



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 1982

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TRAFFIC BILL IN DRIVERS' INTEREST

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DRIVERS SHOULD FEEL REASSURED RATHER THAN THREATENED BY THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN HONG KONG'S ROAD TRAFFIC LAWS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR ALAN SCOTT, SAID TODAY.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION IN THE NEW LEGISLATION TO CREATE A MEANS OF HARASSING DRIVERS, PROFESSIONAL OR OTHERWISE.

MR SCOTT MADE THE COMMENTS TO THE Y'S MEN'S CLUB OF HONG KONG IN SPEECH ON PROVISIONS IN THE ROAD TRAFFIC BILL 1982 TO SUBSTITUTE THE OFFENCE OF +DANGEROUS DRIVING AND CAUSING DEATH THEREBY+ WITH THE OFFENCES OF +CAUSING DEATH BY RECKLESS DRIVING+ AND +RECKLESS DRIVING+.

HONG KONG'S TRAFFIC LAWS, WHICH WERE ENACTED 25 YEARS AGO, WERE BASED LARGELY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH LAW, HE SAID. OVER THE YEARS IT BECAME CLEAR THAT REFORM WAS NECESSARY IN RESPECT OF THE OLD OFFENCES IN ENGLISH LAW OF +DANGEROUS DRIVING+ AND +CARELESS DRIVING+, AND THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED FOR GOOD REASON TO ADOPT A SIMILAR REFORM IN HONG KONG.

+AS THE HONG KONG LAW STANDS AT PRESENT, IF A DRIVER FAILS TO MAINTAIN THE PROPER STANDARD OF CARE EXPECTED OF HIM BY THE LAW AND HE COMMITS AN OFFENCE, HE MAY BE PROSECUTED FOR DANGEROUS DRIVING OR FOR CARELESS DRIVING. DANGEROUS DRIVING CARRIES MORE SEVERE MAXIMUM PENALTIES THAN DOES CARELESS DRIVING,+ MR SCOTT SAID.

+YOU MIGHT EXPECT THAT DIFFERENCE IN MAXIMUM PENALTY TO REFLECT A CLEAR DIFFERENCE IN THE DEGREE OF FAULT WHICH MUST BE PROVED BY THE PROSECUTION, BUT THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO OFFENCES OVER THE YEARS HAS IN PRACTICE BECOME BLURRED, BECAUSE COURTS HAVE HELD THAT DANGEROUS DRIVING DOES NOT REQUIRE PROOF OF A SERIOUS DEGREE OF FAULT.

+SO, THE PRESENT LAW MAKES IT DIFFICULT, IN TOO MANY CASES, TO KNOW WHETHER A PARTICULAR PIECE OF BAD DRIVING FALLS INTO THE CATEGORY OF DANGEROUS DRIVING, OR OF CARELESS DRIVING. THIS DIFFICULTY FACES THE POLICE, THE PROSECUTION, AND THE DEFENDANT AND HIS LAWYERS,+ HE NOTED.

+THIS DIFFICULTY BECOMES PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT WHERE A DEATH HAS BEEN CAUSED IN A ROAD ACCIDENT,+ HE SAID. +OBVIOUSLY, CAUSING DEATH BY DANGEROUS DRIVING IS A VERY SERIOUS OFFENCE, BUT AS THE LAW PRESENTLY STANDS, THE ACT CONSTITUTING DANGEROUS DRIVING MAY INVOLVE RELATIVELY LITTLE FAULT ON THE PART OF THE DRIVER. NEVERTHELESS THE CHARGE OF CAUSING DEATH BY DANGEROUS DRIVING CARRIES A MAXIMUM PENALTY IN THE HIGHER COURTS OF FIVE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT. THIS IN SOME CASES COULD BE OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE DEGREE OF FAULT SHOWN BY A PARTICULAR DRIVER, NOTWITHSTANDING THAT A DEATH WAS CAUSED AS A RESULT OF HIS ACT.+

/MR SCOTT

MR SCOTT SAID THE CRIMINAL LAW ACT 1977 OF THE UNITED KINGDOM SOUGHT TO CLARIFY THE POSITION AND MAKE IT MORE PRECISE. AND SINCE THEN THE MEANING OF +RECKLESS DRIVING+ HAD BEEN WORKED OUT BY THE COURTS IN ENGLAND.

HE EXPLAINED THAT PROSECUTION FOR RECKLESS DRIVING COULD ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL WHERE IT COULD BE SHOWN FAIRLY AND PROPERLY THAT THE DRIVER IN QUESTION HAD COMMITTED A PLAINLY PERILOUS PIECE OF DRIVING.

