



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1994

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
ACCESS ROAD IN KWAI CHUNG OPEN TO TRAFFIC	1
FRESH WATER CUT ON TSING YI ISLAND	1

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1994

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
GROWTH RATE IN YOUTH DRUG ABUSE SLOWING	2
\$10 GOLD COIN ON SALE THIS WEEK	3
NEW EX-GRATIA SCHEME HELPS DECEASED WORKERS' DEPENDENTS	4
PREGNANT WORKERS PROTECTED BY LAW	4
REPORT CHILD ABUSE, PAMPHLET SAYS	6

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1994

- 1 -

ACCESS ROAD IN KWAI CHUNG OPEN TO TRAFFIC
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THE NEW ACCESS ROAD LINKING THE WESTBOUND SLIP ROAD LEADING FROM CHING CHEUNG ROAD WITH THE SLIP ROAD LEADING TO PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL INTERCHANGE (NEAR CONTAINER TERMINAL 4) WILL BE OPENED TO TRAFFIC FROM 10 AM ON MONDAY (JANUARY 3), THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED.

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FRESH WATER CUT ON TSING YI ISLAND
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FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO SOME PREMISES ON TSING YI ISLAND WILL GO OFF FROM 8 PM ON MONDAY (JANUARY 3) TO 6 AM THE NEXT DAY TO FACILITATE CONNECTION WORK ON WATER MAINS.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT GREENFIELD GARDEN AND ALL THE PREMISES AT TSING YI HEUNG SZE WUI ROAD, CHEUNG WAN STREET, CHEUNG HO STREET, CHEUNG LUNG STREET, CHEUNG FAI ROAD, CHEUNG TAT ROAD AND CHEUNG FAT ROAD.

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GROWTH RATE IN YOUTH DRUG ABUSE SLOWING

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THE GROWTH RATE IN DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS SEEMS TO BE SLOWING, DESPITE A DROP IN RETAIL PRICE OF HEROIN.

"YET WE CANNOT AFFORD TO GROW COMPLACENT, WE MUST STRIVE CONSTANTLY FOR NEW AND MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS OF PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF ILLICIT DRUGS WHICH ARE A TERRIBLE MENACE TO OUR SOCIETY," THE COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS, MR ALASDAIR SINCLAIR, SAID.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT THE ANTI-DRUG CARNIVAL ORGANISED BY THE YOUTH VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS THIS (SUNDAY) MORNING AT THE KOWLOON PARK PIAZZA, TSIM SHA TSUI.

ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL FIGURES, THE NUMBER OF NEWLY REPORTED YOUNG ABUSERS WAS UP BY 55 PER CENT IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF LAST YEAR COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD IN 1992.

MR SINCLAIR ATTRIBUTED THIS ALARMING PERCENTAGE INCREASE AT LEAST IN PART TO A 17 PER CENT DROP IN THE RETAIL PRICE OF HEROIN.

"FALLING PRICES ALWAYS STIMULATE DEMAND," HE SAID.

"BUT WE CAN TAKE SOME COMFORT FROM THE FACTS THAT THE GROWTH RATE IN YOUNG DRUG ABUSE WAS ONLY 24 PER CENT IN THE THREE MONTHS FROM JULY TO SEPTEMBER."

AND THAT MORE THAN 99.7 PER CENT OF THE AGE GROUP BETWEEN 11 AND 20 HAS NO KNOWN INVOLVEMENT WITH DRUGS.

"OUR PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES CAN CLAIM PART OF THE CREDIT FOR THE LOW PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN HONG KONG," HE REMARKED.

"WE PUT A LOT OF EFFORT INTO THIS WORK."

"IT IS SO MUCH BETTER TO STOP PEOPLE FROM BEING CAUGHT UP IN THE MISERY OF DRUG ADDICTION, WHICH IS SO DIFFICULT TO END," MR SINCLAIR ADDED.

LOOKING BACK OVER 1993, ON TOP OF ANTI-DRUG DISTRICT CAMPAIGNS AND ACTIVITIES, THE NARCOTICS DIVISION HAD MADE HUNDREDS OF SCHOOL VISITS, ORGANISED DRUG EDUCATION SEMINARS FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AND FINAL-YEAR STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION.

