DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Labour problem tops opinion poll

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Labour-related problems have replaced housing matters as the top concern according to the latest public opinion poll conducted by the Home Affairs Branch.

Releasing the findings of a bimonthly survey on perceived problems conducted between July 10 and 14, a spokesman for the Branch said 45 per cent of the respondents referred to labour problems, up from 34 per cent in the May poll. Among these respondents, 76 per cent were worried about unemployment while the corresponding figure in the last survey was 51 per cent.

The percentage of respondents who were concerned about the importation of labour, meanwhile, dropped from 55 per cent to 39 per cent.

When asked about the Government's handling of the labour issue, 46 per cent considered the Administration had exerted efforts in solving the problem, up slightly from 44 per cent.

Housing-related problems, which came second in the list stood at 32 per cent, down from 37 per cent.

The third was transport-related problems, with 31 per cent of respondents mentioning it, up from 25 per cent.

However, the number of respondents who expressed confidence in the continued prosperity and stability of the territory remained unchanged at 55 per cent.

The survey was the 59th in the series to gauge the trend of public opinion on perceived problems in Hong Kong and the community's views of the general situation.

Through a random sampling of residential telephone numbers, 1,513 persons aged between 15 and 64, were interviewed.

End/Saturday, August 5, 1995

Training courses for health workers

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The Social Welfare Department, in conjunction with four professional health care training institutes, is organising a series of training courses to meet the demand for health care staff in residential care homes for the elderly.

The training courses are organised with a view to improving the quality of service of personnel in residential homes for the elderly, a spokesman for the department said today (Saturday).

The four institutes are the College of Nursing, Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Red Cross, the Hong Kong St John Ambulance Association and the Management Society for Healthcare Professionals. The first course will commence on September 26. "Under the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation, all health workers are required, among other things, to complete training approved by the Director of Social Welfare before being qualified for registration.

"The content of the course includes basic skills in rendering health care to the elderly, with emphasis on the psychological and physical changes of the elderly," the spokesman said.

Hong Kong residents who have completed Form 3 or equivalent and are competent to complete the training course can apply. Priority will be given to those who have two or more years of working experience in services for the elderly. Copies of invitation have already been sent to elderly home operators, inviting them to recommend suitable candidates for the course.

Individuals who are interested to take up a job in elderly homes may also forward their applications to the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly at Room 2354, 23rd floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

For enquiries, please call the licensing office on 2961 7221. The closing date is August 12 (Saturday).

End/Saturday, August 5, 1995

Outstanding Disabled Employees Award invites nominations

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The Labour Department invites employers to nominate disabled employees for the Outstanding Disabled Employees Award (ODEA) 1995.

"The ODEA aims at giving formal recognition and appreciation to disabled employees with outstanding achievements," Senior Labour Officer (Selective Placement), Mrs Jennie Chor, said.

"We hope that through this meaningful annual event, more employers can recognise the working abilities of the disabled and provide them with more employment opportunities."

"On the other hand, we also hope that it can provide an incentive for disabled employees to further improve their performance at work," she added.

The criteria for selection will include their overall performance, efforts and achievements in overcoming difficulties, diligence, devotion and accomplishment in employment.

They are also required to attend an interview by a panel of judges.

"Winners will each be awarded a souvenir plaque and their nominators will also receive a souvenir," Mrs Chor said.

Both the winners and their nominators will be invited to attend a prize presentation ceremony later this year.

Deadline for nominations will be August 20. Interested parties can contact Miss Yung of the Publicity and Promotion Unit on 2852 4803 for nominations.

End/Saturday, August 5, 1995

Donation to give visitor centre in park a facelift

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A $1 million donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust will soon be used to sponsor a project aimed at giving a facelift to the popular Sai Kung Country Park Visitor Centre.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Department's (AFD) acting Assistant Director (Conservation and Country Parks), Mr Wong Fook-yee, said the department was extremely grateful to the Charities Trust for the grant, adding that country park visitors would stand to benefit.

Mr Wong said the donation would be used to upgrade facilities and exhibits in the centre with a view to giving it new impetus and innovative themes.

"The existing displays at the centre, which were installed 10 years ago and have since not been replaced, are now showing signs of deterioration. Some of the information in the displays is out-dated and needs updating," he said. The Trust's generous donation could not have come at a time more appropriate than this, he added.

He said the Sai Kung Country Park Visitor Centre was one of the more popular centres in Hong Kong with more than 200,000 visitors recorded last year.

Apart from this one, there are six other visitor centres in the territory. They are located in country parks in Aberdeen, Tai Mo Shan, Clear Water Bay, Shing Mun and Plover Cove as well as in the Lions Nature Education Centre in Tsiu Hang, Sai Kung.

Country park visitor centres are open to the public daily except Tuesdays, between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm.

No advance booking is required for visiting these centres. But organised groups which need information for planning visits to these centres can contact AFD's Conservation Education Unit on 2733 2121.

