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## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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### Efforts to promote healthy lifestyle stepped up

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The Government aims to complete by 1998 a comprehensive review of the health care system to address the problem of escalating medical costs and to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness of the system, the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, informed the Health Services Panel of the Legislative Council this (Monday) afternoon.

Elaborating on the health policy initiatives for the year ahead, the Secretary spelt out the three objectives of the review :

- \* examine the relationship between primary, secondary and tertiary health care to strike an appropriate balance;
- \* review the respective roles of the public and private sectors in the provision of health care services, and the interface between them; and
- \* study options for financing Hong Kong's health care services, including the introduction of medical insurance and savings schemes.

She assured members of the Panel that regular reports would be made to keep them informed of progress on this matter.

On the preventive front, Mrs Fok noted that the Government had embarked on an ambitious programme for school children to prevent disease and promote a healthy lifestyle.

The Student Health Service has been extended to cover some 450,000 primary school students since September last year, and the School Dental Care Service to provide over 380,000 primary school children with annual dental check-ups.

On AIDS, an Education and Resource Centre will be open towards the end of 1996 and the Government will organise the territory's first AIDS Conference with the Advisory Council on AIDS in November.

Mrs Fok also noted that the Government was on target to complete the construction of North District Hospital and Tseung Kwan O Hospital by mid-1997 and mid-1999 respectively. Planning and design for the final phase of the Castle Peak Hospital redevelopment project is progressing well, she added.

On clinics, the Secretary said ten of the 13 new clinics pledged in 1992 were already in operation. Of the remaining three, one has just been opened at Ma On Shan, the one at Ha Kwai Chung will be ready for commissioned shortly while the one at Tseung Kwan O is due for completion by 1997.

To cater for patients with special needs, Mrs Fok said that starting from the coming year, the Government would provide designated specialist consultation for 2,000 children with psychiatric disorders each year.

Efforts to improve the quality of life for chronically ill patients, asthma patients, patients with chronic spinal conditions, patients with sleep disorders, mentally ill and elderly patients will also be stepped up.

End

#### Objective of reviewing old age allowance clarified

\* \* \* \* \*

The Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, today (Monday) dismissed some wild rumours circulating about what the Government was planning to do on social security, in particular with regard to the old age allowance (OAA).

Reviewing her welfare policy commitments at the Legislative Council Welfare Services Panel, Mrs Fok said: "Let me start by emphasising that our objective in examining the OAA is not, and I repeat not, to cut expenditure.

"Rather, as is the case with any scheme which has been established for some time, the basic objective is to check that the scheme is still operating effectively.

"The review is still in hand and no conclusions have yet been reached. We shall, of course, consult you and other interested parties before any decisions or changes are made."

As regards improvements announced in the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Review which was completed in March, Mrs Fok hoped that by April next year she would be in a position to invite applications from elderly CSSA recipients who wished to continue to receive their CSSA payments while living in Guangdong.

Care for the elderly with spending of over \$10 billion this year remains to be Mrs Fok's top priority. Highlights of some ongoing programmes in this area include:

- \* upgrading the quality of private residential homes by implementing the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance;
- \* developing a computerised integrated waiting list for all residential services for the elderly;
- \* completing four nursing homes next year and the remaining two in the following year providing a total of 1,400 places; and
- \* providing 5,768 more places in care and attention homes by the end of 1997.

While admitting there were slippages in some of these programmes, Mrs Fok stressed that the Government was doing all it could to minimise the delays concerned.

"But I hope you will all give due recognition to the fact that some of these targets are very ambitious even by Hong Kong's standards and the great bulk of them have been met by an enormous joint effort by Government and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerned," she said.

In terms of new initiatives, she looked forward to seeing the new support network pilot scheme being implemented and to the results next year of the study of elderly needs which should set a framework for the future development of services for the elderly.

Turning to rehabilitation programmes, Mrs Fok said the Government aimed to provide an additional 1,800 residential places, 650 sheltered workshop places and 528 day activity centre places by the end of next year.

New amendments to the Mental Health Ordinance dealing with people unfit to plead in criminal proceedings by reason of a mental disability will be effective from November; and more wide ranging amendments, including greatly improved guardianship procedures and separate provisions for people with a mental handicap and a mental disorder, will also be introduced in January.

On child welfare, Mrs Fok pledged to continue to expand day nursery places despite difficulties in finding suitable private premises to purchase for them.

She also spoke on the review of the subvention system for the non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Following consultation with the welfare sector on the "unit grant" approach proposed by the consultants, the Government now proposes to introduce service quality standards in 21 service units in both NGOs and the Social Welfare Department.

"We shall provide training for both NGOs and the department to support the introduction of these standards and the Funding and Service Agreements (or FSAs) which will set them out. We also intend to develop FSAs for the remaining 50 services.

