

THE TIMES

Monday 19th December 1956.

At least six people have died and **several**¹ others have been injured in road accidents in thick fog. Most of England has been **shrouded**² in fog, with visibility in parts of East Anglia reduced to five yards in places.

In Bedfordshire two men in a van were killed when it **crashed**³ into a lorry.

In Wales, forty-one miners on their way to work were taken to hospital when a double-decker bus **over-turned**⁴ near Merthyr Tydfil in Glamorganshire. Ten were kept in for treatment.

The fog has also caused **disruption**⁵ on the railways. A diesel train from Lichfield to Birmingham ran into the **rear**⁶ of a **stationary**⁷ engine in fog outside New Street Station in Birmingham.

The front coach of the train was **extensively**⁸ damaged and the driver, Richard Lloyd, from Birmingham, was admitted to hospital suffering with a broken arm. Two passengers were treated at the hospital for **severe**⁹ shock.

The line was blocked for an hour and the disruption led to delays of up to two hours on the main London line.

A **spokesman**¹⁰ for the Post Office has **urged**¹¹ customers to post Christmas letters and cards at once so as to be sure that they arrive in time.

Air passengers have also faced delays. People travelling to Ireland are being offered the **alternative**¹² of travelling by rail from Euston to Dublin. Scientists have assured the public that the **amount**¹³ of sulphur dioxide in the fog is not **comparable with**¹⁴ the fog of 1952 which caused such a high number of casualties. Official figures show some 4,000 people died prematurely following five days of smog in December of that year.

It is the dark smoke and grit from chimneys which **combines**¹⁵ with fog to produce the dense "smog".

When the Clean Air Act became law in the summer, **banning**¹⁶ the emission of dark smoke from chimneys, trains and industrial furnaces. But the new law will take some time to take effect as residents and operators switch over to smokeless fuels.

extreme	turmoil	implored	upturned
option	motionless	numerous	considerably
fuses	cloaked	quantity	similar to
collided	prohibiting	representative	back

THE TIMES

Monday 19th December 1984.

The British colony of Hong Kong is to be returned to China in 1997 after a **historic**¹ agreement was signed in Peking today.

Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher signed the joint declaration with her Chinese counterpart Zhao Ziyang.

It **formally**² seals the **future**³ of Hong Kong, transferring it from a British colony of six million people over to communist China in 13 years.

The agreement, which will end 155 years of British rule in the colony, will **launch**⁴ a welcome new era in **trade**⁵ and diplomacy between the two countries.

Chinese president Deng Xiaoping, who **pursued**⁶ the recovery of Hong Kong, **greeted**⁷ Mrs Thatcher.

The champagne **ceremony**⁸ took place at the Great Hall of the People before delegates who helped draw up the agreement, including 101 guests from Hong Kong.

Mrs Thatcher said: "The circumstances are **unique**⁹". The agreement is unique.

The declaration outlines how Hong Kong will be **restored**¹⁰ to the People's Republic of China with effect from 1st July 1997 and will apply for fifty years.

Britain has agreed to return Hong Kong after receiving **guarantees**¹¹ that it will "enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defence affairs".

The Prime Minister later **revealed**¹² that the negotiation process had been rocky.

When Mrs Thatcher last visited Peking in 1982 the **atmosphere**¹³ was hostile as an agreement could not be reached.

Talks restarted in July 1983 and today's **agreement**¹⁴, which was **finalised**¹⁵ only ten days before the 30 September deadline, is being **hailed**¹⁶ as a diplomatic coup.

Mrs Thatcher will visit Hong Kong tomorrow during her whistle-stop world tour. The Prime Minister will return to Downing Street on Sunday evening.

initiate	returned	welcomed	destiny
disclosed	momentous	air	sought
function	unparalleled	officially	contract
business	assurances	acclaimed	completed