



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Hospital care services on improvement

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Hong Kong is probably the only city in the world where taxation is low but medical and health care is heavily subsidised and, in many instances, virtually free, the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, said.

Officiating at the opening ceremony of the Hospital Authority Convention 1995 today (Wednesday), Mrs Chan said: "We are one of the few places that provides a free and comprehensive immunisation programme to all children protecting them against major infectious diseases.

"In terms of infant mortality, average life expectancy at birth and the ratio of non-smokers to smokers, the health status of our community is among the best in the region."

Speaking on the theme of this year's Convention, "Transformation in Hospital Services", Mrs Chan said the hospital care services had made significant improvements in the past few years.

These include the substantial elimination of camp-beds in public hospitals, the provision of enquiry services in all hospitals for visitors, and the introduction of a priority system in emergency services which significantly reduces the waiting time for patients.

The Chief Secretary pointed out that effective and efficient health care delivery could only be achieved through active collaboration by providers, carers and patients.

"In this regard, the Hospital Authority has shaped its corporate mission to strengthen the interface between public and private sectors.

"This will not only improve utilisation of resources and avoid duplication of services, but also enhance the continuum of patient care," she said.

The Chief Secretary said in the light of increased public awareness and escalating medical costs, preventive care should receive greater emphasis.

She said: "Through its front-line contact with patients and their families, and close co-operation with the Department of Health on health education programme, the Hospital Authority will add strength to our initiatives to improve preventive care for our community."

End/Wednesday, January 4, 1995

Transcript of Chief Secretary's speech to media

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Following is a transcript of the Chief Secretary Mrs Anson Chan's speech to the press after officiating at the opening ceremony of Hospital Authority Convention 1995 this (Wednesday) morning:

CS: I'd like to wish you all a very happy Christmas. And I hope that your news reporting during the year will be smooth. I hope that the community as a whole will enjoy continued and strong economic growth, that we'll see strengthened co-operation and communication with the Chinese authorities. In particular, I personally hope that we will have a greater progress in a whole host of transitional issues through the JLG and expert group meetings to be set up under the JLG. Thank you.

End/Wednesday, January 4, 1995

Housing Ordinance to be amended

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The Governor-in-Council has approved that a bill to update and improve several provisions in the Housing Ordinance should be introduced into the Legislative Council.

The Housing (Amendment) Bill 1995, among other things, will empower the Secretary for Housing to appoint an appeal panel to hear appeals under section 19(1) of the Housing Ordinance and to make appeal rules.

To ensure the independence and impartiality of the appeal panel, the secretary will only appoint non-Housing Authority members to the panel.

At present, the Housing Authority is responsible for the appointment of the panel and the making of appeal rules. This arrangement is not very satisfactory since the authority is a party to the appeals.

The bill also seeks to deter the creation of unauthorised mortgages or charges by making them void and rendering the offenders liable to prosecution.

A Government spokesman said: "It has come to the Housing Department's notice that some mortgages for Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme flats, which do not comply with the terms on which the Director of Housing has signified his approval, have been executed.

"Legal advice is that it would be inappropriate to take prosecution action on the basis of the present provisions in the Housing Ordinance."

Other proposals in the bill include giving the Housing Authority specific power to employ its own staff and advisory services, and removing the need for the Director of Housing to appoint a long list of public officers to whom his power is delegated and to update the list frequently.

The bill will be gazetted on January 13 and be introduced into the Legislative Council on January 25 this year.

End/Wednesday, January 4, 1995

Regulations on bedspace apartments to be gazetted

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Regulations prescribing a fee scale for the issue and renewal of certificates of exemption and licences for bedspace apartments as well as governing the operation of the Bedspace Apartments Appeal Board will be gazetted on Friday (January 6).

They are the Bedspace Apartments (Fees) Regulation and the Bedspace Apartments (Appeal Board) Regulation, which will come into effect on February 9.

A spokesman for the Home Affairs Branch today (Wednesday) said under the fee regulation, bedspace apartment operators would have to pay \$90 for the issue and annual renewal of a certificate of exemption.

As to the issue and renewal of licence, the fee will be set on a sliding scale depending on the number of permitted bedspaces in the apartments.

It will range from \$370 for a bedspace apartment with 12 to 20 permitted bedspaces to a maximum of \$2,280 for one with more than 70 permitted bedspaces.

The spokesman pointed out that the proposed scale of fees would only cover the administrative costs of the licensing scheme.

