



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

Saturday, May 27, 1995

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Expert talks on the Court of Final Appeal	1
Overseas adoption agreement signed	1
DSHW to attend world congress on child health	2
Equal opportunities for the disabled	3
Code of Practice for scaffolding safety	4
More off-road driving test centres being planned	5
Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations	6

Sunday, May 28, 1995

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
50 new building plans approved in March	7
Distance posts to help hikers	8
International Business Reply Service extended to more countries	9
WSD has achieved performance targets	9
Fourth activity centre for overseas domestic helpers opens	10
Fund-raising schedule for June	12
Tuen Ng Festival clinic service	13

Expert talks on the Court of Final Appeal

The seventh round of talks between experts of the British and Chinese sides of the Joint Liaison Group on matters relating to the Court of Final Appeal will be held in Hong Kong on May 30 and 31.

The British team will be led by British Representative Mr Alan Paul, the Chinese team will be led by Chinese Representative Mr Chen Zuo'er. They will be assisted by experts from the two sides.

End/Saturday, May 27, 1995

Overseas adoption agreement signed

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has entered into a formal agreement on overseas adoption services with two social service agencies to widen the adoption chance of children with special needs.

The agreement was signed yesterday (Friday) at the SWD Headquarters by the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Ian Strachan, and representatives of the Holt International Children's Service and Mother's Choice.

Speaking at the agreement signing ceremony, Mr Strachan said the department's Adoption Unit had been making vigorous efforts to find suitable adoptive families for children in need of a permanent home.

"We have made much progress. Notwithstanding this, the Adoption Unit has difficulties in placing special needs children, in particular those with disabilities, into suitable homes.

"In order to widen the opportunities of adoption of these children with special needs, the Adoption Unit has enlisted the help of Mother's Choice and Holt International since December 1992," Mr Strachan said.

The three parties signed a Letter of Intent on December 11, 1992, and started a joint effort in finding suitable adoptive families in the United States for children with special needs.

"Through your unfailing efforts, six children have already departed for their adoptive families in the United States, and three are now awaiting to complete the adoption procedures and will soon join their adoptive parents.

"I am pleased to see such remarkable progress, in which children with severe multiple handicaps who were considered to be hard-to-place can be received into warm and living homes," he said.

The Holt International Children's Service is an American social agency set up 39 years ago with an objective of serving the homeless children.

The Mother's Choice, a local charitable organisation, provides overseas adoption service, renders assistance to single pregnant girls and their families and offers residential care to babies awaiting adoption.

End/Saturday, May 27, 1995

DSHW to attend world congress on child health

* * * * *

The Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Shelley Lau, left for Vancouver yesterday (Friday) to attend the Child Health 2000 - 2nd World Congress and Exposition to be held from May 30 to June 3.

Mrs Lau will deliver a keynote speech on Women's Status in Hong Kong at the Congress which provides a unique opportunity for all sectors of the child health community from all parts of the world to share their experiences in promoting the health and well-being of children.

Mrs Lau will then fly to Toronto where she will address over 100 doctors and politicians on "The future of medical and health care services in Hong Kong - a prospect for partnership in western and traditional medicine".

The Deputy Secretary will return to Hong Kong on June 6.

End/Saturday, May 27, 1995

Equal opportunities for the disabled

* * * * *

The government together with non-governmental organisations have been making every effort in recent years to promote "Equal Opportunities and Full Participation For All", which is the ultimate goal of rehabilitation programmes.

This was stated by the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Ian Strachan, when he officiated at the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong Island East PHAB Centre of the Hong Kong PHAB Association today (Saturday).

"A lot of resources has also been spent on public education to help people in the community to have a better understanding and acceptance of disabled persons, their disabilities and the rehabilitation services provided for them.

"While community support and acceptance are important to ensure integration, persons with disability also need more work skills and employment opportunities to facilitate them to wholly fulfil their potential in this competitive society," Mr Stratton said.