+IT WILL THEREFORE REMOVE THE AMBIGUITY OF WHETHER A DRIVER HAS DRIVEN DANGEROUSLY, OR ONLY CARELESSLY; AND TO THAT EXTENT, THE CHANGE IS IN THE INTEREST OF DRIVER. THAT IS WHY I SAID THAT THE CHANGE IS ONE WHICH DRIVERS SHOULD FIND REASSURING. ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE THE NEW OFFENCE OF RECKLESS DRIVING IS INTENDED TO APPLY TO OBVIOUSLY SERIOUS CASES, CONVICTIONS FOR SUCH AN OFFENCE SHOULD BE LIABLE TO GREATER POWERS OF PUNISHMENT BY THE COURTS.+

MR SCOTT SAID THE HOUSE OF LORDS, IN AN APPEAL CASE IN 1981, GAVE THEIR VIEW OF WHAT MUST BE SATISFACTORILY PROVED IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH WHETHER A PARTICULAR PIECE OF DRIVING WAS RECKLESS. WHAT WAS HELD IN THAT CASE TO BE REQUIRED (IN SUCH CASES) WAS:

- (A) FIRST, THAT THE DEFENDANT WAS IN FACT DRIVING THE VEHICLE IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO CREATE AN OBVIOUS AND SERIOUS RISK OF CAUSING PHYSICAL INJURY TO SOME OTHER PERSON WHO MIGHT HAPPEN TO BE USING THE ROAD, OR OF DOING SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY; AND
- (B) SECOND, THAT IN DRIVING IN SUCH A MANNER THE DEFENDANT DID SO WITHOUT HAVING GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THERE BEING ANY SUCH RISK, OR HAVING RECOGNISED THAT THERE WAS SOME RISK INVOLVED, HAD NONETHELESS GONE ON TO TAKE IT.

THE LAW LORDS WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN DECIDING WHETHER THE RISK CREATED BY THE MANNER IN WHICH THE VEHICLE WAS BEING DRIVEN WAS BOTH OBVIOUS AND SERIOUS, ONE SHOULD APPLY THE STANDARD OF THE ORDINARY PRUDENT MOTORIST.

MR SCOTT STRESSED THAT AS WITH ALL LEGISLATION IT WAS FOR THE COURTS TO DETERMINE QUESTIONS OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE AND OF PUNISHMENT, AS WELL AS TO INTERPRET THE LAW AND TO DEFINE THE SCOPE OF OFFENCES, AS AND WHEN CASES CAME UP FOR DECISION.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS HAD YET TO BE DEBATED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AS THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THAT A LONG PERIOD BETWEEN THE INTRODUCTION INTO THE COUNCIL AND THE RESUMPTION OF THE DEBATE WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO GIVE THE PUBLIC AND ORGANISATIONS FULL OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THE BILL AND MAKE KNOWN THEIR VIEWS PUBLICLY AND TO UMELCO.

IN VIEW OF THE INTEREST EXPRESSED IN THE BILL SINCE ITS PUBLICATION, MR SCOTT GAVE TWO EXAMPLES OF WHAT MIGHT CONSTITUTE +RECKLESS DRIVING+, ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUAL CASES WOULD HAVE TO BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES AS ESTABLISHED BY EVIDENCE. THE FIRST WAS THE MANOEUVRE OF CHANGING LANES.

+IT IS INDEED A MANOEUVRE WHICH CAN BE SAFELY PERFORMED, BUT CAN ALSO BE DANGEROUSLY PERFORMED. IF A DRIVER CHANGES LANES SAFELY WHERE IT IS NOT OTHERWISE PROHIBITED AND HE HAS A PROPER REASON FOR DOING SO, THEN IT CANNOT BE SAID TO BE CARELESS OR RECKLESS DRIVING. IF HE CHANGES LANES WITHOUT CHECKING HIS MIRROR OR WITHOUT SIGNALLING IN REASONABLE TIME, THIS MIGHT BE HELD TO AMOUNT TO CARELESS DRIVING. IF, HOWEVER, HE CHANGES LANES AT EXCESSIVE SPEED IN HEAVY TRAFFIC ON THE APPROACH TO A JUNCTION WHERE PEDESTRIANS ARE CROSSING THE ROAD, HE WOULD SEEM LIABLE TO BE CHARGED WITH RECKLESS DRIVING.+