He said in making the regulation, the Government had also taken into account the financial means of the bedspace apartment operators and the special circumstances of bedspace apartments which provided low cost accommodation for those who needed it.

"The proposed fees, in fact, represent an insignificant percentage of the operating costs of bedspace apartments and therefore the consequential impact per bedspace on tenants will be negligible," he added.

Meanwhile, the regulation on the appeal board has prescribed the practice and procedure of the body.

Any person aggrieved by the decision of the authorities relating to licensing of bedspace apartments can appeal to the board.

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Measures for display of film posters

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The Government has decided to introduce a number of measures aimed at tackling the public display of offensive and pornographic film posters and providing more information to parents to help them make an informed choice on what films they wish their children to watch.

A Film Censorship (Amendment) Bill to this effect will be introduced into the Legislative Council on January 18, a spokesman for the Recreation and Culture Branch said today (Wednesday).

"Advertising materials, including posters of all Category III films, will be required to be submitted to the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) for approval before they can be distributed, circulated or publicly displayed," the spokesman added.

"Any person who distributes, circulates or publicly displays Category III film advertising materials without prior approval of TELA will commit an offence and be liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for one year."

An across-the-board restriction on all Category III film advertising materials is necessary to ensure that film posters, newspaper advertisement, or handbills and so on do not contain materials that are offensive to public morality and ordinary good taste.

"To cater for the situation where publicity materials for a film need to be prepared prior to obtaining a classification, the bill will introduce an arrangement whereby advertising materials of all films intended for exhibition can be submitted to TELA for vetting on a voluntary basis."

Apart from imposing compulsory censorship on Category III film advertising materials, the spokesman said the existing classification of Category II would also be refined to form two sub-categories. This is made in response to the public wish for providing more information relating to individual films.

"The existing Category II will be split into sub-categories, namely: 'Not suitable for children below 12 and for which parental guidance is recommended' and 'Not suitable for persons below 18'.

"Parents should find the refined film classification system of help in deciding what films they wish their children to watch," the spokesman said.

The opportunity will also be taken to make some minor amendments to the Film Censorship Ordinance to improve its operation.

The number of non-official members of the Board of Review will be increased from six to eight, and its terms of reference expanded correspondingly to cover the extended scope of the ordinance.

The spokesman added that a separate exercise was being undertaken to address the problem of easy access by young people to indecent articles, including indecent comic books.

The necessary legislative amendments to the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance will be introduced into the Legislative Council in the first quarter of this year.

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No "double standards" for action against unauthorised building works

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The Buildings Department does not apply "double standards" in dealing with unauthorised building works (UBW), the Director of Buildings Mrs Helen Yu stressed today (Wednesday).

She firmly rebutted some newspaper comments that queried whether there are "double standards" in respect of UBW.

"We in Buildings Department enforce the law without fear or favour. We treat all UBW equally, whether they are located in old tenement blocks or new luxury buildings and whether they house the rich or the poor," she noted.

Mrs Yu emphasised: "Government's prime concern with action against UBW is public safety."

"Thus, ours is a policy of priorities based on safety, to ensure that UBW do not pose a threat to the public or to owners and occupiers. We endeavour to do our best but our resources are not unlimited."

Under this policy, Mrs Yu added, priority enforcement action is taken against:

- * UBW posing imminent danger to life and property or seriously endangering public health;
- * UBW under construction or newly constructed;
- * UBW for demolition or remedial measures, recommended by government departments or public bodies such as district boards, environmental improvement committees and building management co-ordination committees; and
- * major UBW contravening provisions of both the Buildings Ordinance and lease conditions.

"Actions against UBW outside these priorities are deferred for the time being but they will be upgraded when appropriate," Mrs Yu explained.

"The Buildings Department both responds to reports or referrals and initiates clearances in different districts, some of them being major operations," she said.

End/Wednesday, January 4, 1995

Appointment to Consumer Council

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A Government spokesman announced today (Wednesday) that the Financial Secretary had appointed 14 members to the Consumer Council for a period of one to two years with effect from January 1 this year.

Three existing members have been reappointed to the Consumer Council for a period of two years. They are Mr Thomas Kwok Wai-yan, Dr Lo Chi-kin and Dr Michael Tsui Fuk-sun.

Another five existing members have been reappointed for a period of one year. They are Dr Law Cheung-kwok, Mr Lee Kam-hung, Dr Albert Leung Wing-nang, Mr Man Mo-leung and Mrs Yuen Chan Po-hing.

