



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1992

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NEW SOCIAL SECURITY PACKAGE IN PLACE NEXT JULY

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A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN JULY NEXT YEAR TO REPLACE THE EXISTING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME, SUBJECT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S APPROVAL OF FUNDS.

A SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (SATURDAY) THAT THE NEW SCHEME WOULD ENSURE THAT THOSE IN NEED WOULD RECEIVE MORE ASSISTANCE, AS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS POLICY SPEECH ON OCTOBER 7.

AT PRESENT, AN ELDERLY PERSON LIVING ALONE RECEIVES \$1,238 A MONTH IN BASIC RATE AND OLD AGE SUPPLEMENT.

THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT WILL LEAD TO HIS ENTITLEMENT OF A STANDARD RATE OF \$1,420 A MONTH.

WHEN OTHER PAYMENTS SUCH AS RENT AND SPECIAL GRANTS ARE INCLUDED, HIS TOTAL BENEFIT WILL BE ABOUT \$1,900 A MONTH. THIS IS MORE THAN ONE-THIRD OF A MANUFACTURING WORKER'S WAGE.

EXISTING CASES SHOW THAT THE AVERAGE PAYMENT FOR A SINGLE ELDERLY PERSON IS NOW \$1,700 A MONTH AND ABOUT 25 PER CENT OF SUCH CASES RECEIVE MORE THAN \$1,900 A MONTH.

FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR, THE NEW RATES PLUS RENT AND OTHER ADDITIONAL GRANTS WILL PROVIDE A MONTHLY INCOME OF \$5,510, ABOUT THE SAME AS THE AVERAGE MANUFACTURING WORKERS' WAGES.

"THERE WILL BE TWO INCREASES TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS NEXT YEAR. IN ADDITION TO THE REAL INCREASE OF 15 PER CENT, THE PAYMENT RATES WILL ALSO BE REVISED UPWARDS IN APRIL TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF INFLATION," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"FOR THE ELDERLY OR DISABLED WHO DO NOT MEET THE CRITERIA OF THE MEANS-TESTED COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE BENEFITS IN THE FORM OF A NON-MEANS-TESTED SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE. THEIR LEVEL OF BENEFITS WILL ALSO BE ADJUSTED ACCORDING TO INFLATION NEXT APRIL," HE ADDED.

WITH EFFECT FROM JULY 1 NEXT YEAR, THE CURRENT RULE, ALLOWING 45 DAYS ABSENCE FROM THE TERRITORY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS AND 119 DAYS ABSENCE FOR SOCIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE RECIPIENTS BEFORE BENEFITS ARE SUSPENDED, WILL ALSO BE RELAXED TO 180 DAYS FOR ALL OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AND DISABILITY ALLOWANCE AS WELL AS ELDERLY AND DISABLED PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS AND 60 DAYS FOR OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS.

THE RELAXATION WILL BENEFIT THE ELDERLY WHO WISH TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEIR RELATIVES IN CHINA OR ELSEWHERE.

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"THERE WILL BE CONSIDERABLE ADMINISTRATIVE PREPARATIONS TO BE DONE BY THE DEPARTMENT IN THE COMING FEW MONTHS. MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE NEW SOCIAL SECURITY PACKAGE WILL BE ANNOUNCED NEARER THE TIME OF IMPLEMENTATION.

"DUE ADJUSTMENT TO THE LEVEL OF BENEFITS WILL BE MADE AUTOMATICALLY FOR EXISTING RECIPIENTS," HE SAID.

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MORE TO ENJOY KINDERGARTEN FEE REMISSION
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THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BENEFITING FROM THE KINDERGARTEN FEE REMISSION SCHEME WILL INCREASE FROM THE CURRENT FIVE PER CENT TO 11 PER CENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR DOMINIC S W WONG, SAID TODAY (SATURDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY THANKSGIVING DAY OF THE HONG KONG CHRISTIAN KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, MR WONG SAID THESE CHILDREN WILL ENJOY FULL OR HALF FEE REMISSION BASED ON THE POINTS SYSTEM USED FOR THE SENIOR SECONDARY FEE REMISSION SCHEME.

