRISED LICENSED BANKS, LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES AND REGISTERED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES.

"THE CHANGES, IN ESSENCE, WILL REPLACE THE CATEGORIES OF LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY AND REGISTERED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY WITH TWO NEW AUTHORISATIONS: RESTRICTED LICENCE BANK AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY," HE SAID.

"THE AUTHORISATION REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF BANKS WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED, EXCEPT THAT THE MINIMUM PAID-UP CAPITAL FOR LOCALLY INCORPORATED BANKS WILL BE INCREASED FROM $100 MILLION AT PRESENT TO $150 MILLION," HE ADDED.

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM, RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS, WHICH WILL REPLACE THE PRESENT LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES, WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE WORD "BANK" (AND THE LIKE) IN DESCRIBING THEIR BUSINESS IN PROMOTIONAL PUBLICATIONS AND ADVERTISEMENTS, PROVIDED THAT IT IS SUITABLY QUALIFIED -- FOR EXAMPLE "MERCHANT BANK BUSINESS" OR "INVESTMENT BANKING SERVICES".

DESCRIPTIONS SUCH AS "RETAIL" OR "COMMERCIAL" WILL, HOWEVER, NOT BE ALLOWED, TO AVOID CONFUSION WITH LICENSED BANKS.

BANKS INCORPORATED OVERSEAS AND SEEKING AUTHORISATION AS RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS WILL BE ABLE TO OPERATE IN BRANCH OR SUBSIDIARY FORM.

IF IN BRANCH FORM, AND THEIR OVERSEAS REGISTERED NAME INCLUDES THE WORD "BANK", THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO TRADE FROM HONG KONG WITH THE SAME NAME, BUT QUALIFIED IN EQUAL PROMINENCE BY THE WORDS "RESTRICTED LICENCE BANK" NEXT TO IT. A HONG KONG SUBSIDIARY WILL, HOWEVER, NOT BE ALLOWED TO INCORPORATE WITH A BANKING NAME.

/MR NICOLIE .....

MR NICOLLE SAID THE CHANGES TO BE INTRODUCED WOULD ALSO INCLUDE AN INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM PAID-UP CAPITAL FROM $75 MILLION FOR LOCALLY INCORPORATED LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES TO $100 MILLION FOR RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS.

"THIS WILL REFLECT THE ADDITIONAL STATUS AND PRIVILEGES OF RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS," HE SAID.

"EXISTING LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES, PROVIDED THEIR CAPITAL MEETS THE NEW MINIMUM REQUIREMENT, WILL BE GRANDFATHERED AS RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS."

THE OFFICERS-IN-ONE-BUILDING RESTRICTION WILL APPLY TO OVERSEAS BANKS NEWLY AUTHORISED AS RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS AND OPERATING HERE IN BRANCH FORM.

HOWEVER, LOCALLY INCORPORATED RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS OR EXISTING LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES WHICH ARE GRANDFATHERED AS RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS, WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO SUCH A RESTRICTION.

MR NICOLLE SAID THE RULES FOR THE NEW CATEGORY OF DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY WOULD BE LITTLE CHANGED FROM THOSE APPLICABLE TO REGISTERED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES AT PRESENT.

"THE MINIMUM CAPITAL FOR DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES WILL, HOWEVER, BE RAISED FROM $10 MILLION TO $25 MILLION TO ADD ASSURANCE THAT ONLY SOUND INSTITUTIONS ARE ENTRUSTED WITH PUBLIC DEPOSITS," HE SAID.

EXISTING REGISTERED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (WHICH WILL BE GRANDFATHERED AS DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES) WILL HAVE TWO YEARS IN WHICH TO MEET THE NEW MINIMUM CAPITAL REQUIREMENT. THE NEW REQUIREMENT WILL, HOWEVER, APPLY TO ANY NEW APPLICANT FOR REGISTRATION AS A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY AFTER TOMORROW (FRIDAY).

MR NICOLLE SAID THE SAME PRUDENTIAL STANDARDS WOULD APPLY TO BANKS, RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES, BOTH ON AUTHORISATION AND AS A CONTINUING REQUIREMENT.

IN PARTICULAR, AN APPLICANT FOR DTC AUTHORISATION WILL HAVE TO SATISFY THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING THAT IT IS A FIT AND PROPER BODY.

IN DETERMINING WHETHER A BODY IS "FIT AND PROPER" TO TAKE DEPOSITS, THE COMMISSIONER WILL HAVE REGARD TO, INTER ALIA, THE ADEQUACY OF ITS CAPITAL (IN RELATION TO ITS BUSINESS) AND HUMAN RESOURCES.

THE AUTHORISATION CRITERIA FOR RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS WILL BE SIMILAR TO THOSE FOR LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES AT PRESENT, EXCEPT THAT IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY FOR AN INSTITUTION FIRST TO HAVE BEEN A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY BEFORE BECOMING A RESTRICTED LICENCE BANK.

/NEW AUTHORISATIONS .....