In order to improve training and employment opportunities, Mr Stratton said a Working Party on Training and Employment for People with Disabilities had been set up since May last year to review the existing services and a report would soon be issued.

"As a way forward to enhance the employment of the disabled, there is a significant increase in the subvention provision for supported employment service to 360 places from March 1 this year involving many more agencies, including the Hong Kong PHAB Association.

"This service encompasses job finding and matching, job coaching, a follow-through support and employment related skills training.

"Through this service, it is hoped that persons with disability will gain more work skills, higher income and better chances to compete in the open job market, and be able to lead a more dignified fulfilling life, integrated fully into the community," he said.

Pointing out that the success of supported employment service depended very much on the contribution of non-governmental welfare organisations, the support of family members and the efforts of disabled persons themselves, Mr Strachan said what is most important is the acceptance and support of employers.

He therefore appealed to all the employers in Hong Kong for their support and action in providing employment opportunities for people with disability.

End/Saturday, May 27, 1995

Code of Practice for scaffolding safety

* * * * *

Building contractors should protect the safety of scaffolders by providing them with safe scaffolds and working platforms.

Deputy Chief Factory Inspector of the Labour Department, Mr Wong Ching-
kwok, today (Saturday) said a safety management system had to be developed at the
initial design and planning stage of the scaffold.

"Bamboo scaffolds should be erected in double rows to facilitate the provision
of proper working platforms.

"Requirements and standards on foundation support, working platforms and
means of access to a scaffold must be met. Moreover, supervisory duties and erection
work should be carried out by competent persons and competent workmen
respectively," he said.

He also urged contractors to take proactive safety measures to ensure that
scaffolds were stable and sound especially during the typhoon season.

The Labour Department will publish a Code of Practice for Scaffolding Safety,
the first of its kind in Hong Kong, to provide practical guidance for contractors.

The Code is a supplement to existing safety regulations and will become
effective by announcement in the gazette later.

An announcement will be made in the form of a press release when the Code is ready for distribution to the public.

Contractors wishing to get details on the Code may contact the General Duties Office of the Labour Department on 2399 2251 or approach the Building and Engineering Construction Office of the Factory Inspectorate Division in their area.

End/Saturday, May 27, 1995

More off-road driving test centres being planned

* * * * *

The Transport Department is planning more off-road driving test centres in line with the Government's policy to promote off-road training and testing of drivers.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Chak On Road Driving Test Centre today (Saturday), Assistant Commissioner for Transport Mr Ernest Lee said the department was aiming at opening one off-road driving test centre each year in future.

New off-road centres under active planning include those at Shek Lei in Kwai Chung, So Kon Po on Hong Kong Island, and Shek Mun in Sha Tin. The one in Happy Valley has been in use since July last year.

Mr Lee said candidates taking driving test in off-road driving test centres would be free from interference from the outside environment and thus faced much less psychological pressure.

The Chak On Road Driving Test Centre occupies an area of about 1,500 square metres. It is the first major off-road driving test centre in Kowloon and is for driving tests of medium goods vehicles.

It was originally located on Tai Po Road near the North Kowloon Magistracy Building and had a history of more than 20 years. The move to the present location was necessary to make way for the Lung Cheung Road widening project.

Also officiating at today's ceremony were the Chairman of Sham Shui Po District Board, Mr Wong Chung-ki, and the Sham Shui Po District Officer, Ms Linda Lai.

A mock driving test demonstration was given by staff of the department's Driving Test Section during the ceremony.

End/Saturday, May 27, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ Million</u>	<u>Time (Hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative Change (\$ Million)</u>
Opening Balance in the account	2,728	09:30	+25
Closing Balance in the account	1,413	10:00	+25
Change Attributable to:		11:00	+25
Money Market Activity	+25	11:30	+25
Laf Today	-1,340	15:00	

Laf Rate 4.25% Bid/6.25% Offer TWI 117.9 *-0.4* 27.5.95

End/Saturday, May 27, 1995

50 new building plans approved in March

* * * * *

The Buildings Department approved 50 building plans in March this year.