THE AUTOMATED DRUG ABUSE TELEPHONE HOTLINE HAD ALSO RECEIVED NEARLY 370,000 ENQUIRIES ON HARMFUL EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE, AS WELL AS GUIDANCE ON TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES.

\$10 GOLD COIN ON SALE THIS WEEK

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PROSPECTIVE BUYERS OF A STRICTLY LIMITED EDITION OF THE HONG KONG COMMEMORATIVE \$10 GOLD COIN, WHICH IS OF GREAT INTRINSIC VALUE AND HISTORICAL INTEREST, ARE REMINDED TO APPLY FOR A SINGLE PURCHASE WITHIN THIS WEEK.

"SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, THE BRITISH ROYAL MINT HAS STRUCK A LIMITED EDITION OF JUST 20,000 OF THESE COINS," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY SAID.

"THEY ARE BEING MADE AVAILABLE IN SMALL QUANTITIES TO COLLECTORS AROUND THE WORLD, WITH A MAJORITY OF 18,000 RESERVED FOR HONG KONG RESIDENTS. NO FURTHER SUCH COINS WILL BE STRUCK," HE ADDED.

AS DEMAND IS EXPECTED TO BE HIGH, EVERY APPLICANT MAY GET ONLY ONE COIN. A BALLOT WILL BE HELD IF THE COINS ARE OVER-SUBSCRIBED.

"IT IS THE FIRST-EVER TWO-GOLD ALLOY COIN IN THE HISTORY OF HONG KONG'S COINAGE, AND COMMEMORATES THE INTRODUCTION OF HONG KONG'S NEW COIN DESIGNS PRIOR TO 1997," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IT FEATURES THE BLOOM OF ONE OF HONG KONG'S MOST BEAUTIFUL ORNAMENTAL TREES, THE BAUHINIA BLAKEANA, WHICH WAS SELECTED AS HONG KONG'S OFFICIAL EMBLEM IN 1965.

"THIS COIN IS OF THE SAME SIZE AND DESIGN AS THE NEW HK\$10 COIN WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED INTO GENERAL CIRCULATION LATER THIS YEAR.

"BUT THERE THE SIMILARITY ENDS, BECAUSE THE OUTER RING OF THIS RARE ISSUE IS CAST IN A BLEND OF NINE-CARAT GOLD WITH THE BALANCE IN SILVER, WHILST THE CENTRE SECTION CONSISTS OF 22-CARAT GOLD," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE GOLD COIN WAS ALSO LEGAL TENDER IN HONG KONG.

THE \$10 GOLD COIN, DATED 1994, IS PRICED AT \$2,888. CONTAINED IN AN ATTRACTIVE RED PRESENTATION CASE WITH A CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY, IT IS BOTH A GOLDEN ASSET FOR THE FUTURE AND A GIFT TO TREASURE.

THOSE INTERESTED IN THE GOLD COIN SHOULD COLLECT THE APPLICATION FORMS BETWEEN TOMORROW (MONDAY) AND SATURDAY (JANUARY 8) FROM DISTRICT OFFICES AND THE 10 HONGKONGBANK BRANCHES IN THE HONG KONG MAIN OFFICE, CHINA BUILDING, WAYFOONG HOUSE, AT DES VOEUX ROAD WEST, PATERSON STREET, AND IN KWUN TONG, MONG KOK, NORTH POINT, TSUEN WAN AND YUEN LONG.

COMPLETED FORMS TOGETHER WITH A BANKER'S CASHIER ORDER OR A CROSSED CHEQUE MUST BE RETURNED TO ONE OF THESE DESIGNATED HONGKONGBANK BRANCHES BEFORE 12.30 PM ON SATURDAY. THE COINS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED FROM JANUARY 31 (MONDAY) ONWARDS.

ALL NET PROCEEDS FROM THE SALES WILL BE USED TO SUPPORT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, SELECTED PROJECTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1994

- 4 -

NEW EX-GRATIA SCHEME HELPS DECEASED WORKERS' DEPENDENTS

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A NEW EX-GRATIA SCHEME HAS BEEN SET UP TO PROVIDE QUICK RELIEF FOR DEPENDENTS OF VICTIMS OF FATAL WORK ACCIDENTS, A HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (SUNDAY).