End/Saturday, August 5, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($ million)
Opening balance in the account	2,301	09:30	NIL
Closing balance in the account	1,541	10:00	NIL
Change attributable to:		11:00	NIL
Money market activity	NIL	11:30	NIL
LAF today	-760	15:00	

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 119.7 *+0.1* 5.8.95

End/Saturday, August 5, 1995

Public housing estates outside Building Department's ambit

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It would not be appropriate for the Buildings Department to include public housing estates in its quality audit because buildings under the management of the Housing Authority are exempt from the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance.

The Housing Ordinance empowers the Housing Authority to manage and construct public housing estates.

This was stated by a spokesman of the Buildings Department this (Sunday) morning in response to a petition by a residents concern group from the Valley Road Estate to the Director of Buildings, Mrs Helen Yu, calling on her to include public housing blocks in the department's inspection programme.

The spokesman, however, said Mrs Yu did appreciate the group's concern, and had referred its views to the Director of Housing for her attention.

On the matter of standards of building inspections by building professionals, the spokesman said the method and criteria for structural assessment of danger would be similar, whether carried out by the staff of the Housing Department or the Buildings Department.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Housing Department pointed out that part of the Valley Road Estate had already been included in the Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme, and re-iterated that the Housing Authority would implement a special programme to provide better maintenance and repairs service for all the older estates included in the redevelopment programme.

Under the special repair programme, the Housing Department would undertake comprehensive inspection of flat conditions instead of relying on tenants' complaints and reports. The assessment result would be frequently reviewed to ensure that remedial action could be taken immediately if building safety suddenly deteriorated, the spokesman added.

End/Sunday, August 6, 1995

34 dangerous hillsides notices issued in six months

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A total of 34 dangerous hillsides notices had been served by the Buildings Department to owners of private slopes during the first six months of this year compared with 31 for last year, the department's Assistant Director, Mr Mike Green, said today (Sunday).

He said the notices were issued under the Buildings Ordinance on the advice of the Geotechnical Engineering Office of the Civil Engineering Department to safeguard the public and bring private slopes and retaining walls up to the required safety standard.

"These notices require the owners to appoint an authorised professional to investigate the stability of the slopes in question, to design and supervise the necessary landslip preventive works, to monitor stability until completion of the remedial works and to give warning of impending danger if necessary," he said.

Last year, 12 notices were complied with by owners, and a further six notices were complied with in the first six months of this year although not all of them were issued during these periods. In addition, last year the government contractors had carried out remedial works in the owners' default respect of five notices issued.

Mr Green said an owner who failed to comply with the dangerous hillsides notice would be liable to prosecution and, on conviction, to a fine of $50,000 and imprisonment for one year.

"He is also liable to a further fine of $5,000 per day for the period during which the failure to comply with the notice continued," he added.

Mr Green stressed that even after a notice had been complied with, continuing vigilance by the owners was necessary to ensure the slope remained safe.

"Every slope and retaining wall must be regularly inspected and any maintenance works must be undertaken timely by the owners," he said.

He also urged owners to ensure all drains, surface water channels on slopes and weepholes in retaining walls are kept clear and free of debris.

"All buried services including underground drains and water supplying pipes should also be examined for signs of leakage or water flow," he added.

End/Sunday, August 6, 1995

Secondary 6 admission begins on Tuesday

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The Education Department this year has streamlined secondary 6 admission procedures and stepped up the publicity in helping Secondary 5 students apply for about 23,500 S6 places when the results of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) are released on Tuesday (August 8).

To lessen students' anxiety and avoid schools from violating the rules, the five-stage admission procedures have been shortened from 11 to nine working days.

In order to give wider publicity and to make it more convenient to students, the department will provide the media with a floppy diskette containing a list of schools with vacancies at Stage II (August 9) and Stage IV (August 11). Some newspapers have indicated that they will publish the lists on these two days.

The list with S6 vacancies in Stage II and Stage IV will also be displayed at all District Education Offices throughout the territory as in previous years.

A spokesman for the Education Department said: "From August 8 to August 18, a central hotline manned by education officers and educational psychologists will be set up for students seeking advice and clarification about the admission procedures. "Educational psychologists are on hand to receive calls from anxious students."

The central hotline numbers are 2782 7511, 2782 7625 and 2782 7639-40. They will be operating from 9 am to 1 pm and from 2 pm to 5 pm from Monday to Friday and 9 am to noon on Saturday.

The five-stage admission procedures are as follows:

* Stage I, August 8: students with 14 points or more (best six subjects in one sitting) can apply to own or linked school before 3.30 pm and successful candidates should register with the schools on the same day.

* Stage II, August 9: students including evening schools and private candidates who have obtained 14 points or more but cannot secure a place can apply to other schools and successful candidates should register with the schools on the same day.

* Stage III, August 10: students satisfying minimum A-level entry requirements (six subjects in grade E or above or five subjects on no less than eight points in one sitting) can apply to own or linked schools. Successful candidates should register with the schools on the same day.

* Stage IV, August 11: students with minimum A-level requirements can apply other schools. Successful candidates should register with the schools on the same day.

* Stage V:

  1) August 14: current year HKCEE participants with minimum A-level entry requirements may apply for central allocation.

  2) August 18: results of central allocation will be displayed at specified centres and successful candidates should register with the schools on the same day.