Of the plans, 29 are for Hong Kong Island, six for Kowloon and 15 for the New Territories.

The approved plans include 13 for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, eight for commercial development and four for factory and industrial developments.

In the same month, consent was given for work to start on 43 building projects, which involve 62,934.6 square metres of usable domestic floor area and 136,124.9 square metres of usable non-domestic floor area.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in the month totalled about \$2,897 million.

Of the buildings certified for occupation in the month, usable floor areas for domestic and non-domestic uses are 142,651.1 square metres and 111,998.7 square metres respectively.

In the same month, the department issued 40 Occupation Permits - nine for Hong Kong Island, 14 for Kowloon and 17 for the New Territories.

In addition, 10 demolition consents involving 36 buildings were issued.

The Buildings Department's Control and Enforcement Division received 680 complaints of unauthorised building works, carried out 2,172 inspections and issued 424 Removal Orders on unauthorised works.

The department's Dangerous Buildings Section also inspected 905 buildings and obtained nil Emergency Closure Order from the court.

End/Sunday, May 28, 1995

Distance posts to help hikers

The Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) has set up a series of distance posts along the MacLehose Trail to help hikers.

AFD country park development officer Dr Yeung Ka-ming said this was a safety feature introduced to assist hikers in identifying their position while at the territory's longest trail.

Dr Yeung said: "In case of emergency, hikers may make use of the number of the nearest post to indicate their location so as to facilitate search and rescue operations."

There are a total of 200 such posts along the MacLehose Trail, which stretches for over 100 kilometres through the finest scenery of eight country parks.

The distance between two posts is about 500 metres. The first numbered post starts at Pak Tam Chung, Sai Kung and the last one ends near San Hui Tsuen, Tuen Mun.

Dr Yeung said these posts could also help hikers plan itinerary of their walks at the trail, which is divided into 10 stages of different lengths.

At the moment, only the MacLehose Trail is equipped with the distance posts. These facilities are expected to be extended to the Hong Kong Trail and Lantau Trail later.

Dr Yeung also reminded hikers to always observe the safety hints during their outings so as to prevent accidents.

Some of the safety hints are the awareness of own physical limitations, careful planning of walking routes, identification of difficult areas, sufficient equipment and clothing as well as alertness of weather changes during trips.

End/Sunday, May 28, 1995

International Business Reply Service extended to more countries

The Postmaster General, Mr Mike Pagliari, announced today (Sunday) that the International Business Reply Service would be extended to Australia, New Zealand, Denmark and Japan as from Thursday (June 1).

The International Business Reply Service, which was first introduced on October 1, 1991, is presently available to seven countries: the United Kingdom, Singapore, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Israel. The expanded network will certainly enhance the popularity of the service.

The service enables a sender in Hong Kong to enclose with his communication a self-addressed reply envelope or card of a prescribed design.

The recipient of the communication in the overseas country can despatch by air mail, without paying any postage, a response to the Hong Kong sender using the envelope or card provided.

The Hong Kong Post office will charge the Hong Kong sender \$8 for each item returned to him.

Further details about this service may be obtained from the Post Office Enquiry Bureau on tel 2921 2222.

End/Sunday, May 28, 1995

WSD has achieved performance targets

The Director of Water Supplies, Mr Hu Man-shiu, today (Sunday) said his department had achieved most of the performance targets announced last year.

"Improvements have also been made over the results achieved in 1993-94 in respect of the remaining targets.

"We have set some higher targets and introduce new ones this year after having reviewed the 1994-95 results and taken into consideration our customers' highly valuable suggestions," Mr Hu added.

The new pledges aim at continuing to improve the department's services by promoting openness and accountability and by developing a client-based culture in the department.

Performance targets of this year cover mainly the essential services related to water accounts and daily water supply matters.

Mr Hu assured customers that they would continue to get reliable, efficient and courteous services from the department.

Reviewing the major improvements made last year, Mr Hu pointed out that a faxline service had been introduced for receiving enquiries and complaints; and a new facility had also been launched for customers to pay bills by phone.

