



## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**Saturday, October 19, 1996**

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Bilateral repurchase agreement signed

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The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) jointly announced that a bilateral repurchase (repo) agreement between the two institutions has been signed today (Saturday) in Hong Kong.

The bilateral repo agreement with the MAS is HKMA's seventh such agreement. The HKMA has earlier signed bilateral repo agreements with central banks from Australia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. The MAS has earlier entered into such agreements with central banks from the region.

A bilateral repo agreement is the simultaneous agreement to buy securities for an agreed amount of cash and to sell back the same securities at a specific later date for a specified amount. Highly liquid US dollar Government securities are the instruments used in all the repo agreements signed between the HKMA and regional central banks.

Entering into these well secured agreements with central banks, whose credit standing are generally higher than those of private sector banks, would improve liquidity of the central banks under minimal risk.

End

Electrical workers reminded of registration deadline

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The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (Saturday) urged electrical workers who intend to qualify to be registered as Grade A electrical workers by experience only to do so as soon as possible as the deadline for submitting applications is November 1.

At present, an applicant is qualified to register under this grade if he satisfies the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (DEMS) that he has been employed as an electrical worker for at least six years, of which at least one year includes practical experience in electrical work.

"From November 2 onwards, whoever wishes to apply for registration as a Grade A electrical worker will have to, apart from having sufficient working experience in electrical work, possess the required academic qualifications or pass the Grade A Trade Test approved by the DEMS," said a spokesman for the department.

Meanwhile, the spokesman said, under the registration scheme, there are also Grade B and Grade C electrical workers who could perform more complex low voltage electrical work.

Any worker without formal academic qualifications who wishes to be qualified for registration as a Grade B or C electrical worker is required to pass an examination approved or set by the DEMS.

The examination for registration as a Grade B worker is held regularly twice a year by the Hong Kong Examinations Authority while the examination for registration as a Grade C worker, jointly organised by the Hong Kong University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University, is held regularly once a year.

"A candidate who has passed the examination will still have to fulfil the electrical work experience requirement as laid down in the Electricity (Registration) Regulations if he wishes to apply for registration as a Grade B or C electrical worker," he said.

The spokesman added that in accordance with the Electricity Ordinance, all electrical workers engaged in electrical work on fixed electrical installations after June 1, 1992 had to register with EMSD.

"This is to ensure that electrical work is done only by qualified electrical workers to improve electrical safety.

"So far, about 49,000 qualified electrical workers have been registered." he added.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ Million</u>	<u>Time (Hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative Change (\$ Million)</u>
Opening Balance in the account	2,673	09:30	-450
Closing Balance in the account	2,098	10:00	-450
Change Attributable to:		11:00	-450
Money Market Activity	- 450	11:30	-450
Laf Today	- 125		

Laf Rate 4% Bid/6% Offer TWI 124.9 \*-0.1\* 19.10.96

End

Education Department's commitments will be honoured

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Candidates in previous cycles of the Non-graduate Teacher Qualifications Assessment (NGTQA) Scheme have been assured that the Education Department will continue to honour its commitments after the discontinuation of the scheme on completion of the 1997 cycle.

The commitments include supervised teaching practice for candidates who have passed all three parts of the assessment, and resitting arrangements for eligible candidates who failed the English Language Proficiency Test, the English Oral Proficiency Test, and/or one subject examination.

Completion of these commitments is expected to take two to four years.

Meanwhile, the department shares the view of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications that to improve the quality of education in schools, there should be in place an all-trained profession familiar with local curriculum development and with the needs of local students.

The department considers that holders of overseas qualifications intending to enter the teaching profession should receive local teacher training.

In this regard, there are various teacher education course or degree courses currently run by local tertiary institutes such as the Open Learning Institute and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, upon completion of which potential NGTQA candidates can join the teaching profession in the territory.

A working group set up to review the NGTQA Scheme has found it difficult to justify the continuation of the Scheme which is of interest to a small group of people only and which is set against a climate in which the demand for trained non-graduate primary school teachers is not acute and avenues for entry into the local teaching profession are not absent.

Applications for the last cycle of the NGTQA Scheme will be invited in mid-November. Details will be announced separately.

End

### Schools reminded on homework and test policy

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The Education Department considers it very important that learning in school should be a pleasant and rewarding experience and that no student should receive undue pressure from excessive homework and tests.

A principal curriculum planning officer, Mr Tang Chee-poon, said the department has been issuing a series of circulars on the teaching of school subjects and on homework and tests in school to obtain teachers' support and co-operation.

Guidelines and a circular re-issued by the department reiterated that homework should be properly designed and regulated and that assignments should be reasonably balanced in terms of quantity.