THE SCHEME, IMPLEMENTED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, IS FINANCED BY THE BREWIN TRUST FUND.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE TRUST FUND, WHICH IS CHARITABLE IN NATURE AND MANAGED BY THE BRANCH, HAD PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED INTEREST-FREE LOANS FOR THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF EMPLOYEES WHO DIED IN WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS.

BUT WITH THE RECENT INTRODUCTION OF A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUND PROVIDING SIMILAR RELIEF, THE BREWIN TRUST FUND COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO INTRODUCE THE EX-GRATIA PAYMENT SCHEME TO REPLACE THE LOAN SCHEME.

UNDER THE NEW SCHEME, EACH ELIGIBLE APPLICANT WILL BE OFFERED AN EX-GRATIA CASH GRANT OF \$5,000.

THE APPLICANTS SHOULD BE THE SURVIVING WIVES AND CHILDREN OF EMPLOYEES WHO DIE ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1 THIS YEAR AS A RESULT OF THE WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS.

MOREOVER, THEY SHOULD BE WHOLLY OR PARTLY DEPENDENT UPON THE EARNINGS OF THE DECEASED AT THE TIME OF HIS OR HER DEATH.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE MADE WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF THE DEATH OF THE EMPLOYEES, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

ALL APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE FATAL CASES OFFICE, EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION DIVISION, LABOUR DEPARTMENT, ROOM 1522, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL.

ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE OF THE OFFICE IN PERSON OR BY CALLING 852 4030.

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PREGNANT WORKERS PROTECTED BY LAW

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT REMINDED EMPLOYERS THAT IT WAS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE TO FIRE A WOMAN WORKER AFTER SHE HAD GIVEN TO THE MANAGEMENT A NOTICE OF HER INTENTION TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE.

THE CHIEF LABOUR OFFICER, MR JAMES YEUNG, GAVE THE ADVICE TODAY (SUNDAY) AFTER A COMPANY - THE NEIL PRYDE LIMITED - WAS CONVICTED AND FINED \$5,000 BY A TUEN MUN MAGISTRATE FOR SACKING A PREGNANT WORKER.

/THE CASE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1994

- 5 -

THE CASE CAME TO LIGHT AFTER A COMPLAINT WAS LODGED TO THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE (LRS) IN APRIL LAST YEAR.

FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION BY LRS OFFICERS, A SUMMONS WAS LAID AGAINST THE COMPANY FOR VIOLATING THE PROVISIONS RELATING TO MATERNITY PROTECTION OF THE ORDINANCE.

THE LAW PROVIDES THAT A WOMAN WORKER IS PROTECTED FROM TERMINATION OF HER EMPLOYMENT DURING THE PERIOD FROM THE DATE ON WHICH SHE GIVES NOTICE OF HER INTENTION TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE UNTIL THE DATE ON WHICH SHE IS DUE TO RETURN TO WORK, IF SHE HAS BEEN EMPLOYED FOR NOT LESS THAN 12 WEEKS.

IT ALSO PROVIDES THAT A WOMAN EMPLOYEE WHO HAS WORKED FOR THE SAME EMPLOYER UNDER A CONTINUOUS CONTRACT FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN 26 WEEKS IS ENTITLED TO MATERNITY LEAVE.

"IF A FEMALE WORKER HAS WORKED CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE EMPLOYER FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN 40 WEEKS BEFORE THE EXPECTED DATE OF HER COMMENCEMENT OF MATERNITY LEAVE AND SHE HAS NO MORE THAN TWO SURVIVING CHILDREN, SHE IS ALSO ENTITLED TO MATERNITY LEAVE PAY," HE SAID.

THE MATERNITY LEAVE PAY IS CALCULATED AT THE RATE OF TWO-THIRDS OF HER MONTHLY SALARY.