NEW AUTHORISATIONS AS DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES AND RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS WILL GENERALLY BE RESTRICTED TO OVERSEAS BANKS OR, AS AT PRESENT FOR DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES, TO COMPANIES AT LEAST HALF OWNED BY BANKS.

MR NICOLLE SAID THAT ACTION WAS BEING PUT IN HAND TO INTRODUCE THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO EFFECT THE ABOVE CHANGES.

"IT IS HOPED THAT THE NEW SYSTEM WILL BE IN OPERATION LATER THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

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FUTURE OF COMMERCIAL SOUND BROADCASTING IN HK

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THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (BA) TODAY (THURSDAY) RECOMMENDED THAT COMMERCIAL RADIO HONG KONG'S (CRHK) BROADCASTING LICENCE BE RENEWED WHEN ITS CURRENT LICENCE EXPIRES ON AUGUST 25 THIS YEAR AND THAT A LICENCE FOR A SECOND COMMERCIAL RADIO STATION BE AWARDED BY TENDER.

UNDER ITS CURRENT LICENCE, CRHK OPERATES ON THREE AM TERRITORY-WIDE CHANNELS, PROVIDING ONE ENGLISH AND TWO CHINESE SERVICES, THE LATTER TWO SERVICES BEING DUPLICATED ON FM FREQUENCIES.

"THE BA RECOMMENDS THAT CRHK BE GIVEN ONE AM AND TWO FM CHANNELS IN THE NEW LICENSING PERIOD," THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BA, SIR ROGER LOBO, SAID.

"IT IS INTENDED THAT THE SECOND COMMERCIAL RADIO STATION SELECTED BY THE TENDER WILL ALSO BE OPERATING ON ONE AM AND TWO FM CHANNELS TO ENHANCE COMPETITION ON AN EQUAL FOOTING.

"IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE NEW CRHK LICENCE BE VALID FOR A PERIOD OF 12 YEARS, EXPIRING ON AUGUST 25, 2001, AND SUBJECT TO A MID-TERM REVIEW. THE MID-TERM REVIEW WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY PUBLIC HEARINGS."

THE BA HAS ALSO MADE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE CRHK LICENCE WILL BE RENEWED. ALL THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. DETAILS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AFTER THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS MADE THE FINAL DECISION.

"IT IS BELIEVED THAT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD ENSURE THAT AIRWAVES ARE PROPERLY USED IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE REGULATORY SYSTEM, AND IMPROVE FURTHER THE QUALITY OF COMMERCIAL SOUND BROADCASTING IN HONG KONG," SIR ROGER ADDED.

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PROVISIONAL RESULTS OF RETAIL SALES SURVEY FOR DECEMBER RELEASED

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THE VALUE OF TOTAL RETAIL SALES IN DECEMBER 1988, ESTIMATED AT $9,769 MILLION, WAS 17 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN DECEMBER 1987 WHILE THEIR VOLUME WAS 8 PER CENT HIGHER, ACCORDING TO THE PROVISIONAL RESULTS OF A SURVEY RELEASED TODAY (THURSDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

COMPARING DECEMBER 1988 WITH DECEMBER 1987, RETAIL SALES OF FOODSTUFFS, ALCOHOLIC DRINKS AND TOBACCO INCREASED BY 11 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 4 PER CENT IN VOLUME. FUELS ROSE BY 7 PER CENT IN BOTH SALES VALUE AND VOLUME.

ON THE SAME BASIS OF COMPARISON, RETAIL SALES OF CONSUMER DURABLES ROSE BY 22 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 13 PER CENT IN VOLUME. CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR AND ALLIED PRODUCTS INCREASED BY 21 PER CENT IN SALES VALUE AND 9 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME WHILE THE CORRESPONDING INCREASES FOR "OTHER CONSUMER GOODS" WERE 17 PER CENT AND 8 PER CENT.

ANALYSED BY SELECTED TRADES, RETAIL SALES OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND PARTS ROSE BY 35 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 23 PER CENT IN VOLUME. SALES BY DEPARTMENT STORES WENT UP BY 17 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 5 PER CENT IN VOLUME.

CONSUMER DURABLES OTHER THAN MOTOR VEHICLES AND PARTS INCREASED BY 16 PER CENT IN SALES VALUE AND 9 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME, WHILST SUPERMARKETS SALES INCREASED BY 14 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 3 PER CENT IN VOLUME.

COMPARING THE YEAR 1988 WITH THE YEAR 1987, TOTAL RETAIL SALES INCREASED BY 21 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 12 PER CENT IN VOLUME.

ANALYSED BY MAJOR TRADE GROUPS, SALES OF FOODSTUFFS, ALCOHOLIC DRINKS AND TOBACCO ROSE BY 11 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 2 PER CENT IN VOLUME. FUELS WENT UP BY 8 PER CENT IN SALES VALUE AND 5 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME.

ON THE SAME BASIS OF COMPARISON, RETAIL SALES OF "OTHER CONSUMER GOODS" ROSE BY 28 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 19 PER CENT IN VOLUME.

"CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR AND ALLIED PRODUCTS" AND CONSUMER DURABLES INCREASED BY 23 PER CENT AND 20 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IN SALES VALUE, AND BOTH INCREASED BY 11 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME.

ANALYSED BY SELECTED TRADES, SALES OF "MOTOR VEHICLES AND PARTS" AND DEPARTMENT STORES BOTH INCREASED BY 39 PER CENT IN VALUE, AND INCREASED BY 27 PER CENT AND 26 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IN VOLUME.

SUPERMARKETS SALES ROSE BY 16 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 7 PER CENT IN VOLUME. CONSUMER DURABLES OTHER THAN MOTOR VEHICLES AND PARTS WENT UP BY 11 PER CENT IN SALES VALUE AND 5 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME.

/WHEN COMPARED .....

WHEN COMPARED WITH NOVEMBER 1988, AND BEARING IN MIND THAT THIS COMPARISON IS LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY SEASONAL FACTORS, TOTAL RETAIL SALES FOR DECEMBER 1988 ROSE BY 10 PER CENT IN BOTH VALUE AND VOLUME TERMS.

FUELS AND "FOODSTUFFS, ALOHOLIC DRINKS AND TOBACCO" INCREASED BY 11 PER CENT AND 6 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IN BOTH SALES VALUE AND VOLUME.

ON THE SAME BASIS OF COMPARISON, RETAIL SALES OF CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR AND ALLIED PRODUCTS ROSE BY 18 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 16 PER CENT IN VOLUME.

"OTHER CONSUMER GOODS" INCREASED BY 13 PER CENT IN SALES VALUE AND 12 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME. CONSUMER DURABLES WENT UP BY 4 PER CENT IN SALES VALUE AND 5 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME.

ANALYSED BY SELECTED TRADES, SALES BY SUPERMARKETS INCREASED BY 23 PER CENT IN VALUE AND 22 PER CENT IN VOLUME.

IN TERMS OF BOTH SALES VALUE AND VOLUME, DEPARTMENT STORES AND "CONSUMER DURABLES OTHER THAN MOTOR VEHICLES AND PARTS" ROSE BY 21 PER CENT AND 13 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, MOTOR VEHICLES AND PARTS DROPPED BY 9 PER CENT IN SALES VALUE AND 10 PER CENT IN SALES VOLUME.

TABLE 1 PRESENTS THE REVISED TOTAL RETAIL SALES FIGURE FOR NOVEMBER 1988 AND THE PROVISIONAL FIGURE FOR DECEMBER 1988.

TABLE 2 SHOWS THE VALUE AND VOLUME INDEXES IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1988 (A) FOR ALL RETAIL TRADES, (B) BY MAJOR TRADE GROUPS AND (C) BY SELECTED TRADES (WHICH FORM PART OF THE RELEVANT MAJOR TRADE GROUPS), WITH AVERAGE RETAIL SALES FROM OCTOBER 1984 TO SEPTEMBER 1985 TAKEN AS 100.

COMPARISONS OF DECEMBER 1988 RESULTS WITH THOSE FOR NOVEMBER 1988 AND WITH THOSE FOR DECEMBER 1987 AND COMPARISONS OF RETAIL SALES IN THE YEAR 1988 WITH THE YEAR 1987 ARE ALSO GIVEN.

THE REPORT CONTAINING THE ANALYSIS OF DECEMBER 1988 SURVEY RESULTS IS NOW ON SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL, AT $1 PER COPY.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE SURVEY RESULTS MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE STATISTICS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON TELEPHONE 5-8234941.

/TABLE 1 .....

TABLE 1 : TOTAL RETAIL SALES

Total Retail Sales for December 1988 (Provisional Figure) = HK$ 9,769million
for November 1988 (Revised Figure) = HK$ 8,865million

TABLE 2 : VALUE AND VOLUME INDEXES OF RETAIL SALES FOR NOVEMBER 1988 AND DECEMBER 1988

(Monthly average of Oct. 84 - Sept. 85 = 100)

Item	Index of Retail Sales	November 1988	December 1988	December 1988 compared with November 1988		December 1988 compared with December 1987		Jan.-Dec. 1988 compared with Jan.-Dec. 1987	
		(Revised figures)	(Provisional figures)	Points	%	Points	%	Points	%
(A) FOR ALL RETAIL TRADES									
	Value	158	174	16	10	25	17	27	21
	Volume	127	140	12	10	10	8	14	12
(B) BY MAJOR TRADE GROUPS									
Foodstuffs, alcoholic drinks and tobacco	Value	141	149	8	6	15	11	13	11
	Volume	119	126	7	6	5	4	2	2
Fuels	Value	101	112	11	11	8	7	8	8
	Volume	110	122	12	11	8	7	6	5
Clothing, footwear and allied products	Value	184	217	33	18	38	21	31	23
	Volume	138	159	22	16	13	9	14	11
Consumer durables	Value	163	170	7	4	31	22	26	20
	Volume	127	133	6	5	15	13	13	11
Other consumer goods	Value	168	190	22	13	27	17	36	28
	Volume	133	149	16	12	11	8	22	19
(C) BY SELECTED TRADES									
(see note 1 below)									
Supermarkets	Value	147	181	34	23	22	14	22	16
	Volume	122	149	27	22	5	3	8	7
Motor vehicles and parts	Value	283	259	-25	-9	67	35	69	39
	Volume	197	177	-19	-10	33	23	37	27
Consumer durables other than motor vehicles and parts	Value	126	143	17	13	20	16	13	11
	Volume	105	119	14	13	10	9	5	5
Department stores	Value	203	246	43	21	35	17	53	39
	Volume	153	185	32	21	9	5	32	26

