



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
GARDEN ROAD, 5th-8th FLOORS, MURRAY BUILDING,
HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Saturday, March 1, 1997

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Azalea open days at Government House	1
Public Consultation on Telecommunications Review	2
New roles and responsibilities of school leaders	3
Heavy penalty for ignoring improvement notices	4
Total solar eclipse	5

Sunday, March 2, 1997

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
HAD organises seminar for new arrivals	5
Teachers invited to design curriculum projects	6
Fees for Certificate of Competency of Boilers revised	7

Azalea open days at Government House

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The Governor, the Rt Honourable Christopher Patten, has decided that the gardens of Government House will be open to the public for two days instead of just one Sunday as in the past so that more people will have a chance to see the azaleas at their best at the Governor's residence.

Mr Patten has also invited wheelchair users to visit the Government House gardens on a special open day for them.

Since 1968, the Azalea Day has become an institution and is normally held on a Sunday in late February or early March each year. The Governor's decision to extend it to a whole weekend this year was made in response to a suggestion made to him at the public forum on his Policy Address in October last year.

The Gardens of Government house will be open to the public on March 8 and 9 (Saturday and Sunday) from 10 am to 5 pm.

For the open day for wheelchair users, including people with a disability and elderly persons, special access facilities will be set up for them.

The extra open day will be held on March 15 (Saturday) from 10 am to 5 pm. Admission for this open day will be by ticket and is arranged by the Commissioner for Rehabilitation through the Social Welfare Department, the Hospital Authority and other voluntary agencies.

The open day has been an annual event since 1968 and this year marks its 29th anniversary

In 1994, the event drew 17,432 visitors. The figure for 1995 was 17,650. Last year, 24,650 people attended the open day.

During the opening hours on March 8 and 9, all visitors are advised to enter the Government House by the east gate, which is located on Upper Albert Road facing the American Consulate. Special arrangements will be made on March 15 to facilitate the alighting and boarding of wheelchair users.

Visitors can leave by the main gate on Upper Albert Road or the west gate on Albert Path.

As a large number of people are anticipated, visitors are advised not to travel by private car or taxi. If they come by taxi or car, they are advised not to alight on Upper Albert Road.

End

Public Consultation on Telecommunications Review

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The Government published today (Saturday) a consultation document on a comprehensive review of its policies in telecommunications.

Speaking after a briefing session on the recent World Trade Organization (WTO) Basic Telecommunications Agreement, Mr Alexander Arena, Head, Telecommunications Review said that "despite the fact that Hong Kong already enjoys a world-class telecommunications industry, we need to plan ahead to ensure the strength of Hong Kong's telecommunications sector continues to grow. The world telecommunications industry is operating in an increasingly competitive market as global trade in services continues to surge."

Hong Kong's telecommunications policies were last reviewed in 1992 and a position paper was subsequently issued in early 1994.

The current review will start on March 1, 1997. Its main objectives are -

- a) examining, on the completion of 18 months since the opening up of local telephone service to competition, the current state of development of Hong Kong's telecommunications industry;
- b) formulating policy options to respond to the foreseeable development of telecommunications technologies and the convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting and information technologies; and
- c) developing strategic options, with a full analysis of "pros" and "cons" to maintain Hong Kong's leading position in telecommunications and competitiveness in the Information Age.

Members of the public are invited to submit their comments to the following by Friday April 11, 1997 -

Economic Services Branch
2/F, Central Government Offices (Main Wing)
Lower Albert Road
Hong Kong
(Fax : 2868 4679)

The public consultation document is available from OFTA's Internet home page (URL address : <http://www.ofa.gov.hk>). Copies of the consultation document will be available at Economic Services Branch or OFTA's Enquiry Counter from March 3, 1997 onwards, and at District Offices' Public Enquiry Counters from March 5, 1997.

End

New roles and responsibilities of school leaders

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The Director of Education, Mrs Helen C P Lai Yu this (Saturday) morning shared her views on the roles and responsibilities of school leaders with participants at the Conference on Designing Schools for the 21st Century -- Considerations for Hong Kong's School Leaders.

Mrs Yu said school leaders had to assume new roles in quality development and quality assurance in the next century.

"We now ask them to be crusader, motivator, facilitator and learner -- all at the same time," she said.

She said a good leader should be a crusader with a clear vision for quality development, a true believer with firm conviction for quality culture.

He shares powers of decision-making and mobilises participation, yet appreciates the importance of accountability and accepts responsibility, she added.

"A school leader must be a motivator, where change begins and extends.

"He creates a climate for shared values, corporate decisions and joint action.

"Change would then permeate through the school, in beliefs and behaviour," Mrs Yu said.

Meanwhile, a school leader must be a facilitator and supporter, not just supervisor or controller.

He renders assistance and maximises resources. He provides opportunities for training and performance.

"He establishes an atmosphere for innovation, for collaboration and for pursuit of excellence in people as well as in the school environment," she said.

"A school leader must be a life-long learner. He keeps abreast of developments, not only in education but also in the society around him.

"He does not rest on faded glory or pasting traditions," she added.