"School heads are also reminded of their responsibility in supervising and regulating the type, frequency and amount of homework set for each class," Mr Tang said.

"In view of the wide variation in pupils' learning needs, abilities and home environment, there are no hard-and-fast rules about the frequency, amount and type of homework which should be set at each class level."

This is a matter on which teachers are expected to exercise professional judgement and common sense, he said.

"However, it is important that each school should have a written homework policy drawn up in consultation with teaching staff and review it regularly."

Education Department area staff will advise and assist schools in drawing up the homework and test policy.

During visits to schools, they will note the measures taken. The written homework and test policy should be made available to them upon request.

The department's subject inspectors will also offer professional assistance with the quality and frequency of homework during school visits.

"Schools are advised that frequency of assignments will be best controlled by a homework time-table ensuring an even spread of homework over the week or teaching cycle and a balanced coverage of subjects," Mr Tang said.

The guidelines strongly recommend that, particularly at the primary and junior secondary levels, teachers should maintain proper co-ordination and should be given clear instructions on the frequency, amount to be set and the subjects to be covered, and that due recognition should be given at all times to the ages and abilities of pupils.

Assessments and tests can also cause anxiety and undue pressure, especially if they are administered too frequently or the learning material to be tested is too wide or too difficult.

The number of tests administered each week should be strictly controlled.

Mr Tang urged parents to step up communication with schools in respect to the appropriateness of the amount of homework through such channels as parent-teacher associations and School Management Initiatives.

End

#### Environmental improvement campaign in Yau Tsim Mong

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Residents in Yau Tsim Mong district have been urged to participate more in clean-up operations and environmental improvement activities to make the district a cleaner and healthier place to live.

Officiating at the Yau Tsim Mong Environmental Improvement Campaign 1996-97 opening ceremony today (Sunday), Yau Tsim Mong District Officer Bart Ireland said all residents deserved to live in a clean district but they must do their part to make it possible.

Mr Ireland said the Environmental Improvement Campaign was one of the most important events organised each year by the Board's Environment Committee to encourage residents' participation in environmental improvement activities.

The three-month campaign will include seminars on environmental protection and horticulture; visits to Sai Kung Lions Nature Trail and Lantau Island; a sort-and-recycle programme; demolition of abandoned signboards and year-end clean-up exercises.

He also paid tributes to Yau Tsim Mong District Board, the Urban Council, Friends of the Earth, Duty Free Shoppers HK Limited and relevant Government departments for their support in making the event a success.

Also attending the ceremony was Yau Tsim Mong DB Chairman Chow Chun-fai.

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### Anti-drugs camp for students a success

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More than 100 secondary school students unanimously said "no" to drugs after they learned of its adverse effects at a two-day camp in Lei Yue Mun.

The event, jointly organised by the Wan Chai District Fight Crime Committee, the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers and Wan Chai District Office, was held at Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village.

The participants gained a better understanding of drugs and the adverse effects of drug abuse through video shows, role-play, games and group discussions. A former drug abuser spoke of his personal ordeal as a drug addict.

Speaking at a closing ceremony today (Sunday), the chairman of a working group under the Wan Chai District Fight Crime Committee, Mr Charles Koo, hoped the participants would help to spread the beat drugs message to their friends. He also urged them to take part in an anti-narcotics concert to be held by the working group and Metro Radio on January 18 next year.

End

### Fresh water cut in Tsim Sha Tsui and Ngau Tau Kok

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The fresh water supply to some premises in Ngau Tau Kok and Tsim Sha Tsui will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (October 23) to 6 am the following day for waste detection work on watermains.

In Ngau Tau Kok, the suspension will affect all premises in the area bounded by Kwun Tong Road, Elegance Road, Ngau Tau Kok Road and Sheung Yee Road.

In Tsim Sha Tsui, the suspension will affect all premises in the area bounded by Peking Road, Kowloon Park Drive, Salisbury Road and the sea front of Salisbury Road.

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### Survey on implementation of new sixth form curriculum

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A survey revealed that the new sixth form curriculum was most warmly received by the students and least by teachers.

On the other hand, the principals requested that more support should be given to schools.

The new sixth form curriculum with 22 revised Advanced Level (AL) and 18 newly-created Advanced Supplementary (AS) Level was introduced in 1992 as recommended by Education Commission Report No 2.

A working group was set up by the Education Department to carry out a research project to find out to what extent schools would introduce the new AS subjects and what problems schools might have in adopting the new curriculum.

Two identical questionnaires were sent to principals, teachers and students in October 1992 and in October 1993 respectively in order to collect their views on the curriculum.

The findings showed that there was a tendency for schools to offer more AS level subjects in 1993/94 school year than in 1992/93.

The biggest difficulty expressed by principals was the deployment of suitable teachers among the existing teaching staff to teach the AL and AS subjects.