"IF A FEMALE WORKER IS EMPLOYED ON PIECE RATE OR WHERE HER DAILY WAGES VARY FROM DAY TO DAY, THE RATE IS TWO-THIRDS OF HER DAILY AVERAGE WAGE DURING EVERY COMPLETE WAGE PERIOD, COMPRISING NOT LESS THAN 28 DAYS AND NOT MORE THAN 31 DAYS, PRECEDING THE LEAVE.

IN ADDITION, EMPLOYERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PAY WAGES IN LIEU OF MATERNITY LEAVE, HE ADDED.

MR YEUNG SAID EMPLOYERS BREACHING THE PROVISIONS WOULD BE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$10,000.

"THE EMPLOYER WILL ALSO HAVE TO PAY THE SUM WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN PAYABLE IF THE CONTRACT HAS BEEN TERMINATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS TERMS, THE MATERNITY LEAVE PAY FOR 10 WEEKS AND A FURTHER SUM EQUIVALENT TO SEVEN DAYS' WAGES."

TO HELP WORKERS UNDERSTAND THE MATERNITY PROTECTION PROVISIONS, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED COPIES OF A LEAFLET FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION AT THE LRS OFFICES.

INCLUDED IN THE LEAFLET IS A STANDARD FORM OF NOTICE, SPECIFYING THE EXPECTED DATE OF CONFINEMENT AND THE DATE ON WHICH THE MATERNITY LEAVE IS TO START, TO HELP EMPLOYEES COMPLY WITH THEIR OBLIGATION UNDER THE ORDINANCE, HE SAID.

THERE IS ALSO A DECLARATION FORM TO HELP WOMAN WORKERS MAKE STATUTORY DECLARATION TO VERIFY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN THEY HAVE IN ORDER TO CLAIM MATERNITY LEAVE PAY.

TO AVOID UNNECESSARY MISUNDERSTANDING AND DISPUTES, EMPLOYEES INTENDING TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE SHOULD CONSIDER USING THE STANDARD FORM OF NOTICE AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, HE ADDED.

/MR YEUNG

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1994

- 6 -

MR YEUNG ALSO URGED PREGNANT WORKERS TO MAKE DECLARATION, USING THE ATTACHED FORM IN THE LEAFLET, AT THE 11 LRS OFFICES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THIS IS BECAUSE THEY MUST PRODUCE TO THEIR EMPLOYERS A STATUTORY DECLARATION VERIFYING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AT THE TIME WHEN THE NOTICE OF INTENTION TO TAKE LEAVE IS SERVED.

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REPORT CHILD ABUSE, PAMPHLET SAYS

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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TODAY (SUNDAY) APPEALED TO THE PUBLIC TO REPORT CHILD ABUSES THAT COME TO LIGHT.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID PAMPHLETS HAD BEEN RE-PRINTED TO HELP PUBLICISE EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE CASES.

NAMED "REPORT CHILD ABUSE", THE PAMPHLETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COLLECTION AT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S FAMILY SERVICE CENTRES.

COPIES ARE ALSO DISTRIBUTED THROUGH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE POLICE, HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT.

REPORTS ON CHILD ABUSE CAN BE MADE ON THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HOTLINE - 343 2255 AND THE AGAINST CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE - 755 1122.

"ACTION MAY NOT ONLY SAVE A CHILD BUT ALSO HELP THE FAMILY BY BRINGING THEIR DIFFICULTIES TO THE ATTENTION OF AUTHORITIES WHO MAY BE IN A POSITION TO HELP THEM," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT REPORTING SUCH CASES WAS NOT MEDDLING IN THE AFFAIRS OF A FAMILY.

"WHEN IT IS FELT THAT THE DISCIPLINE IMPOSED ON A CHILD IS EXCESSIVE, GOOD INTENTIONS NOTWITHSTANDING, ONE SHOULD ACT WITHOUT HESITATION," HE ADDED.

TO HELP THE PUBLIC UNDERSTAND GENUINE CHILD ABUSE CASES BETTER, THE PAMPHLET GIVES A DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND DESCRIBES SIGNS TO HELP DETECT SUCH CASES.

IN ADDITION TO THE HOTLINE NUMBERS, THE PAMPHLET ALSO LISTS OUT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SERVICE UNITS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WHERE ONE MAY SEEK HELP.

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