Six new members - Mr William F A Chao, Mr Chan Yan-leung, Dr Joseph K L Lai, Mr Tim Lui Tim-leung, Mr Herman To Yung-sing and Mr Peter T S Wong - have been appointed to the council for a period of one year.

Mr Chao is the executive director of a media company and sits on the Complaints Committee of the Broadcasting Authority.

Mr Chan is the principal of Tsuen Wan Public Ho Chuen Yiu Memorial College. He is also a member of the Board of Review on the Compulsory School Attendance Scheme.

Dr Lai is the head of the Materials Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong. He is also a member of the Plastics Training Board of the Vocational Training Council.

Mr Lui is a certified public accountant and sits on the Council of the Hong Kong Society of Accountants.

Mr To is the director and general manager of an industrial development company.

Mr Wong is a bank director in retail banking business.

Retiring from the Consumer Council are Professor Peter W Cheung, Mr Dennis Lam Haw-shun, Mr Johnny Mok Shiu-luen, Mr Ng Tat-lun, Mrs So Cheung Yee-hing and Mr Anthony Yuen Tak-tim.

"We are grateful to these retired members for the devotion of their precious time and effort to a highly regarded public service. Their contribution to the work of the Consumer Council has been most useful in promoting consumer interests," the spokesman said.

End/Wednesday, January 4, 1995

English Language Broadcasting

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The Recreation and Culture Branch submitted two information papers to the LegCo Information Policy Panel (the Panel) today on "English Language Broadcasting".

Interest in this topic was sparked off by RTHK's recent decision to broadcast Legislative Council sittings on its English service on a selective basis only.

Panel members were informed that this was not an attempt to downplay the importance of English language broadcasting.

It was purely a programming decision, based on the consideration that since LegCo proceedings were increasingly conducted in Cantonese, English broadcasts comprised mostly simultaneous interpretation which the public generally did not find interesting.

Members were told that RTHK had since stepped up its news service on LegCo sitting days by providing up-to-the minute reports on its hourly news so that listeners were kept informed of events in LegCo as they unfolded throughout the day.

On the separate question of English language obligations imposed on the two local free-to-air television stations, the Panel was advised that this was not an issue originally included in the 1994 Broadcasting Policy Review recently conducted by the Branch.

The Consultancy for the review had merely observed that the two stations were facing increasing cost pressure in English language programming for their English Channels, and that the Government may wish to do something to recognise this.

The Panel was informed that the Administration's view is that, though the cost pressure on the English channels is recognised, there is no question of reducing the present English language requirement imposed on the two stations.

The economics of the stations and the profitability of their services should be taken as one single business entity rather than on individual channels.

However, the Administration would look further into the question of English language programming on local free-to-air stations in the context of the 1996 review to deregulate the broadcasting market upon expiry of Wharf Cable's exclusivity period.

End/Wednesday, January 4, 1995

Youth need family support to stay away from drugs

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Young drug abusers may have lacked the attachments, the stimuli and the adult role models which earlier generations had experienced and parents are urged to make it clear to their children that drug taking is unacceptable.

The Commissioner for Narcotics, Mr Alasdair Sinclair, made these remarks at a luncheon meeting held by the Rotary Club of Kowloon Golden Mile today (Wednesday).

Speaking on the rapid increase in youth drug abuse in recent years, Mr Sinclair said the young people who were now abusing drugs belonged to the cohort which was born in the late 1970s, the beginning of Hong Kong's period of affluence. "With both parents typically out working, they may have lacked the attachments, the stimuli and the adult role models which earlier generation had experienced, notwithstanding their greater educational opportunities.

"In a recent paper, Dr Y W Cheung of The Chinese University has suggested that rapid social change in the domains of family, school and peers might have been conducive to the increase in drug use among adolescents," he said.

Mr Sinclair said young people had to be helped to develop healthy and positive attitudes and skills to say no to drugs.

"Schools can do a lot here and the Education Department advises them to do so. All teachers have a responsibility, not just those concerned with the parts of the curriculum into which drug education is integrated.

"Every teacher can contribute to the creation of the right school atmosphere, that is, one which encourages the development of a positive self-image among young people and fosters effective communication between teachers and students," he said.

Mr Sinclair pointed out that the Narcotics Division was active in supplementing the schools' efforts, with more than 300 talks being given last year to more than 75,000 children at all levels from Primary Six upwards.