IN TERMS OF NUMBER, HE SAID OVER 10,000 CHILDREN WERE NOW ENJOYING THE SCHEME.

MR WONG SAID THE CURRICULUM, SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT, FACILITIES AND TEACHER QUALITY WERE THE MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS IMPLEMENTED SEVERAL MEASURES SINCE 1990 TO ENHANCE QUALITY. THESE INCLUDE:

- * PEGGING CLASS SIZE AT NOT MORE THAN 30 FOR HALF-DAY CLASSES AND NOT MORE THAN 20 FOR WHOLE-DAY OR NURSERY CLASSES;
- * SETTING A RECOMMENDED SALARY SCALE FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING;
- * ALLOWING KINDERGARTENS TO INCREASE FEES IN ORDER TO MEET IMPROVED SALARIES OF TEACHERS;
- * IMPLEMENTING THE FEE REMISSION SCHEME;
- * PROVIDING INCENTIVE TRAINING COURSES FOR ASSISTANT KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS; AND
- * ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO MONITOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION.

WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE IMPROVED FEE REMISSION SCHEME, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE IN A POSITION TO CONSIDER LEGISLATING FOR A MINIMUM PROPORTION OF TRAINED TEACHERS IN EACH KINDERGARTEN, MR WONG SAID.

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RESIDENTS URGED TO KEEP COUNTRY PARKS CLEAN

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COUNTRY PARK VISITORS ARE URGED TODAY (SATURDAY) TO KEEP THE AREAS CLEAN BY PROPERLY DISPOSING OF REFUSE AFTER BARBECUING AND PICNICKING.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT'S SENIOR COUNTRY PARKS OFFICER, MR LAI CHING-WAI, MADE THE APPEAL AS HE REVIEWED THE LITTERING PROBLEM IN COUNTRY PARKS.

MR LAI POINTED OUT THAT THE SITUATION WAS AT ITS WORST OVER WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS WHEN THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE VISITED THE COUNTRY PARKS.

"ON MONDAYS AND THE DAYS AFTER PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, MANY BARBECUE SITES ARE COVERED BY LARGE AMOUNT OF LITTER, PLASTIC BAGS, FOOD RESIDUES AND BARBECUE FORKS.

"NOT ONLY DO THEY RUIN THE OUTLOOK OF THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY PARKS BUT ALSO CREATE HYGIENE PROBLEMS," HE SAID.

MR LAI WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED OVER THE ATTITUDES OF MANY VISITORS WHO DO NOT BOTHER EVEN TO THROW THE REFUSE INTO NEARBY LITTER BINS OR STOCKADES.

"THE SIMPLEST THING TO DO IS TO PITCH IN. BETTER STILL, THEY CAN CREATE LESS REFUSE BY TAKING HOME REUSABLE ITEMS SUCH AS BARBECUE FORKS," HE SAID.

ABOUT 3,650 TONNES OF LITTER WERE LEFT IN COUNTRY PARKS EACH YEAR. IN ADDITION, SOME 700,000 ABANDONED BARBECUE FORKS WERE COLLECTED IN COUNTRY PARKS BY THE DEPARTMENT'S STAFF LAST YEAR.

THESE STAFF COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER DEPLOYED TO OTHER USEFUL DUTIES IN IMPROVING THE COUNTRY PARKS IF VISITORS WERE MORE CIVIC CONSCIOUS, MR LAI SAID.

"THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION TO DETER PEOPLE FROM LITTERING," HE SAID.

ANY PERSON FOUND LITTERING AT COUNTRY PARKS COULD FACE A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$2,000 AND THREE MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT UPON CONVICTION.

SOME 775 PEOPLE WERE FINED A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$262,150 FOR THE LITTERING OFFENCE UNDER THE COUNTRY PARKS AND SPECIAL AREAS REGULATIONS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

MR LAI SAID MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC COULD TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO HELP KEEP THE COUNTRY PARKS CLEAN BY TAKING PART IN AN VOLUNTARY LITTER COLLECTION OPERATION HELD REGULARLY BY THE DEPARTMENT.