Meanwhile, the two customer enquiry centres in Sha Tin and Tai Po were given a facelift last year under an ongoing refurbishment programme.

"We shall go on monitoring our performance against performance targets and publish our achievements annually," he added.

Copies of a booklet containing details of the performance pledges of the Water Supplies Department are available free of charge from the department's customer enquiry centres and all district offices.

End/Sunday, May 28, 1995

Fourth activity centre for overseas domestic helpers opens

One more activity centre for overseas domestic helpers (ODHs) to spend their rest day was opened today (Sunday).

Located at the Po Leung Kuk Yu Lee Mo Fan Memorial School in North Point, the centre can accommodate about 100 participants.

Speaking after an opening ceremony for the centre, Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs Miss Jessie Wong said at present four ODH activity centres were in operation.

The first centre was set up at Clementi Secondary School in North Point on December 4 last year. Two other centres, located at Ho Tung Technical School for Girls in Causeway Bay and Jockey Club Government Technical School in Kowloon Tong, were opened on February 12 this year.

Miss Wong said the operation of the first three ODH centres had been proven satisfactory.

"The centres are well-received by the participants and they have demonstrated that with proper management, a centre for ODHs can operate in an orderly manner with no nuisance caused to nearby residents," she added.

"Operation of this latest centre will be closely monitored by a Steering Committee comprising, among others, the District Board member of the constituency concerned and representatives of the Wharf Road residents group."

Miss Wong also said the department would continue to search for more venues to set up centres for ODHs. One more activity centre is expected to be set up at the Kowloon Technical School in Sham Shui Po next month.

"We have also approached the schools of the English Schools Foundation and the initial response is very positive," she said.

In addition, two vacant buildings belonging to the ex-Chung Sing Benevolent Society School in Kennedy Town and the ex-Yiu Dak Chi Memorial School in Mong Kok, will be developed into service centres for ODHs. They can accommodate about 1,500 and 500 people respectively.

Different from the activity centres which are open on Sundays only, the service centres will open throughout the week. It is hoped that they can start operation in the last quarter of this year.

End/Sunday, May 28, 1995

Fund-raising schedule for June

* * * * *

Eight organisations have been granted permission to raise funds next month (June), a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department said today (Sunday).

They will either sell flags, tokens or similar items, or place donation boxes in designated public places.

Members of the public can call the department's hotline 2343 2255 or the Hong Kong Council of Social Service's 2866 8123 in case of doubt.

Any organisation planning to hold activities involving collection of money or sale or exchange for donation of badges, tokens or similar articles in a public place for charitable purposes should apply for a public subscription permit from the Social Welfare Department.

The spokesman appealed to organisers to take precautions against any possible fraud.

"Sellers should display the permit or carry copies of the permit for inspection upon request if the fund-raising is mobile," he said.

The spokesman also advised them to prepare guidelines for sellers, setting out the places and the times for selling and the collection points for bags.

"Organisers should inform the Police in case of loss of property, and seek their help when fraudulent acts, such as tampering of collection bags or making unauthorised selling, are found," he said.

Permits are given to the following organisations for raising funds next month:

Flag Day

Event Date

Organisation

June 3

Steward's Co., (HK) Ltd.

June 10

Mong Kok Kaifong Association Ltd.

June 17

Wu Oi Christian Centre Ltd.

June 24

Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong

Public Subscription

<u>Event Day</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
June 3 & 4	Children's Cancer Foundation
June 4, 11, 18 & 25	Jesus is Lord School of Ministry (HK) Ltd.
June 10 & 24	Land of Virtue Centre Ltd.
June 18	Kowloon Tong Church of Chinese Christian and Missionary Alliance Sheung Shui Church

End/Sunday, May 28, 1995

Tuen Ng Festival clinic service

* * * * *

The Department of Health today (Sunday) announced that there would be no holiday out-patient service on Friday (June 2), which is the Tuen Ng Festival.

End/Sunday, May 28, 1995