The Division also ran drug education workshops for aspiring teachers at the various teacher training colleges. Several longer workshops were also jointly organised with the Education Department to familiarise in-service teachers with the resources available for teaching about drugs.

Mr Sinclair noted that youngsters rated forgetting about their troubles as the main satisfaction to be obtained from drug taking. This suggested that drug abuse was a response to an unhappy life, and a sense of rejection, failure and hopelessness, he added. The Commissioner called on parents to take an interest in steering their children away from taking drugs.

"Be open, listen to them, and guide them past a danger which was not so prevalent when we were growing up," he said.

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Blankets distributed to street-sleepers

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A total of 504 blankets was distributed to 461 street-sleepers by Social Welfare Department staff throughout the territory last (Tuesday) night.

The blankets were given to 172 street-sleepers on Hong Kong Island, 20 in East Kowloon, 229 in West Kowloon, 30 in New Territories East and 10 in New Territories West.

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Correctional Services Staff Clubhouse opens

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A new clubhouse for staff of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) was opened today (Wednesday).

Located next to the Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre, the new CSD Staff Club will provide a wide range of sport and recreational facilities for staff of all ranks and their families.

Work on the \$28 million-clubhouse began in mid-1993. The cost was met purely by donations. The biggest single donation of \$20 million was made by the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club in 1992.

Representing the Jockey Club to officiate at the opening ceremony was a steward of the club, Mr Michael Thornhill.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Eric McCosh, described the Jockey Club's support for the project as "truly magnificent".

"I hesitate in using the description 'magnificent support' because even those words inadequately describe what has been made possible. What the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club gave turned a possibility into a reality," Mr McCosh said.

In addition to the donation from the Jockey Club, CSD held its first 17-kilometre Victoria - Stanley Run to raise funds among staff in 1991.

"The task of raising finance was daunting, but I truly believed that if we were to try and seek financial assistance from others we should first of all demonstrate that we were willing and able to help ourselves.

"Rather surprisingly everyone who participated, even though the run took place during the height of summer, survived the ordeal," Mr McCosh noted.

Financial support for the construction of the clubhouse also came from the community.

"We owe a very sincere expression of gratitude to this department's numerous friends, whose contributions gave us not only the financial boost we needed, but also a feeling of support for the work that we in CSD do for the community that we serve," he said.

The clubhouse boasts a total area of 2,800 square metres. It has a swimming pool, a pool-side bar, a karaoke lounge, a video games room, a children's playroom, a billiard room, a multi-gym, a tennis court, a library, a meeting room, two sauna rooms, two squash courts and a number of recreation rooms.

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Two lots to let

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The Lands Department is inviting tenders for short-term tenancies of two lots of Government land in the New Territories.

The first lot, located at Lai Ping Road, Sha Tin New Town, has an area of 3,525 square metres for storage of goods excluding dangerous goods, or for storage of motor vehicles or plant and equipment. The tenancy is for two years, renewable quarterly.

Covering an area of 1,770 square metres, the second lot at Tsing Nam Street, Tsing Yi, New Territories, is to be used for repairing of vehicles.

The tenancy is also for two years, renewable quarterly.

Closing dates for submission of tenders for both lots are noon on January 20.

Tender forms, tender notice and conditions may be obtained from the District Lands Offices at Kwai Tsing and Sha Tin, the District Lands Offices Kowloon, 10th floor, Yau Ma Tei Car Park Building, 250 Shanghai Street, Kowloon and the Land Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road.

Tender plans can also be inspected at these offices.

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Flushing water cut in Ho Man Tin and King's Park

Flushing water supply to all premises in Ho Man Tin and King's Park will be temporarily suspended from 8 am to 5 pm on Friday (January 6) to facilitate the cleansing of the Ho Man Tin High Level Salt Water Service Reservoir.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,591	0930	+377
Closing balance in the account	1,374	1000	+377
Change attributable to :		1100	+348
Money market activity	+301	1200	+301
LAF today	-518	1500	+301
		1600	+301

LAF rate 3.75% bid/5.75% offer TWI 121.7 *+0.2* 4.1.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.17	17 months	2605	6.35	98.62	7.56
1 month	5.24	23 months	2611	6.90	98.56	7.89
3 months	5.69	28 months	3704	6.15	96.31	8.08
6 months	6.33	34 months	3710	7.25	98.07	8.18
12 months	7.13	60 months	5912	8.15	99.20	8.52

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$28,839 million

Closed January 4, 1995

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