ANY INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANISATION WHO IS INTERESTED IN THE WORK CAN GET DETAILS FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON 733 2121.

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CONTRACTOR FINED FOR NOT LABELLING CHEMICALS

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TODAY (SATURDAY) REMINDED FACTORY PROPRIETORS OF THEIR STATUTORY DUTY TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF WORKERS HANDLING DANGEROUS CHEMICALS.

THE REMINDER WAS GIVEN FOLLOWING A CASE IN WHICH THE E. ON ENGINEERING LTD IN CENTRAL WAS FINED \$10,000 ON TWO SUMMONSES FOR FAILING TO LABEL CHEMICAL CONTAINERS PROPERLY.

IN ADDITION, THE CONTRACTOR WAS FINED \$3,000 FOR FAILING TO PROVIDE EMPLOYEES WITH ADEQUATE INFORMATION ON SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN HANDLING INFLAMMABLE AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

IN THE CASE, A FIRE BROKE OUT IN A RESTAURANT UNDER DECORATION, KILLING ONE WORKER AND INJURING ANOTHER.

UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES) REGULATIONS, ALL PROPRIETORS ARE REQUIRED TO CLASSIFY AND LABEL COMMONLY-USED, DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES WHICH MAY BE TOXIC, INFLAMMABLE, OXIDISING, EXPLOSIVE, CORROSIVE, IRRITANT OR HARMFUL.

"PROPRIETORS SHOULD PROVIDE WORKERS WITH ADEQUATE INFORMATION ON THE HAZARDS AND NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS IN THE HANDLING OF DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES," CHIEF FACTORY INSPECTOR, MR CHAN TAT-KING, EXPLAINED.

"THEY SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS, TRAINING AND SUITABLE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR EMPLOYEES WHO MAY BE EXPOSED TO SUCH SUBSTANCES," HE ADDED.

HE ALSO ASKED PROPRIETORS TO EXERCISE ADEQUATE SUPERVISION TO ENSURE THAT THE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT.

MR CHAN ADVISED PROPRIETORS THAT IT WAS THEIR OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES FROM CHEMICAL HAZARDS.

"THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WILL SPARE NO EFFORT TO TAKE OUT PROSECUTION AGAINST EMPLOYERS WHO CHOOSE TO CUT CORNERS AND IGNORE THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE REGULATIONS," HE SAID.

"THEY ARE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$30,000," HE ADDED.

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TWO NEW MEMBERS JOIN COUNTRY PARKS BOARD

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THE GOVERNOR HAS APPOINTED MR FUNG SHIU-WING AND PROFESSOR BRIAN MORTON TO THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD FOR THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 21 THIS YEAR TO AUGUST 15 NEXT YEAR.

MR FUNG IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION WHILE PROFESSOR MORTON IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE SWIRE MARINE LABORATORY, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG.

THE APPOINTMENTS WERE ANNOUNCED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE PUBLISHED YESTERDAY (FRIDAY).

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT SAID THE BOARD WAS A STATUTORY BODY APPOINTED UNDER THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE TO ADVISE THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY ON THE POLICY AND PROGRAMMES IN RESPECT OF COUNTRY PARKS AND SPECIAL AREAS.

THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD IS NOW CHAIRED BY MR CARLOS CHEUNG HON-KAU. OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBERS ARE MR HOWARD YOUNG HOW-WAH, DR CHIU SEIN-TUCK, DR I J HODGKISS, MR HUI CHUN-FUI, MR GEORGE TAN, DR JIM CHI-YUNG, DR PANG HOK-TUEN AND DR TAM WING-KUN.

THE BOARD IS ALSO SERVED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND POLICY BRANCHES.

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LOCKHART ROAD CARNIVAL

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A "MARDI-GRAS"-STYLE CARNIVAL WILL BE HELD IN LOCKHART ROAD, WAN CHAI NEXT SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 8).

JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE WAN CHAI FESTIVAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE, THE WAN CHAI TENANTS ASSOCIATION AND TWO AREA COMMITTEES, THE CELEBRATIONS WILL BE HELD FROM NOON TO 7 PM AT THE SECTION BETWEEN FLEMING ROAD AND LUARD ROAD.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT OFFICE SAID TODAY (SATURDAY): "THE CARNIVAL, WITH THE THEME 'WAN CHAI UNMASKED', WILL PROVIDE A CHANCE FOR THE PUBLIC TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES THE UNIQUE MIX OF CHARACTERS, HISTORY AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DISTRICT."

THE EVENT, NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR, IS TO PROMOTE THE IMAGE OF A GREENER, CLEANER AND PROGRESSIVE DISTRICT FOLLOWING A VIGOROUS TWO-YEAR TREE-PLANTING CAMPAIGN, HE ADDED.

THE PROGRAMMES WILL INCLUDE STAGE PERFORMANCES, STREET PARADES, GAME STALLS AND COMPETITIONS.

TAKING TO THE STREETS WILL BE TROUPES OF ACROBATS, JUGGLERS, MIMES, MAGICIANS, MORRIS AND BELLY DANCERS, AND MASK THEATRE ACTORS.

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A TOTAL OF 47 GAMES, ARTS, FOOD AND BEVERAGE STALLS WILL ALSO BE SET UP ALONG THE PAVEMENTS.

ADMISSION IS FREE. ENQUIRIES ON THE PROGRAMMES CAN BE MADE ON TEL 835 1990 OR 866 9847 (ENGLISH).

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE CARNIVAL.

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FIGHT CRIME CARNIVAL IN SHAM SHUI PO
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TEN CIVIC-MINDED RESIDENTS WILL BE PRESENTED WITH GOOD CITIZEN AWARDS AT A CARNIVAL AT THE MAPLE STREET PLAYGROUND IN SHAM SHUI PO TOMORROW (SUNDAY).

THE CARNIVAL IS ORGANISED BY THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE TO ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO JOIN HANDS TO COMBAT CRIME.

THERE WILL BE AN EXHIBITION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND A SHOW BY POLICE DOGS. THE CARNIVAL WILL START AT 2 PM.

OFFICIATING GUESTS WILL BE THE POLICE REGIONAL COMMANDER (KOWLOON WEST), MR LEE LAM-CHUAN; SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR RAYMOND CHOY; DISTRICT OFFICER, MR ALAN FUNG; AND THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, MR FAN KAM-PING.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE FIGHT CRIME CARNIVAL WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2 PM TOMORROW (SUNDAY) AT THE MAPLE STREET PLAYGROUND IN SHAM SHUI PO.

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STUDENTS SPURRED TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY

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STUDENTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ENSURING HONG KONG'S FUTURE PROSPERITY THROUGH APPLYING THEIR KNOWLEDGE LEARNT AT SCHOOL, SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER (SOUTH), DR CHAN WING-CHEUNG, SAID TODAY (SATURDAY).

ADDRESSING THE STUDENTS AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE SKH LUI MING CHOI SECONDARY SCHOOL, HE SAID: "WHATEVER PROFESSION YOU WILL ENTER INTO, YOU SHOULD WORK HARD TO FACE THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT YOU MAY ENCOUNTER IN YOUR CAREER.

"STUDENTS SHOULD TRY THEIR BEST IN UTILISING THEIR POTENTIAL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC," HE SAID.

IF ALL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY CONTRIBUTED THEIR PART IN SHOWING CONCERN FOR OTHERS, THEY WOULD GAIN RESPECT FROM OTHERS AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY WOULD BE RECOGNISED, DR CHAN SAID.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,674
REVERSAL OF LAF	+1,450
BALANCE AFTER REVERSL OF LAF	4,124 *
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-1,800
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,324
* LAF TO BE REVERSED ON 2/11	-2,624 MN
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	

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