"Since no consensus yet exists on the most appropriate funding arrangement, we shall set up a forum to discuss ideas with the NGO sector with a view to finding an acceptable approach which will meet the objectives of simplicity and flexibility which we all want," Mrs Fok said.

End

#### Finance Branch statement on disabled drivers' tax concession

\* \* \* \* \*

In response to the conclusion drawn by the Office of the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints (COMAC) in respect of a complaint that the current first registration tax concession to disabled drivers should be extended to all disabled persons, irrespective of whether they are fit to drive, a Finance Branch spokesman said:

"The policy intention of the concession is to enhance the mobility of disabled persons who are fit to drive. This was made very clear when the concession was first introduced in 1983, and when we amended the law recently in May to re-affirm the policy intention and clarify the legal position.

"However, this does not mean that disabled persons not fit to drive are neglected or discriminated against."

He pointed out that the Government had provided support to them through:

- \* subvention in full or in part for special child care centres, sheltered workshops, day activity centres, skill centres and residential centres to provide special transport services to the disabled;
- \* development of the territory-wide Rehabus service; and
- \* introduction of the dial-a-ride service, a non-scheduled special personalised transport service taking passengers with a disability to clinics, shops, sport and leisure activities.

"All these measures serve to enhance the mobility of disabled persons.

"We therefore have not proposed to extend the concession to cover disabled persons who are not fit to drive, which may be subject to abuse," said the spokesman, adding that COMAC found no maladministration in the complaint.

End

#### Special conciliation officer appointed for CMB dispute

\* \* \* \* \*

The Commissioner for Labour, Miss Jacqueline Willis, today (Monday) appointed Chief Labour Officer Mrs Chan Mak Kit-ling as a Special Conciliation Officer in an effort to help settle the trade dispute between the management and staff of the China Motor Bus (CMB) Company.

The appointment was made under Section 5(2) of the Labour Relations Ordinance (LRO) and after Miss Willis met CMB staff representatives this afternoon.

The Commissioner for Labour appealed to both the management and staff of the company to give full co-operation to Mrs Chan.

"The Special Conciliation Officer will get in touch with both sides immediately with a view to bringing them back to the negotiating table as soon as possible," Miss Willis said.

The previous appointment of a Special Conciliation Officer under the LRO was made in November 1989 to mediate in a trade dispute between the management and staff of the same bus company. The dispute was eventually settled.

End

TD responds to criticism of COMAC

\* \* \* \* \*

In response to the criticism of the Office of the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints (COMAC) on Transport Department's failure to grant first registration tax (FRT) exemption to a disabled private vehicle owner, a spokesman for the department said:

"We noted that COMAC's comment reflects no mal-administration on the part of Transport Department in the case.

"We would like to clarify that as an agent for collection of FRT, Transport Department's role in connection with the case is to carry out the policy set by the Government. This is similar to the collection of contribution to Traffic Accident Victims Assistance Scheme (TAVA) for the Health and Welfare Branch.

"In this particular case, the policy rests with the Finance Branch."

End

Bedspace flats operators urged to complete fire safety works

\* \* \* \* \*

Operators of bedspace apartments (BSA) are urged to ensure that their premises comply with the basic fire safety requirements before December 1.

A spokesman for the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (Monday) that a letter reminding BSA operators to complete the priority works involving fire safety improvement is being sent to the 120 BSAs throughout the territory.

"These improvement works include the installation of fire extinguishers, provision of fire blankets, no human occupancy on the third tier bunk, unobstructed escape routes, and provision of clear 'exit' signs.

"The letter is issued as a reminder to BSA operators since the staff of HAD's Office of Licensing Authority (OLA) in their recent inspections have found that some of the priority works required to be completed by December 1 are still outstanding," the spokesman said.

BSA operators who have any queries are welcome to contact OLA on 2881 7746 on building safety requirements and 2881 7275 on fire safety requirements.

The Bedspace Apartments Ordinance, enacted in 1994 to provide for a licensing scheme to regulate the fire and building safety and sanitation of BSAs, will be fully implemented on July 1, 1998.

Meanwhile, an information leaflet listing the telephone numbers of HAD, Social Welfare Department, Housing Department, Rating and Valuation Department and the Agency for Volunteer Service - all tasked with assisting BSA tenants, will be distributed to them.

"BSA tenants are strongly advised to seek advice and assistance from the authorities when they encounter problems concerning their BSAs and accommodation arrangements," the spokesman said.

The leaflet, produced by HAD, also explains the rehousing arrangements for BSA tenants who might be affected as a result of the implementation of the ordinance.