THE SECOND EXAMPLE WAS THE MANOEUVRE OF U-TURNS, WHICH HE SAID COULD BE ENTIRELY LAWFUL IN PERMITTED CIRCUMSTANCES. +BUT IF A DRIVER MADE A U-TURN AT A FORBIDDEN POINT, AND DID IT AGAINST TRAFFIC COMING THE OTHER WAY, IT COULD AMOUNT TO RECKLESSNESS, IF IT CREATED A SERIOUS RISK OF HARM. THE TEST IS: WOULD AN ORDINARY PRUDENT DRIVER HAVE DONE THAT, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES?+

MR SCOTT SAID THERE WERE TOO MANY SERIOUS ROAD ACCIDENTS AND A LOT OF DISCOURTEOUS DRIVING IN HONG KONG, WHICH ADMITTEDLY WAS A VERY PRESSURED SOCIETY.

+BUT WHATEVER THE PRESSURES, THEY DO NOT REMOVE THE DUTY OF ALL DRIVERS TO DRIVE PRUDENTLY AND SENSIBLY, AND THIS MUST APPLY TO DRIVERS OF ALL SORTS, TO PROFESSIONALS AS MUCH AS TO WEEKEND DRIVERS AND COMMUTERS,+ HE SAID. +DEATH IS INDEED NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS, BUT IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL OF US WHO USE THE ROADS TO SEE THAT NEITHER DEATH, NOR INJURY, NOR CAUSING FEAR AMONG OTHERS USING THE ROADS IS THE RESULT OF OUR DRIVING.+

MR SCOTT CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE INTENTION OF THE LEGISLATION WAS TO ENCOURAGE AND ENFORCE SAFETY ON OUR ROADS, AND THAT THE SENSIBLE, PRUDENT DRIVER WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE BILL.

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HONG KONG REPLIES TO EEC THREAT

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THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF TRADE, MR JUSTIN YUE TODAY (THURSDAY) CHARACTERISED THE STATEMENT MADE YESTERDAY BY MR HORST KRENZLER, THE EEC'S CHIEF TEXTILE NEGOTIATOR, AS UNHELPFUL IN THE ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS FOR NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS.

IN A PRESS INTERVIEW, MR KRENZLER THREATENED TO IMPOSE UNILATERAL ACTION ON IMPORTS OF TEXTILES FROM THOSE SUPPLIERS WHO CHOSE TO BAULK AT THE EEC'S DEMAND FOR QUOTA CUTBACKS.

+THE EEC IS RESORTING TO THE SAME TACTICS THAT IT USED IN 1977. SUCH TACTICS WILL ONLY SERVE TO HARDEN ATTITUDES ON BOTH SIDES WHEN WE RESUME NEGOTIATIONS IN SEPTEMBER,+ MR YUE SAID.

MR YUE ALSO QUESTIONED THE BASIS FOR MR KRENZLER'S ASSERTION THAT THE EEC CAN LEGALLY IMPOSE IMPORT QUOTAS AGAINST THE 13 NATIONS WHICH MR KRENZLER NAMED.

+I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT PROVISION OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE MR KRENZLER IS REFERRING TO WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP CLAUSE. WHAT I DO UNDERSTAND IS THAT ARTICLE XIII OF THE GATT REQUIRES ALL IMPORT RESTRICTIONS TO BE NON-DISCRIMINATORY, AND APPLIED ACROSS THE BOARD INSTEAD OF TO A SELECTED FEW,+ HE SAID.

ARTICLE XIII: 1 OF THE GATT STIPULATES SPECIFICALLY THAT +NO PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTION SHALL BE APPLIED BY ANY CONTRACTING PARTY ON THE IMPORTATION OF ANY PRODUCT OF THE TERRITORY OF ANY OTHER CONTRACTING PARTY, UNLESS THE IMPORTATION OF THE LIKE PRODUCT OF ALL THIRD COUNTRIES IS SIMILARLY PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED+. THIS MEANS THAT IF UNILATERAL IMPORT QUOTAS ARE IMPOSED AGAINST HONG KONG AND A FEW OTHER SUPPLIES ONLY, THE EEC WOULD BE ACTING IN CONTRAVENTION OF THIS PROVISION OF THE GATT.

+SUCH AN ACTION WOULD UNDERMINE THE VERY BASIS OF THE GATT, AND SHOULD BE ROUNDLY CONDEMNED BY ALL THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE PROMOTION AND PRESERVATION OF THE RULES GOVERNING INTERNATIONAL TRADE,+ MR YUE ADDED.