NOTES : 1. In order to analyse the sales of certain trades WITHIN major trade groups, the value and volume indexes in respect of the following selected trades are compiled :
(a) "Supermarkets" - a trade in the "Foodstuffs, alcoholic drinks and tobacco" group.
(b) "Motor vehicles and parts" - a trade in the "Consumer durables" group.
(c) "Consumer durables other than motor vehicles and parts" - a trade in the "Consumer durables" group.
(d) "Department stores" - a trade in the "Other consumer goods" group.
2. Figures denoting changes are derived from the unrounded index figures.
3. "#" denotes a figure within ±0.5.

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LOW ELECTION TURNOUT UNSATISFACTORY: SCA

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THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TONIGHT (THURSDAY) DESCRIBED AS "NOT SATISFACTORY" THE LOW TURNOUT RATE OF THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS ELECTION.

A TOTAL OF 213,352 ELECTORS CAST THEIR BALLOTS, REPRESENTING 17.6 PER CENT OF THE ELECTORATE.

"I AM DISAPPOINTED, BUT WE SHOULD NOT DWELL ON THAT. LET US REMEMBER THAT IN AN ELECTION THERE IS ONLY THAT MUCH THE GOVERNMENT CAN DO," MR SUEN SAID.

"IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE VOTERS THEMSELVES. IT'S THE VOTERS WHO MAKE THE TURNOUT.

"IF THEY COME OUT TO VOTE WE'LL GET A HIGH TURNOUT, BUT IF THEY DON'T COME OUT TO VOTE, DESPITE WHAT THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT DO, THE TURNOUT RATE WILL REMAIN LOW," HE ADDED.

MR SUEN POINTED OUT THAT ELECTORS SHOULD "TREASURE" THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE BY EXERCISING THAT RIGHT TO ELECT THEIR OWN REPRESENTATIVES TO THE VARIOUS TIERS OF GOVERNMENT, AS THERE WILL BE MORE ELECTIONS TO COME.

HE SAID HE WOULD NOT SPECULATE ON THE REASONS FOR THE LOW TURNOUT BUT NOTED THAT THE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES STANDING FOR ELECTIONS THIS YEAR WAS MUCH LESS THAN IN THE 1986 ELECTIONS.

ON THE QUESTION OF PUBLICITY, MR SUEN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PUBLICISING THE ELECTIONS.

"I DON'T THINK ANYONE CAN SAY THAT THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF THE FACT THAT TODAY IS ELECTION DAY. THEY KNOW OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ELECTION AND PEOPLE WHO ARE REGISTERED AS VOTERS GET THEIR POLL CARDS, AND THEY KNOW WHERE TO VOTE TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS," HE ADDED.

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INCUMBENT MEMBERS DOMINATE UC/RC ELECTIONS

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INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS HAVE DOMINATED THE ELECTIONS WITH 12 BEING RE-ELECTED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNCILS.

COUNTING OF THE 213,352 VOTES THAT HAD BEEN CAST FOR THE 46 CANDIDATES VYING FOR 20 SEATS ON THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS BEGAN AFTER THE POLLS CLOSED AT 10.30 PM TODAY (THURSDAY).

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THE 20 ELECTED (11 UC AND 9 RC) WILL JOIN SEVEN OTHERS (4 UC AND 3 RC) WHO WERE UNCONTESTED TO SERVE FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS. OF THE SEVEN, ONLY MR CHOW YICK-HAY OF KWAI CHUNG EAST IN THE RC ELECTION, IS A NEWCOMER.

MR LAU KONG-WAH, WHO RAN IN THE SHA TIN WEST CONSTITUENCY OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, RECEIVED THE MOST VOTES AT 10,271, WHILE MR MAN SAI-CHEONG GOT THE MOST BALLOTS IN THE URBAN COUNCIL ELECTION WITH 8,312 IN THE NORTH POINT CONSTITUENCY.

FIVE INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL RETAINED THEIR SEATS WHILE TWO ARE DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND TWO ARE NEWCOMERS.

SEVEN INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL WERE RE-ELECTED WHILE FOUR DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WERE VOTED INTO THE COUNCIL.

THOSE ELECTED INCLUDED SOCIAL WORKERS, BUSINESSMEN, LAWYERS, ACADEMICS AND A HERBALIST.