Mrs Yu said the roles of school leader became ever more complex and so more interesting, more challenging and thus more rewarding.

He has to be both responsible and responsive, she noted.

End

Heavy penalty for ignoring improvement notices

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The Labour Department today (Saturday) warned the proprietors to take measures promptly to improve the safety at work once the improvement notices were issued to them, otherwise they would face severe penalties.

The warning was made following three recent court cases in which three companies, namely Hang Fook Lau Seafood Restaurant Limited, Bowker Garment Factory Co. Ltd. and Hip Hing Machinery Factory, were convicted for ignoring improvement notices.

Improvement notices were issued to the three respective proprietors warning them to keep all doorways and exits free from obstruction. However, it was found that no improvements were made when follow-up inspection was conducted.

Hang Fook Lau Seafood Restaurant Limited at Tai Po Road was fined \$20,000 for ignoring the improvement notice. An additional fine of \$20,000 was imposed on the original offence of obstructing exits and doorways from the workplace which violated Regulation 5(1) of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Fire Precautions in Notifiable Workplaces) Regulations.

Bowker Garment Factory Co. Ltd. at Castle Peak Road was fined \$10,000 and \$10,000 respectively.

Hip Hing Machinery Factory at Tonkin Street was fined \$10,000 and \$22,000 respectively.

The maximum penalty for contravening an improvement notice is a fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for 12 months.

End

Total solar eclipse

There will be a total solar eclipse on March 9, 1997 (Sunday). Weather permitting, the event will be visible as a partial eclipse of the sun in Hong Kong.

Details of the eclipse are as follows:-

	Hong Kong <u>Time</u>	Azimuth <u>Direction</u>	Elevation <u>Degrees</u>
Sunrise	0638	East	-1
Eclipse begins	0719	East	9
Maximum eclipse	0813	East-southeast	21
Eclipse ends	0912	East-southeast	34

The magnitude of the eclipse will be about 0.49. This means that 49 per cent of the sun's diameter will be obscured by the moon at the maximum eclipse.

The best place to observe the eclipse in Hong Kong will be on high grounds with no obstruction of sight to the east-southeast.

Special precautions must be taken to observe solar eclipses because of the blinding intensity of the sun's rays. Under no circumstances should the sun be looked at directly without any protective measures. A safe and better method is to project the sun's image onto a screen and view the reflection.

The next solar eclipse observable in Hong Kong will not occur until August 22, 1998.

End

HAD organises seminar for new arrivals

A group of new arrivals from the mainland learnt about the local employment situation and anti-corruption practices at a seminar organised by the Home Affairs Department's Eastern District Office at Fukien Middle School in North Point today (Sunday).

A spokesman for the Home Affairs Department said the seminar was tailored to the needs of the new immigrants, many of whom were looking for jobs.

Representatives from the Labour Department and the Employees Retraining Board briefed the new arrivals on the local job market, assistance offered by the Government for job hunters, and retraining of employees.

A representative of the Independent Commission Against Corruption gave a talk on the importance of fighting corruption.

"The Government is committed to assisting new arrivals from the mainland to integrate into the community as quickly as possible.

"As a sizeable number of them have settled in the Eastern District, we will continue to identify their needs and make every effort to organise programmes specially designed for their needs," the spokesman said.

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Teachers invited to design curriculum projects

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Teachers and heads of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools interested in the School-based Curriculum Project Scheme are reminded to submit their applications on or before March 15 (Saturday).

The objective of the scheme is to encourage teachers' participation in curriculum development work.

Under the scheme, a curriculum project grant ranging from \$9,800 to \$42,550 will be provided to each project complementing the curriculum set out in the syllabuses or curriculum guidelines prepared by the Curriculum Development Council.

Projects should be specifically designed to cater for the varied needs, abilities and interests of pupils of individual schools.

Meanwhile, projects may include the design of new teaching approaches to specific topics in the curriculum; new topics or areas of studies as alternatives to certain aspects of the curriculum; and teaching/resource materials.

Monitoring panels will assess applications on whether they can meet the needs, abilities and interest of pupils of the try-out schools; and the aims of corresponding syllabuses or curriculum guidelines; whether they are practicable and creative.

Preference will be given to projects introducing new teaching approaches, topics or areas of studies which address current curriculum implementation issues in Hong Kong.

Teachers who are interested in participating in the scheme are requested to send in their completed application forms to the Research, Evaluation and Projects Section of the Education Department's Curriculum Development Institute at Room 1012, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai on or before March 15.

Successful applicants will be notified in due course. Schools may submit more than one application.

Enquiries should be directed to the Research, Evaluation and Projects Section at 2892 5830 or 2892 5838.

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Fees for Certificate of Competency of Boilers revised

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The fee for the issue of a Certificate of Competency to operate boilers and steam receivers under the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Regulation has been revised from \$275 to \$330 since February 14, 1997.

Also, the examination fee for the issue of such certificates was increased from \$510 to \$610 from the same day.

A Labour Department spokesman said that the fees were revised in accordance with the inflation rate. The fee revision was gazetted on January 3, 1997.

For enquiries, please contact the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Division of the Labour Department on 2852 4179.

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