On the other hand, teachers were concerned about the readiness of tertiary institutions to accept some subjects as for fulfilment of admission requirements.

The depth of syllabuses to be taught, the availability of suitable textbooks and the way to match students' academic standard were perceived as the major difficulties by teachers.

The lack of understanding about the contents of the AS subjects chosen was a common difficulty faced by students taking the new curriculum.

Addressing these concerns, respondents proposed that there should be more teachers for split-class teaching and teacher training.

They pointed out that more resources should be provided to schools.

Clarification of admission requirements by tertiary institution was also regarded as an important matter.

Based on the findings of the survey, the working group recommended to offer more training courses for teachers, particularly on new subjects.

More support should be given to teachers in the form of model answers, sample examination papers, teaching kits to facilitate their sixth form teaching.

The working group also recommended to publish more reference books written in Chinese, particularly on Mathematics and Statistics (AS), Biology (AL) and Engineering Science (AL).

Copies of the report on the survey had been sent to the tertiary institutions under the University Grant Committee to draw their attention to the public concern of the admission requirements.

End

#### CSD Autumn Fair

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The CSD Autumn Fair, an annual outdoor event known for its scale and atmosphere, will be held at the Stanley football field on November 2 (Saturday) and will mark its 44th anniversary.

This year was especially memorable because it will be the last time that the CSD Autumn Fair will be held in the football field, because the venue will soon be converted into a medium security prison.

The popularity of the quality goods made by prisoners has been one of the main attractions for thousands of people flocking to the fair annually and this year will be no exception.

There will be a variety of products including arts and handicraft items, stuffed toys, rattan and wooden furniture on sale at over 30 stalls.

There will also be entertainment, games stalls and food for sale at numerous other stalls throughout the afternoon.

The proceeds of the fair will be contributed to various charities.

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More philatelic offices to be established

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To better serve stamp collectors, philatelic counters will be set up at 11 new philatelic offices as from November 1, the Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Monday).

They are:

Aberdeen Post Office  
ground floor, Kam Fung Building, J/O Aberdeen Main Road  
Sai On Street, Hong Kong

Cheung Chau Post Office  
ground floor, Regional Council Cheung Chau Complex,  
2 Tai Hing Tai Road, Cheung Chau

Cheung Sha Wan Post Office  
650 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon

Hennessy Road Post Office  
1 Hennessy Road, Hong Kong

Kowloon Central Post Office  
ground floor, 405 Nathan Road, Kowloon

Kowloon City Post Office  
28 Lung Kong Road, Kowloon

Mong Kok Post Office  
first floor, Mong Kok Exchange,  
37 Bute Street, Kowloon

Shau Kei Wan Post Office  
ground floor, Perfect Mount Gardens, 1 Po Man Street,  
Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong

Tai Po Post Office  
Tai Po Government Office Building,  
ground floor, Ting Kok Road, Tai Po, New Territories

Tuen Mun Central Post Office  
Podium Level, Library and Post Office Building,  
1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories

Yuen Long Post Office  
51-53 Sau Fu Street, Yuen Long, New Territories

"This will bring the total number of philatelic offices to 19," said Mr Footman.

"By extending the philatelic network, we aim to better serve the stamp collectors."

The existing eight philatelic offices are at the General Post Office, the Harcourt Road Post Office, the Peak Post Office, the Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office, the Granville Road Post Office, the Sha Tin Central Post Office, the Tsuen Wan Post Office and the Airport Post Office.

Stamps and philatelic products of Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia and Singapore as well as selected philatelic products of China, Australia and United States Postal Service will be available for sale at these new offices.

The philatelic pictorial datestamp for each new philatelic office incorporates the usual Philatelic Bureau 'Junk' design and individual office code. They will be used for cancellation of souvenir covers and mail items posted in the special posting boxes in these offices.

A hand-back service applying the pictorial datestamps will be provided on November 1 at these 11 philatelic offices for any locally addressed covers bearing the 'First Day' indication.

End

#### Fresh water cut in Tsuen Wan

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The fresh water supply to some premises in Tsuen Wan will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Thursday (October 24) to 6 am the following day for waste detection work on watermains.

The suspension will affect all premises in the area bounded by Route Twisk from Kwong Pan Tin San Tsuen to Fu Yung Shan Road and Fu Yung Shan Road including Kwong Pan Tin Tsuen, Pak Tin Pa San Tsuen, Fu Yung Shan and San Tsuen.

End

Flushing water cut in Tai Po

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The flushing water supply to some premises in Tai Po will be temporarily suspended from 9 pm on Thursday (October 24) to 6 am the following day for waste detection work on watermains.

The suspension will affect all premises in Hong Lok Yuen.

End