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FINAL REGISTER OF ELECTORS AVAILABLE
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MORE THAN 700 000 VOTERS WILL BE ABLE TO VOTE IN THE COMING URBAN AREA DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER.

THE FIGURE IS CONTAINED IN THE FINAL REGISTER OF ELECTORS, WHICH IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION, ACCORDING TO A GOVERNMENT GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY PUBLISHED TODAY (THURSDAY).

+THE FINAL REGISTER INCLUDES THE REGISTERED PARTICULARS OF 706 833 VOTERS IN THE URBAN AREA AND 196 744 IN THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ THE REGISTRATION OFFICER, MR GEORGE HO SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE FINAL FIGURE FOR THE URBAN AREA WAS OBTAINED AFTER DELETING DOUBLE REGISTRATION IN THE PROVISIONAL REGISTER PUBLISHED IN JUNE.

THE FINAL REGISTER CAN BE INSPECTED DURING OFFICE HOURS AT THE FOLLOWING OFFICES :

* REGISTRATION AND ELECTORAL OFFICE,
18TH FLOOR, NEW MERCURY HOUSE,
22 FENWICK STREET,
HONG KONG;

* CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION HEADQUARTERS,
5TH FLOOR, HK HOUSING AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING,
101 PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD,
KOWLOON;

* OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL SECRETARY (HONG KONG AND KOWLOON),
CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION,
9TH FLOOR, INTERNATIONAL BUILDING,
141 DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL,
HONG KONG.

IN ADDITION, RELEVANT PARTS OF THE REGISTER WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE RESPECTIVE CITY DISTRICT OFFICES AND NT DISTRICT OFFICES.

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NEARLY 250 000 IN SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE SCHEME

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NEARLY \$12 MILLION WAS SPENT IN THE 1981-82 FISCAL YEAR BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IN PROVIDING MEDICAL SERVICES TO SCHOOL CHILDREN, IT IS STATED IN THE SESSIONAL REPORT OF THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE BOARD.

AT A COST OF \$55 A YEAR FOR EACH PUPIL -- WITH \$50 PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT AND \$5 BY THE CHILD -- ABOUT 245 000 CHILDREN WERE COVERED BY THE SCHEME DURING THE YEAR, WHICH WORKED OUT AT ALMOST ONE CHILD IN EVERY THREE ELIGIBLE CHILDREN ATTENDING PRIMARY CLASSES AND UP TO FORM THREE.

DOCTORS WHO APPLY TO JOIN THE SCHEME PROVIDE THEIR SERVICES IN THEIR OFFICES DURING NORMAL CONSULTATION HOURS. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE THE DISCRETION TO ISSUE PRESCRIPTIONS TO BE FILLED AT A PHARMACY, WITH THE COST TO BE BORNE BY THE PATIENT.

ESTABLISHED IN 1964, WHEN THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE BOARD WAS CONSTITUTED AS A STATUTORY BODY, THE SCHEME NOW EMBRACES 852 SCHOOLS, REPRESENTING 70 PER CENT OF ALL ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS, AND HAS 232 DOCTORS TAKING PART.

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PLAYS THE KEY ROLE IN THE SCHEME, THE REPORT POINTS OUT, AS HE OR SHE IS ASKED TO MAKE KNOWN ITS EXISTENCE, CHOOSE A DOCTOR FOR THE SCHOOL AND REQUEST AN INITIAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPATION CARDS, EACH OF WHICH WILL BEAR THE NAME OF THE DOCTOR CHOSEN.

THE SCHOOL-BASED SCHEME IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN, AND PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY. DURING THE YEAR, IT GREW BY 18 PER CENT OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR, AND PROVIDED SOME 600 000 CONSULTATIONS AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS. ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEME COST \$561 000, COMPARED WITH \$416 000 FOR THE YEAR BEFORE. DISEASES OF THE RESPIRATORY TRACT AND DENTAL CARRIES REMAIN THE MOST COMMON AILMENT AMONG THE CHILDREN, ABOUT 80 PER CENT OF WHOM ARE IN THE 6-12 AGE GROUP.

THE SCHEME IS NOT TIED TO THE ACADEMIC YEAR, BUT ALLOWS THE PUPILS TO ENROL AT ANY TIME. THUS THE CHILD IS ABLE TO VISIT THE DOCTOR CHOSEN BY THE SCHOOL ONCE THE CHILD OBTAINS A PARTICIPATION CARD, AND THEREAFTER DURING THE 12 MONTHS THE CARD IS VALID.