THE AGES OF THOSE ELECTED TO THE REGIONAL COUNCIL RANGED FROM 30 TO 43, WHILE THOSE IN THE URBAN COUNCIL RANGED FROM 28 TO 67.

THE FIRST CONSTITUENCY TO RETURN VOTES WAS MONG KOK AT 12.20 AM (FRIDAY) WHILE THE LAST VOTES COUNTED WAS AT 4.50 AM FOR THE SHAM SHUI PO WEST SEAT.

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SCA APPEALS TO ELECTORS

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THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, THIS (THURSDAY) MORNING APPEALED TO ELECTORS TO CAST THEIR VOTES IN TODAY'S URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

SPEAKING TO THE PRESS DURING HIS VISIT TO THE ELECTIONS PRESS CENTRE AT THE CITY HALL EXHIBITION HALL, MR SUEN SAID: "I HOPE THAT ELECTORS WILL DISCHARGE THEIR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY BY GOING TO THE POLLING STATIONS. I ALSO APPEAL TO THOSE WHO ARE AT WORK TO CAST THEIR VOTES AFTER WORK."

ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE VOTER TURNOUT RATE AS AT 10.30 AM, MR SUEN SAID IT WAS TOO EARLY FOR HIM TO MAKE AN ASSESSMENT, ADDING THAT HE HOPED THE RATE WOULD INCREASE AS THE DAY PROGRESSED.

MR SUEN SAID HE HAD VISITED POLLING STATIONS IN CHAI WAN, NORTH POINT AND HAPPY VALLEY, AND HAD OBSERVED THAT MOST OF THE VOTERS AT THOSE STATIONS WERE ELDERLY PERSONS.

"THIS IS NOT SURPRISING BECAUSE THE YOUNGER PERSONS ARE AT WORK," HE NOTED.

/IN ANSWER .....

IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, MR SUEN SAID HE HOPED THAT ELECTORS WOULD NOT TIRE OF ELECTIONS BECAUSE ELECTIONS WERE NECESSARY TO ENABLE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO CHOOSE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES TO SIT ON THE TWO COUNCILS OR THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT URBAN OR REGIONAL COUNCILLORS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MATTERS WHICH CLOSELY AFFECTED LOCAL RESIDENTS, SUCH AS RECREATION AND THE HAWKER PROBLEM.

"I HOPE THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WILL, THROUGH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE COUNCILS, EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON MATTERS FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THEIR LIFE," HE ADDED.

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ELECTORS URGED TO GO TO POLLS

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THE SECRETARY FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES, MR AUGUSTINE CHUI, THIS (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON APPEALED TO ELECTORS TO MAKE USE OF THE FEW REMAINING HOURS TO CAST THEIR VOTES IN THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS ELECTIONS BEFORE THE POLLING STATIONS CLOSE AT 10.30 PM.

SPEAKING AT A MEDIA BRIEFING IN THE ELECTIONS PRESS CENTRE AT CITY HALL, MR CHUI SAID THAT IF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WANTED TO SEE FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WORK OF THE TWO COUNCILS, THEY SHOULD PERFORM THEIR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY BY ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE ELECTIONS.

NOTING THAT THE VOTER TURNOUT RATE IN THE AFTERNOON WAS COMPARABLY LOWER THAN THAT DURING THE SAME PERIOD IN THE 1986 ELECTIONS, HE SAID, "WE STILL HAVE A FEW HOURS TO GO, AND WE WON'T GET A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE SITUATION UNTIL 10.30 TONIGHT."

MR CHUI POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE MORE UNCONTESTED SEATS THIS YEAR.

"THIS MEANS THAT THE REGISTERED ELECTORS IN SEVEN CONSTITUENCIES DO NOT HAVE TO GO TO THE POLLS, AND THIS WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE EFFECTS ON THE TURNOUT RATE," HE ADDED.

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MORE MODERN VESSELS ADDED TO MARINE POLICE FLEET

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HARBOUR POLICING IN HONG KONG WILL BE FURTHER ENHANCED BY THE LATEST ADDITION OF MODERN VESSELS TO THE MARINE POLICE FLEET -- THE LARGEST POLICE FLEET IN THE WORLD.

SEVERAL NEW POLICE VESSELS, INCLUDING SEVEN HARBOUR LAUNCHES, TWO "SHARK CAT" MULTI-HULLED VESSELS AND TWO TYPHOON 9.5-METRE RIGID INFLATABLE BOATS, WERE TODAY (THURSDAY) COMMISSIONED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, MR RAYMON ANNING, AT JOSS HOUSE BAY.

SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY, MR ANNING SAID THE NEW VESSELS FORMED PART OF THE MARINE REPLACEMENT AND EXPANSION PLANS WHICH WERE ALREADY UNDERWAY FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS.

"HONG KONG HARBOUR RATES AS ONE OF THE BUSIEST WATERWAYS IN THE WORLD AND THE UP-TO-DATE EQUIPMENT ON BOARD THE NEW HARBOUR LAUNCHES WILL GREATLY ASSIST MARINE POLICE IN MEETING THE EVER INCREASING DEMANDS," SAID MR ANNING.