If students meeting the minimum A-level requirements are still unable to secure an S6 place after the completion of Stage V, they may be able to get one at the beginning of the new school year because some successful students may decide not to take up their places.

A list of these vacancies will be displayed and updated weekly at all District Education Offices up to the end of September. Applications should be made to these schools direct but admission will be entirely at the discretion of the school authorities.

The spokesman said a summary table together with the admission procedures leaflet containing addresses and telephones of 19 District Education Offices had been distributed to students in March this year.

He said additional copies of the leaflet and summary table were available at the District Education Offices.

Students can also obtain information on the procedures by using the department's 24-hour automatic telephone enquiry service 2891 0088.

End/Sunday, August 6, 1995

Young electors urged to cast clean votes

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The Chairman of the Boundary and Election Commission (BEC), Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing, today (Sunday) reminded young electors not to accept any advantage from candidates and their supporters as an inducement to vote for them in the Legislative Council elections.

"You must not accept such advantage," Mr Justice Woo said.

Speaking at the opening of Youth Zone - Election Carnival organised by the Sha Tin District Electoral Education Committee, Mr Justice Woo said advantages could be in the form of money, presents or meals, warning young electors about possible undue influences.

"While school supervisors, principals or teachers are free to support any candidate they prefer, they must not exert undue influence on students or staff. "The same applies to candidates who are themselves school supervisors, principals or teachers," he said.

He pointed out that bribery, treating, and undue influence were serious offences under the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Ordinance.

The Chairman stressed that the BEC's task was to ensure that elections were conducted fairly, openly and honestly.

"This cannot succeed without public support," he said, encouraging youngsters to report any breaches of the election laws and guidelines to the BEC's Complaints Committee, the Police or the ICAC. Mr Justice Woo also reminded young electors to exercise their civic rights by voting in the coming elections.

"By casting your vote, you will have a say in how the government is run," he said.

More than 100,000 people aged under 21 have registered as electors since the voting age was lowered to 18 last year, which represents a registration rate of over 65 per cent.

End/Sunday, August 6, 1995

New video programme to beat drugs

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A new video programme targeted at parents on the handling of drug problems among their children is being produced as one of the latest efforts of the Government's Beat Drugs Campaign.

The video is produced by the Task Group on Production of Video Programme on Parental Support in Handling Drug Problems under the Working Group on Services for Youth at Risk.

The Convenor of the task group, Miss Johanna Tsao, said today (Sunday) the production of the video was aimed at promoting parental understanding on drug misuse and early detection on signs of drug abuse. A sum of $0.48 million has been allocated from the Lotteries Fund to finance the production of the video in both Chinese and English versions.

"Parents can do a great deal to prevent young people from abusing drugs as well as helping their children to quit drugs by showing their concern and support.

"We hope the new video will increase parents' awareness of drug abuse among youngsters and strengthen their ability to help in case their children get involved in drug taking," Miss Tsao said.

The content of the new video illustrates how the parents of three teenagers become aware of their children's involvement in drug abuse and how they assist them to rehabilitate. The stories are based on real cases.

Miss Tsao said the production of the video formed part of the Government's strategy to combat the growing drug problem among young people. There were 3,512 such cases reported in 1994, representing an increase of 37.9 per cent over 2,547 in 1993. Filming for the new video has been completed and post-filming production is in full swing.

Upon completion, copies of the video will be distributed to primary and secondary schools, agencies handling drug rehabilitation programmes, welfare agencies rendering services to youth and government departments concerned later this year.

"It is hoped that these outlets can drive home the anti-drug message to parents as well as young people.

"Parents who suspect their children have got involved in any kind of drug abuse should seek professional advice from social workers or contact the Social Welfare Department's hotline on telephone 2343 2255," she added.

End/Sunday, August 6, 1995

Application for scholarship invited

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Children of farming and fishing families in need of financial assistance to complete their secondary education are reminded to apply early for the Agricultural Products and Marine Fish Scholarship Funds.

A spokesman for the Agriculture and Fisheries Department said applications for the scholarships and grants will close on August 16.

Application forms are obtainable from the department's headquarters on the 12th floor of Canton Road Government Offices, 393 Canton Road, Kowloon, and from various district agricultural and fisheries liaison offices. Applicants must be students in forms 4 to 7 and the awards can be tenable at any secondary school in Hong Kong.

Scholarships may be awarded to students who have achieved a standard of academic excellence, the spokesman said.

"Students may also apply for grants to cover tuition fees and purchase of books. Such submissions will be considered on a financial need basis," he added.

Enquiries about application procedures may be directed to the Secretary of the Agricultural Products and Marine Fish Scholarship Funds Advisory Committee on 2733 2244.

End/Sunday, August 6, 1995

Water cuts in Yau Ma Tei, Sham Shui Po and Mong Kok

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Yau Ma Tei will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (August 9) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains leakage detection.

The suspension will affect all the premises bounded by Kansu Street, Ferry Street, Jordan Road and Canton Road.

Meanwhile, flushing water supply to all premises in Sham Shui Po and Mong Kok will also be temporarily cut off from 9 am on Thursday (August 10) to 7 pm the next day to allow for water mains connection.

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