EFFORT IS CONSTANTLY BEING MADE TO MAKE THE SCHEME MORE WIDELY KNOWN, AND AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT URGES ALL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO BRING THE SCHEME TO THE ATTENTION OF PUPILS AND TO ASSIST IN THEIR ENROLMENT.

WITH SCHOOLS ACTING AS THE MAIN CHANNEL OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME, THE BOARD IS REASONABLY SATISFIED THAT WITHIN ITS RESOURCES THE SERVICE IS ADEQUATELY PUBLICISED, ALTHOUGH LOW-KEY, THE REPORT STATES.

SIR ALBERT RODRIGUES IS CHAIRMAN AND DR HARRY FANG VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHEME, WHICH HAS ITS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES ON THE FIFTH FLOOR OF LEE GARDENS, HYSAN AVENUE, HONG KONG.

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ANTI-NARCOTICS BEACH CONCERT ON SUNDAY
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THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS AND RADIO 2 OF RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG WILL JOINTLY PRESENT AN ANTI-NARCOTICS BEACH CONCERT AT REPULSE BAY THIS SUNDAY (AUGUST 8).

PERFORMING IN THE CONCERT WILL BE SEVERAL TOP SINGERS INCLUDING ROMAN TAM, TERESA CHEUNG AND ALBERT AU. THE CONCERT, WHICH WILL BE BROADCAST +LIVE+ ON RADIO 2, IS EXPECTED TO ATTRACT THOUSANDS OF BEACH-GOERS.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY (THURSDAY) AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, MR C.M. LEUNG, PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (NARCOTICS), SAID THE FUNCTION IS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN PREVENTING DRUG ABUSE THROUGH EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY.

MR LEUNG SAID ABOUT 90 PER CENT OF THE PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES THIS YEAR ARE AIMED AT YOUTHS AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 24. THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS AGE GROUP TAKING DRUGS HAS CONTINUED TO INCREASE IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

THESE PROGRAMMES INCLUDE POSTERS AND TELEVISION ANNOUNCEMENTS, SPORTING EVENTS, SCHOOL TALKS, SEMINARS AND TRAINING CAMPS FOR YOUTH AND A VARIETY OF COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES.

+THE BEACH CONCERT IS ONE OF THESE ACTIVITIES.

+EACH YEAR, THE ACAN AND RTHK JOINTLY ORGANISE A NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINMENT FUNCTIONS ON DRUG PREVENTION.

+LAST YEAR, FOR EXAMPLE, WE ORGANISED A SINGING COMPETITION, FOLLOWED BY A WINNERS' CONCERT, A FOLK CONCERT AND A MUSICAL DRAMA,+ HE SAID.

+SUCH ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE PUBLICITY TOOLS, PARTICULARLY FOR CONVEYING MESSAGES TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE, AND IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT THE CONCERT IS PRESENTED,+ HE EXPLAINED.

MISS M.Y. CHEUNG, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING, SAID RTHK SUPPORTED SUCH FUNCTIONS BECAUSE THE DRUG ABUSE IS A CONSTANT THREAT TO OUR COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

+IT IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE, THAT THE RIGHT KIND OF MEDIUM IS CHOSEN TO REACH OUT TO THEM. MUSIC AND RADIO ARE THE ANSWER,+ SHE SAID.

THE BEACH CONCERT WILL START AT 3 PM AFTER AN OPENING CEREMONY. OFFICIATING GUESTS WILL INCLUDE SIR ALBERT RODRIGUES, CHAIRMAN OF ACAN; MR HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, CHAIRMAN OF URBAN COUNCIL; MR ROY HENRY, COMMISSIONER OF POLICE; MR PETER LEE, COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS; MR KARL STUMPF, CHAIRMAN OF ACAN'S PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY SUB-COMMITTEE; AND MR HAROLD KWOK, ACTING DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING.

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EIGHT MILLION VISITS TO COUNTRY PARKS

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PEOPLE IN HONG KONG MADE MORE THAN EIGHT MILLION VISITS TO THE VARIOUS COUNTRY PARKS LAST YEAR.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED TODAY (THURSDAY) BY THE ACTING SENIOR DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (COUNTRYSIDE) OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, MR JOHN HEYWOOD.

ADDRESSING A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF HONG KONG SOUTH, MR HEYWOOD REPORTED THAT THE COUNTRY PARKS WERE MANAGED BY ABOUT 1 500 STAFF OPERATING FROM 27 MANAGEMENT CENTRES.