THE COMMISSIONER ALSO NOTED THAT THE ADDITION OF TWO "SHARK CATS" AND TWO 9.5-METRE RIGID INFLATABLE BOATS TO THE SMALL BOAT UNIT WOULD IMPROVE ITS OVERALL CAPABILITIES IN DIFFICULT OPERATIONAL CONDITION.

"THE 'SHARK CATS' -- THE FIRST EVER MULTI-HULLED VESSELS TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE SERVICE WITH THE MARINE POLICE -- WILL SERVE AS COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT CRAFT.

"THE 9.5-METRE RIGID INFLATABLE BOATS WILL GREATLY ENHANCE THE CAPABILITY OF THE SMALL BOAT UNIT AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND WATER BORNE CRIMES, AS WELL AS SUPPORTING THE SPECIAL DUTIES UNIT IN THEIR MARITIME COUNTER TERRORIST ROLE," THE POLICE CHIEF SAID.

MR ANNING THEN LIT JOSS STICKS AND TOOK PART IN TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES ABOARD THE NEW VESSELS. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY REGIONAL COMMANDER, MARINE, MR JOHN MACDONALD, AND DIVISIONAL COMMANDER, HARBOUR, MARINE, MR IAIN WARD.

AFTER THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY, THE NEW VESSELS PERFORMED A SERIES OF SEA MANOEUVRES BEFORE SALUTING THE COMMISSIONER.

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IMMIGRATION OFFICERS ON UK ATTACHMENT

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FOUR IMMIGRATION OFFICERS WILL LEAVE FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM NEXT WEEK FOR A SIX-WEEK ATTACHMENT PROGRAMME WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM IMMIGRATION SERVICE.

THE FOUR OFFICERS ARE ACTING SENIOR IMMIGRATION OFFICERS MR PAUL LAM YAN-CHUNG, MR CHOW KAI-TAK, AND MRS PAU LEUNG CHOI-SHEUNG, AND ACTING IMMIGRATION OFFICER MISS NGAI WAI-LAN.

THEY WILL VISIT BRANCHES OF THE HOME OFFICE HANDLING IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY MATTERS AS WELL AS IMMIGRATION OFFICES AND PORTS.

AT A PRE-DEPARTURE BRIEFING HELD TODAY (THURSDAY), THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION, MR ALAN CARTER, SAID THAT IMMIGRATION WORK HAD BECOME MORE COMPLEX AND MEMBERS OF THE SERVICE WERE REQUIRED TO BE VIGILANT AND ALERT TOWARDS CHANGES THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT PLACED GREAT IMPORTANCE ON GIVING ITS STAFF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.

MR CARTER SAID HE HOPED THAT THE ATTACHMENT WOULD ENABLE THE OFFICERS TO WIDEN THEIR HORIZON AND TO HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORK OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

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RE-OPENING OF PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD FLYOVER

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT REMINDED MOTORISTS THAT TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FROM 3.30 PM TOMORROW (FRIDAY) FOR THE RE-OPENING OF THE PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD FLYOVER FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF THE FLYOVER RECONSTRUCTION WORKS.

THE FLYOVER WILL BE OPENED FOR TWO-LANE TRAFFIC IN EACH DIRECTION. AT THE SAME TIME, THE THREE-TONNE GROSS WEIGHT RESTRICTION IMPOSED ON THE OLD FLYOVER WILL BE LIFTED.

THE LEFT-TURN BAN AND THE BUS LANE ON NORTHBOUND WATERLOO ROAD AT ITS JUNCTION WITH PRINCE EDWARD ROAD WILL ALSO BE REMOVED.

ALL VEHICLES CAN MAKE USE OF NORTHBOUND PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD AND WATERLOO ROAD AT GROUND LEVEL ONLY TO GAIN ACCESS TO WESTBOUND PRINCE EDWARD ROAD.

/MOTORISTS USING .....

MOTORISTS USING THE FLYOVER WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO WEAVE INTO THE INNER LANES OF WATERLOO ROAD TO GAIN ACCESS TO PRINCE EDWARD ROAD.

ON THE OTHER HAND, UNDER A TRAFFIC DIVERSION SCHEME IMPLEMENTED IN JUNE 1986 FOR THE FLYOVER RECONSTRUCTION, VEHICLES FROM SOUTHERN KOWLOON AND HONG KONG ISLAND HEADING FOR PRINCE EDWARD ROAD ARE DIVERTED VIA PUI CHING ROAD, SOARES AVENUE, ARGYLE STREET AND KADOORIE AVENUE.

AS GROUND LEVEL RECONSTRUCTION WORKS WILL CONTINUE ON PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD, ARGYLE STREET AND WATERLOO ROAD, THE ONE-WAY ARRANGEMENT ON KADOORIE AVENUE WILL BE MAINTAINED FOR THE TIME BEING TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE ACCESS FROM SOUTHERN KOWLOON TO PRINCE EDWARD ROAD.

