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The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has announced a major restructuring of its operations...

Vancouver tunes in to the Chinese market

Canadian media eager to please influx of SE Asian immigrants, writes Bernard Simon

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) is not alone in tuning into the Chinese market. Vancouver's media landscape is rapidly changing to cater to the growing influx of Southeast Asian immigrants...

The balanced budget amendment, a Republican idea that the president and fellow Democrats...

House of Representatives. The constitutional change would require approval by two-thirds majorities in both chambers, plus ratification by three-quarters of the state legislatures.

The president appeared confident that he has the upper hand in his dealings with Congress as he met the six top Republicans from the House and Senate, as well as four prominent Democrats. "The whole system... is tending towards movement instead of paralysis and that's a good thing for America," he said, while hailing...

Mr Clinton's optimistic tone reflected a belief - well supported by public opinion polls - that the Republicans did themselves more harm than good when they tried head-on confrontation after their election victories in 1994.

Senator Trent Lott, the Republican majority leader, cited taxes, education, crime, drugs and the environment as the issues making up a "critical agenda" which he wanted to see the president tackle. Both sides were at pains to stress that yesterday's broad discussions did not amount to a for-

unvened by Mr Clinton last week.

has been accepted by Republicans as a starting point for discussion, but the proposal for a change in the constitution could still lead to a bitter clash. Moves to advance the amendment in the House were put on hold until next month following the last-minute cancellation of a meeting of the House judiciary committee that was due to take place yesterday. It was apparently cancelled after Republicans realised they could not be sure of voting down a tactical counter-pro-

ity.

If the vote had gone ahead, some Republicans might have broken ranks and supported the counter-proposal, for fear of alienating constituents, especially the elderly, who depend on social benefits. Mrs Madeleine Albright, the new secretary of state, yesterday defended the administration's request for an increase in the international affairs budget by saying that the US could not exercise global leadership "on the cheap".

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The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation normally broadcasts only in English and French. But the CBC's Vancouver television station has been running spots in the past week with the traditional Chinese New Year greeting - kung hei fat choy. Its eagerness to please Chinese viewers reflects the surge in immigration to Canada, especially Vancouver, from Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China and other parts of south-east Asia. Ethnic Chinese now make up an estimated 15-20 per cent of Vancouver's 1.7m residents. Another 360,000 live in Toronto. The CBC is among a growing number of media that have spotted a receptive and growing audience, as well as a growing source of advertising dollars. Vancouver now has three Chinese-language daily newspapers, two pay-TV stations, one community channel, two radio stations and several magazines. Electronic and print media catering to Chinese communities have also mushroomed in Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton. Politicians, conscious of the growing number of voters and potential campaign contributors, increasingly court the Chinese media. Vancouver's Non-Partisan Association hired a Chinese media consultant during recent municipal elections. Mrs Sally Aw, controlling shareholder of Sing Tao Holdings, the Hong Kong-based group that owns the biggest Chinese daily paper in Vancouver and Toronto, last year endowed a journalism school at the University of British Columbia - the first in western Canada. Mrs Aw is also a substantial donor to the University of Toronto. The lure of the Chinese market for advertisers is reinforced by Ottawa's immigration policy, which tends to favour well-heeled investors and entrepreneurs. Nearly a quarter of arrivals from Hong Kong are classified as business immigrants, compared with 6 per cent from other countries.



Some of the publications aimed at the growing, receptive Chinese readership in Vancouver and other Canadian cities

Mr Kam, competition and investment in new printing presses have put pressure on profits in recent years. Besides language, the Chinese media differ in some significant ways from their English counterparts. Their reporters are generally younger, less experienced

and less well paid. Not surprisingly, their coverage is less critical. The Chinese papers allow local politicians - a growing number of whom are ethnic Chinese - to write their own columns. "Our mission is to bring out the facts, not to form an opinion," Mr Fung said.

One Vancouver public relations manager, a Chinese-Canadian, added: "They are fairly apolitical, but definitely pro-immigrant." Cut-throat competition has so far not discouraged expansion plans. Fairchild has forged an alliance with a proposed national satellite television service. Maclean's, the weekly news magazine, plans to step up the frequency of its Chinese edition from once every two months to 10 a year. However, continued growth in readership or advertising revenues cannot be taken for granted. One threat to the Chinese-language media may be the gradual assimilation of readers and viewers into main-

stream American society. Fairchild TV dubs several programmes from English stations, including Vancouver's most popular local news bulletin. Sing Tao signed a deal with Toronto's Financial Post last year to reproduce a page of investment analysis - in English. Mr Fung counters by pointing to the growing influence of "trendy stuff" from Hong Kong in entertainment, music and fashion. About half of Fairchild TV's content comes from Hong Kong's two channels, with another 15 per cent originating in Taiwan, China and Japan. (The remaining 35 per cent is locally produced.) However, the immigration and spending boom has recently shown signs of subsiding. Many adverts in recent bumper Sing Tao and Ming Pao editions are for houses and condominiums put up for sale by Hong Kong investors who have decided not to emigrate to Canada for the time being, or to seek better returns elsewhere.

third of government spending

Mexico's godsend

pared with 2.62m bpd in 1995. Natural gas output also rose by 11.6 per cent to 4,195m cu ft per day. Pemex's export revenues grew by 39 per cent in 1996 to \$11.6bn thanks partly to a 21 per cent rise in world prices for Mexican crude oil, which increased from an average of \$15.7 per barrel in 1995 to \$18.7 per barrel in 1996. Export volumes were also up by 19 per cent to 1.55m bpd. When domestic sales are included, Pemex's total revenues equalled about 10 per cent of gross domestic product. Pemex plans to increase oil production by a further 8 per cent in 1997 to 3.08m bpd. Natural gas output is also scheduled to rise by 8 per cent to 4,545m cu ft per day. Pemex has not placed such emphasis on increasing output since the oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s. To do so, its investment budget has grown by 70 per cent this year to \$5.9bn, compared with the \$2.47bn in

CONTRACTS & TENDERS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER PROCEDURE
SCHIPHOL GOLF & BUSINESS CENTER
Amsterdam Airport Schiphol wishes to meet investors and/or operators for the realization of the Schiphol Golf & Business Center.
Project Description: The Schiphol Golf & Business Center will comprise a four-star 200-room hotel with conference and leisure facilities and an 18-hole golf course to international standard with practice facilities.
Project Location: The site available for this project covers an area of 73 hectares (180 acres) close to the airport, 10 minutes by road from the Terminal and 15 minutes from the commercial and business centers of Amsterdam.
Conditions: The site is the property of Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and will be offered for long-term lease. A concession agreement will be concluded for the operation of the hotel and golf course. Interested parties should be willing both to invest in the project and to undertake its development and operation.
Closing date: Interest may be expressed until 26 February 1997.
Further information: Applications, in writing, for further information may be addressed to: Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Schiphol Real Estate, PO Box 7501, 1118 ZG Schiphol Airport, The Netherlands, tel.: (+31 20) 601 41 10, fax: (+31 20) 601 37 01