HE NOTED THAT THIS MEANT THERE WAS ONE STAFF MEMBER FOR EVERY 28 HECTARES OF COUNTRY PARK LAND, OR ONE MAN FOR EVERY 5 400 VISITORS A YEAR.

LAST YEAR, THE STAFF DISPOSED OF 2 800 TONNES OF LITTER LEFT BEHIND BY VISITORS AND PLANTED 250 000 TREES IN THE PARKS.

+COUNTRYSIDE LEFT ALONE WITHOUT MANAGEMENT DOES NOT REMAIN THE SAME. IT GOES THROUGH ITS OWN SERIES OF CHANGES, SOME BENEFICIAL, SOME NOT,+ MR HEYWOOD SAID.

HE REPORTED THAT THE FIRST COUNTRY PARK RANGER POST ESTABLISHED LAST SEPTEMBER IN THE SAI KUNG PENINSULA COUNTRY PARK HAD DEALT WITH MORE THAN 16 000 ENQUIRIES FROM VISITORS.

MR HEYWOOD DISCLOSED THAT A VISITOR CENTRE WOULD BE BUILT IN THIS PARK SPECIFICALLY TO HANDLE PUBLIC ENQUIRIES SO THAT THE RANGER POST MIGHT DEVOTE ITS FULL ATTENTION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, AS WELL AS EDUCATIONAL AND GUIDE DUTIES.

THE NEW VISITOR CENTRE, SIMILAR TO THOSE AT THE COUNTRY PARKS IN ABERDEEN AND PAT SIN LENG, WILL BE COMPLETED IN TWO YEARS.

MR HEYWOOD NOTED THAT THE STAFF FOR RANGER SERVICES, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS A +KEY PART OF THE COUNTRY PARK SCHEME+, WOULD BE EXPANDED TO 230 PEOPLE.

HE ALSO DISCLOSED THAT SOME OF THE EARLY PICNIC SITES WERE BEING RE-DESIGNED WITH BETTER PAVED PATHS, BETTER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND BETTER PROTECTION FOR PLANTS.

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WATER CUT IN KWUN TONG

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FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO SOME AREAS IN KWUN TONG WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR SIX HOURS FROM 10 AM TO 4 PM ON SUNDAY (AUGUST 8) FOR WATER MAINS WORK.

THE AFFECTED AREAS ARE YAU TONG DISTRICT AND PREMISES ALONG LEI YUE MUN ROAD AND CHA KWO LING ROAD.

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ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL
SERVICES DEPARTMENT BECOMES AUTONOMOUS
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THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL OFFICE OF THE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN UPGRADED TO AN AUTONOMOUS DEPARTMENT. IT WILL NOW BE KNOWN AS THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

THE MOVE CAME FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE RE-ORGANISATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT ON APRIL 1.

THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES, MR GRAHAM OSBORNE, SAID THAT THE CHANGE WAS NECESSARY AS THE E AND M OFFICE HAD GROWN BOTH IN SIZE AND RESPONSIBILITY OVER THE RECENT YEARS.

HE SAID THE NEW DEPARTMENT, COMPRISING THE WORKS AND SERVICES BRANCH, THE PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENT BRANCH AND THE GAS ADVISORS OFFICE, HAD A STRENGTH OF OVER 6 500 ENGINEERS AND TECHNICAL STAFF, OPERATING FROM OVER 100 LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

POLICY MATTERS OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT LIKE THOSE OF THE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, LANDS DEPARTMENT, NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT, ARE HANDLED BY THE LANDS AND WORKS BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT.

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TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE IN MID-LEVELS
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STARTING THIS SATURDAY (AUGUST 7), A SECTION OF CAINE ROAD BETWEEN CASTLE ROAD AND OLD BAILEY STREET IN THE MID-LEVELS WILL BE CLOSED TO ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES FROM 12 NOON TO 7 AM FOR ROAD WORKS.

THIS ARRANGEMENT WILL LAST FOR NINE DAYS.

DURING THE CLOSURE, EASTBOUND TRAFFIC ON CAINE ROAD WILL BE DIVERTED VIA SEYMOUR ROAD AND ROBINSON ROAD OR VIA ABERDEEN STREET.

VEHICLES FROM ELGIN STREET WILL HAVE TO TURN LEFT INTO OLD BAILEY STREET.

AT THE SAME TIME, CASTLE ROAD WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC (EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES) AT ITS JUNCTION WITH CAINE ROAD.

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