



## Keeping the lines of communication open

Civil Service Newsletter Editorial Board

■ FOR a number of government agencies, getting the right information to the right people will be imperative to the smooth running of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events (the Events). Whether it is broadcasting results from the Events, or letting athletes competing in Hong Kong know to expect a change in the weather, the efficient dissemination of information will be vital.

The Hong Kong Observatory (the Observatory) is one agency which is totally on the ball — both in gathering and disseminating information. HKO has been involved in the Events from the early planning stages, collecting weather data that was necessary for deciding on an optimal competition schedule taking into account the heat and humidity of Hong

Kong's summer. A special heat-stress monitoring system was designed and built from scratch under a very tight time frame. Preparations began in late 2005 to allow sufficient time to collect vital weather information for decision-making.



An Observatory staff member putting finishing touches on the special heat stress monitoring system.

Exercises were carried out to test the effectiveness of the weather-forecasting support systems, and tailor-made weather forecasting services had been provided during the Good Luck Beijing events and will be provided in the coming Olympic events.

HKO will also support Beijing in forecasting severe weather through the deployment of its cutting-edge short-range forecasting system. It will also support the Hong Kong windsurfing team through provision of tailor-made weather services for the competition venue at Qingdao.

### OFTA's Olympian effort

The availability of efficient public telephone services, Internet services, external telecommunications services and broadcasting services will be essential during the Events — and it is up to the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) to ensure that everything is running smoothly. OFTA's role is extremely important, not only for Olympics-related communications, but also emergency services.

OFTA will monitor any radio interference that may affect the proper functioning of public mobile phone networks, broadcasting services, the radio systems of government emergency agencies and the Equestrian Events (Hong Kong)

of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Company Limited (Equestrian Company); it will also assist the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in allocating suitable frequency for radio use. Another important role for OFTA is the issuance of temporary licences for the setting up of radio communications systems; and inspecting and labelling radio equipment to be used for the Events.

OFTA started to prepare its Departmental Contingency Plan for the Events in September 2006, with the establishment of a team of 24 officers through internal staff redeployment. This represents 13% of the office's regulatory/enforcement staff, and stretches its manpower capacity to the limit during the Events period.



OFTA staff members in Emergency Co-ordination Centre handling emergency situations during a drill.

### From Fuwa to foreign correspondents, it is a multi-faceted role for ISD

Big events such as the Olympics will always bring into play the wide range of services provided by the Information Services Department (ISD).

From handling media enquiries, planning the fit-out of an international media centre, and devising the logistics of press coverage for major events to designing giant banners and even sourcing souvenirs — all of these jobs and more are routinely handled by ISD staff.

This year their skills and professionalism have been further honed with the sustained — and at times very demanding — efforts to promote Hong Kong's Olympic equestrian preparations and the Torch Relay.

ISD is working closely with other departments that are heavily involved in this year's Olympic preparations, including the Home Affairs Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Transport Department and the Hong Kong Police Force, as well as the Equestrian Company and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

The most visible of their efforts are the hundreds of colourful banners and buntings that have been hoisted onto lampposts, or hung over the sides of railings and buildings to generate a festive Olympic mood in Hong Kong.

The artistic skills and talent of ISD designers have also been put to work on postcards, advertisements, souvenir bags, and even life-sized cutouts of the five Fuwa characters to provide photo opportunities for visitors and locals during the Olympic Games time.

Information Officers in headquarters and departmental units have been working hard to devise publicity projects promoting the Olympic spirit, as well as boost knowledge and understanding of the Events, and encourage people to seize the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend an Olympic event on home turf.

This has included special radio and television programmes, newspaper supplements, media briefings and workshops, and a range of radio promotions on the Olympics and Torch Relay.

A promotional video has been produced, and will be screened on Cathay Pacific and Dragonair flights, as well as at events and functions organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (HKETOs) on the Mainland and overseas.

Various versions of the video feature the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS), Henry Tang Ying-yen, speaking not one but eight languages to extend the hand of friendship to audiences on the Mainland and abroad. (And, in case you were wondering, our multi-lingual CS managed greetings in English, Cantonese, Putonghua, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, German and French!)

Internationally and on the Mainland, ISD has worked closely with HKETOs and the Office of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in Beijing to leverage the Olympic events to boost publicity on Hong Kong as "Asia's world city".

This has included roving exhibitions, lunches and seminars, media briefings and Hong Kong promotions at major equestrian events in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia and Japan.

ISD also arranged three very successful pre-Games visits to Hong Kong for international equestrian media — an Olympic first — to provide them with a first-hand

look at Hong Kong's preparations and world-class equestrian facilities.

In the run-up to the Games, ISD will continue to ramp up publicity locally to generate excitement in the city and concentrate on making sure that visiting journalists feel at home in the City Media Centre to be set up at Hong Kong City Hall.

All the while, ISD will continue to render the usual prompt and efficient services to Hong Kong's dynamic local media scene, as well as its sizeable international media corps.

And of course, during the Games time, ISD staff will be on call 24 hours a day to deal with the expected increase in enquiries from the local media, as well as visiting journalists from around the world covering the Olympics and Equestrian Events.



Hundreds of colourful buntings help generate a festive Olympic mood in Hong Kong.