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CODE OF PRACTICE FOR CATERING INDUSTRY

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A TRIPARTITE WORKING GROUP ON THE CATERING TRADE HAS RECENTLY PUBLISHED A CODE OF PRACTICE TO HELP EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO IMPROVE THE COMPLIANCE OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE AND LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS.

THE WORKING GROUP, SET UP IN MID-1987, IS MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS, MANAGERS' ASSOCIATIONS, TRADE UNIONS, LABOUR GROUPS AND THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

SERVING AS A QUICK GUIDE FOR THOSE IN THE CATERING TRADE, THE CODE OF PRACTICE COMPRISES 12 SECTIONS COVERING SUCH TOPICS AS LABOUR-MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION, RIGHT OF EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES, FRINGE BENEFITS FOR WORKERS, PAYMENT SYSTEM, SETTLEMENT OF TRADE DISPUTES, JOINT CONSULTATION AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

IT ALSO CONTAINS SAMPLES OF CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYEES' HANDBOOK.

THE CODE OF PRACTICE, IN CHINESE ONLY, IS BEING DISTRIBUTED TO EATING ESTABLISHMENTS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

FREE COPIES CAN ALSO BE OBTAINED FROM ALL BRANCH OFFICES OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE.

/NOTE TO .....

NOTE TO EDITORS:

DETAILS OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CATERING INDUSTRY WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (FRIDAY) AT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S CONFERENCE ROOM, 16TH FLOOR, HARBOUR BUILDING, CENTRAL.

THE CONFERENCE WILL BE CHAIRED BY SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER, MR HO HONG-WAI, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES SERVING ON THE WORKING GROUP.

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 3 PM.

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BOE MEMBERS VISIT SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR DISABLED

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FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE) TODAY (THURSDAY) VISITED THE MARY ROSE SCHOOL IN KOWLOON TONG TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES HOW EDUCATION IS PROVIDED TO MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

THE MEMBERS WERE MR TIMOTHY HA, MR TAM MAN-KWAN, PROFESSOR BRIAN COOKE, MISS BOE SUI-MEI AND MISS SO YAN-LAP.

THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED ON THE VISIT BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (SERVICES), MR LUCAS CHAN, AND THE BOE SECRETARY, MR CHIU PING-KWAN.

DURING THEIR TOUR OF THE AIDED CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL, THE MEMBERS WERE TOLD THAT THE SCHOOL WAS FOUNDED BY THE CHRIST CHURCH COUNCIL.

IT WAS FIRST OPERATED IN THE HALL OF ST ANDREW'S CHURCH. THE SCHOOL MOVED TO DERBY ROAD IN KOWLOON TONG IN 1971 BEFORE IT WAS REPROVISIONED IN ITS PRESENT PREMISES IN RENFREW ROAD IN APRIL 1986.

THE SCHOOL NOW OPERATES 10 CLASSES FOR 200 MILDLY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND ANOTHER 10 CLASSES FOR 100 MODERATELY MENTALLY DISABLED CHILDREN IN ITS PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SECTIONS.

THE SCHOOL IS FOLLOWING A CURRICULUM WHICH AIMS TO DEVELOP MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AS INDEPENDENT AND USEFUL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

THE CURRICULUM INCLUDES CHINESE LANGUAGE, MATHEMATICS, PERCEPTUAL MOTOR TRAINING, HOME ECONOMICS, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURAL SUBJECTS.

FOR MILDLY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN, EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON SOCIAL STUDIES, CIVIC, HEALTH AND SEX EDUCATION.

/FOR THE .....

FOR THE MODERATELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, SELF HELP AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE ARE EMPHASISED. UNIT TEACHING AND THE ACTIVITY APPROACH ARE ALSO USED.

SCHOOL LEAVERS ARE REFERRED BY SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT OR PLACEMENT IN SKILLS CENTRES OPERATED THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING DEPARTMENT, OR IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

THE SCHOOL HAS TAKEN PART IN THE LOCAL ANNUAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND IN SPORTS EVENTS OVERSEAS, AND HAS WON MANY AWARDS.

THE HANDICAPPED STUDENTS HAVE ALSO OBTAINED EXCELLENT RESULTS IN THE HONG KONG MUSIC FESTIVAL AND THE HONG KONG SCHOOLS DANCE FESTIVAL.

THE BOE MEMBERS WERE TOLD THAT STUDENTS HAD ALSO TAKEN PART IN A NUMBER OF OVERSEAS ART EXHIBITIONS, SUCH AS THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF ART ORGANISED BY THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN LONDON LAST YEAR.

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MUSIC FUND GRANTS FOR 1989-90

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ALL REGISTERED NON-PROFIT MAKING ORGANISATIONS CAN NOW APPLY FOR GRANTS FROM THE HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB MUSIC FUND FOR THE YEAR 1989-90.

THE GRANTS ARE PRIMARILY FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE FIELDS OF MUSIC, DANCE AND OTHER ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES.

