

## SJ visits State Judicial Exam venue

\*\*\*\*\*

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Elsie Leung, today (September 17) visited one of three venues for the State Judicial Examination, which was being held for the first time in Hong Kong.

Ms Leung, joined by the Director of the State Judicial Examination Centre of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ms Ding Lu; and the Divisional Chief of the Department of State Judicial Examination Division of the MoJ, Mr Sun Xiaoming, arrived at the Delia Memorial School (Yuet Wah) in Kwun Tong at about 7.30am, an hour before the examination was due to start. They inspected the various arrangements for the examination and spoke to the invigilators.

Both Ms Leung and the MoJ officials were pleased with the arrangements made for the examination. "A lot of preparatory work had been done. I am confident that the examination will be conducted smoothly," Ms Leung said.

The other two venues for the two-day examination were YCH Wong Wha San Secondary School and Ying Wa College.

The State Judicial Examination is organised by the MoJ and is held simultaneously in different parts of the Mainland. Under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), which came into effect on January 1, 2004, Hong Kong permanent residents with Chinese nationality are allowed to sit the State Judicial Examination and will be granted a restricted right to practise on the Mainland after passing the examination, which is not open to foreign lawyers.

A total of 272 candidates from Hong Kong sat the examination. It was held for the first time in the territory after a suggestion made by the Secretary for Justice to the MoJ to save Hong Kong residents' from having to travel to the Mainland to sit the examination.

The logistics arrangements for the local examination are made by the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

Last year, over 179,000 candidates sat for the State Judicial Examination in different parts of the Mainland and about 11% passed. This year, about 244,000 candidates sat the examination on the Mainland and in Hong Kong and Macau.

Ms Leung did not wish to make any predictions about the performance of local candidates, but noted: "As the examination is being held in Hong Kong, I hope our candidates will be able to perform better in a familiar environment."

Ends/Saturday, September 17, 2005

NNNN