GRANTS WERE PREVIOUSLY MADE TO SCHOOLS AND MUSIC AND DANCE ORGANISATIONS FOR PURCHASING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, DANCE EQUIPMENT, MUSIC SCORES AND PARTS, AND FOR PAYMENT OF INSTRUCTORS' FEES FOR TRAINING.

THEY ALSO COVERED THE ORGANISING OF MUSIC AND DANCE EVENTS SUCH AS CONCERTS, MUSIC CAMPS AND DANCE WORKSHOPS.

APPLICATIONS CAN BE MADE FOR GRANTS FOR OTHER PURPOSES WHICH CONFORM WITH THE OVERALL EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE FUND.

A MUSIC FUND SPOKESMAN SAID GRANTS TOTALLING $890,000 WERE APPROVED IN 1988-89 FOR 137 SCHOOLS AND ORGANISATIONS.

APPLICATION FORMS AND INFORMATION PAMPHLETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FROM:

/* THE HONG .....

* THE HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB MUSIC FUND SECRETARIAT, 25TH FLOOR, WANCHAI TOWER I, 12 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI.

* MUSIC CENTRES OF THE MUSIC OFFICE.

FURTHER DETAILS CAN BE OBTAINED BY TELEPHONING 5-8235343. THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS APRIL 22.

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SAI KUNG CHILDREN'S CHOIR TO GIVE CONCERT

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THE SAI KUNG CHILDREN'S CHOIR WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL CONCERT AT THE TSUI LAM COMMUNITY HALL IN JUNK BAY ON SATURDAY (MARCH 11).

THE CHOIR WILL PERFORM A NUMBER OF CHINESE AND WESTERN SONGS. THERE WILL ALSO BE RECORDER, VIOLIN AND PIANO PERFORMANCES.

THE CONCERT, WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 8.30 PM, IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SAI KUNG CHILDREN'S CHOIR, SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE MUSIC OFFICE.

SAI KUNG'S DISTRICT OFFICER, MR CHRISTOPHER MUNN, AND THE DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR WILLIAM WAN, WILL BE GUESTS AT THE CONCERT.

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WORKS TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENT AT SAI TSO WAN LANDFILL

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IMPROVEMENT AND PROTECTIVE WORKS WILL BE CARRIED OUT AT THE SAI TSO WAN LANDFILL IN KWUN TONG TO IMPROVE THE OVERALL ENVIRONMENT IN THE AREA AND MAKE IT SAFE FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE METHANE GAS CREATED BY THE DECOMPOSED REFUSE WILL BE EXTRACTED FROM THE LANDFILL BY MEANS OF PUMPING WELLS AND THE EXTRACTED GAS WILL THEN BE BURNT OFF. THIS WILL SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ANY HAZARD ASSOCIATED WITH METHANE GAS.

IN ADDITION, THE MAJOR FACE OF THE LANDFILL FACING WEST IS OVER 60 METRES HIGH AND WILL OVERLOOK ONE OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS. STABILISATION WORKS WILL BE CARRIED OUT ON THIS SLOPE TO BRING IT TO CURRENT STANDARDS.

/THIS LARGE .....

THIS LARGE REFUSE TIP WAS COMPLETED IN 1981 AT A TIME WHEN THERE WAS LITTLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA. WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS ARE NOW PROPOSED IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE LANDFILL SITE, THUS IMPROVEMENT AND PROTECTIVE WORKS ARE REQUIRED.

THE CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE TWO-YEAR PROJECT.

TENDERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY NOON ON MARCH 31.

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF TOLO HIGHWAY

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT TO FACILITATE ROADWORKS AND THE REPLACEMENT OF GANTRY SIGNS, THE NORTHBOUND SLIP ROAD LEADING FROM TOLO HIGHWAY TO TAI PO ROAD (YUEN CHAU TSAI) WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FROM 1.30 AM TO 6 AM ON SUNDAY (MARCH 12).

DURING THE CLOSURE, TAI PO-BOUND GREEN MINIBUS ROUTE 58S WILL BE DIVERTED VIA TAI PO ROAD NORTHBOUND.

VEHICLES PROCEEDING FROM SHA TIN TO TAI PO ARE ADVISED TO USE EITHER TAI PO ROAD OR THE INTERCHANGE AT SHUI WAI FOR ACCESS TO TAI PO FROM TOLO HIGHWAY.

IN ADDITION, THE TRAFFIC LANES ON TOLO HIGHWAY NORTHBOUND BETWEEN TAI PO KAU MARINE POLICE POST AND THE SLIP ROAD TO TAI PO ROAD (YUEN CHAU TSAI) WILL ALSO BE CLOSED IN TURN.

THE FAST LANE WILL BE CLOSED ON MARCH 12 AND 13. IT WILL AGAIN BE CLOSED BETWEEN 9 AM AND 9 PM ON MARCH 15.

MEANWHILE, THE SLOW AND CENTRE LANES WILL BE CLOSED FROM 9 PM ON MARCH 15 TO 6 AM THE NEXT DAY.

THE SLOW LANE WILL ALSO BE CLOSED FROM 9 AM TO 5 PM ON MARCH 17.

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