The spokesman said tenants aged below 60 can apply for a place in HAD's singleton hostels located in Yau Ma Tei, Mong Kok, Tai Kok Tsui, Sham Shui Po, Ngau Tau Kok, Western, Shau Kei Wan and Wan Chai.

"Tenants aged 60 and above with social and medical difficulties, if found eligible, will be offered compassionate rehousing or admission to welfare institutions or homes for the elderly," he said.

"Other than these, the tenants can also apply for single person public flats as the Government has established a waiting list for single persons over the age of 18 to apply for public flats since 1985."

Furthermore, the leaflet reminds BSA tenants of their rights of security of tenure under the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance.

Under the ordinance, any person who unlawfully deprives a tenant or sub-tenant of occupation of any premises commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and 12 months' imprisonment.

BSA tenants are advised to contact the Police immediately in case of unlawful eviction or harassment.

End

### Electronics Committee to visit Korea

\* \* \* \* \*

A delegation of the Electronics Committee of the Industry and Technology Development Council sets out today (Monday) on a four-day visit to the Republic of Korea.

The 15-member delegation is led by the Director-General of Industry and Deputy Chairman of the Electronics Committee, Mr Francis Ho.

"The purpose of the visit is to study how Korea has developed its high-tech industries, what are the areas of technological excellence they have achieved, what roles have been played by the Korean Government and public-funded institutions in promoting and supporting industrial development, and how multi-national companies and small and medium establishments have benefited from the support," Mr Ho said.

The delegation will visit the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, the Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute, the Samsung Advanced Institute of Technology, the Korea Electronics Technology Institute, the Research Centre of LG Electronics Inc, and the Small and Medium Industry Promotion Corporation.

The Electronics Committee is an advisor to the Hong Kong government on issues relating to the electronics industry.

The Committee is planning to visit other neighbouring economies to study their development of high-tech industries in a bid to formulate industrial support recommendations for the Government's consideration.

End

### Immigration data now available on Internet

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Following completion of the uploading of information onto the Immigration Homepage at the end of September, members of the public may now obtain various immigration-related topical data via Internet, a spokesperson of the Immigration Department announced today (Monday).

"As part of the department's plans to improve customer services, around 80 chapters of text with information on various services provided by our department have been uploaded.

"The design is user-friendly and hyper-links have also been built between chapters so that enquirers can quickly access to the information they required," said the spokesperson.

Members of the public may now access the following information through Internet on <http://www.info.gov.hk/immd/>

- \* Welcome message
- \* Organisational structure;
- \* Facts and statistics
- \* Performance pledges
- \* Notice board
- \* Topical information which includes:
  - Hong Kong travel documents
  - Hong Kong identity cards
  - Hong Kong visas
  - Births, deaths and marriage registration
  - Address and opening hours of immigration offices
  - List of forms related to various applications
  - Fee tables

The Internet also offers an additional venue for public enquiries by providing the electronic-mail enquiry service, on top of the existing media of telephone, letter and fax.

Enquiries may be send via the Immigration Department's e-mail account: [enquiry@immd.gcn.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@immd.gcn.gov.hk), while the responsible officer will reply via e-mail accordingly.

For more information, members of the public may telephone 2824 6111 or fax 2877 7711.

End

CSD Beating Retreat a resounding success

\* \* \* \* \*

The Correctional Services Department's (CSD) Beating Retreat 1996 - held at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium on October 4 and 5, was a resounding success with tickets sold out, raising \$86,700 for charity.

At the musical event, lion dance, marching band and silent drill were performed by the 221st Hong Kong Scout Group which is made up of inmates of Cape Collinson Correctional Institution and Lai King Training Centre.

Other performances, including ribbon dance and marching band, were staged by the 141st Island Rangers Guide Service Unit made up of inmates from the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution for Girls.

The event was well received by the audience comprising the elderly, disabled people, and many youth organisations members who were sponsored by donations from various sources including CSD staff messes.

The President of the Scout Group, Mr Steve Lau Hong-wah, was the guest of honour on October 4, and the Chief Justice, Sir Ti Liang Yang, was the guest of honour on October 5.

Scouting was introduced into the training centres in 1986 and it is through scout training and activities that young offenders learn to acquire self-reliance, self-discipline, self-confidence and sense of responsibility - qualities they need to turn over a new leaf.

The 221st Hong Kong Group was established in July 1986 for the inmates of Lai King Training Centre and Cape Collinson Correctional Institution with 78 inmates from the two training centres joining the Group voluntarily. Nineteen CSD staff were appointed scout leaders.

At present, some 250 scout members from the two training centres receive training under the leadership of 35 CSD staff. In the past 10 years, a total of 1,485 inmates had joined the Group at different times.

End

Water storage figure

\* \* \* \* \*

Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Monday) stood at 97.1 per cent of capacity or 569.002 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 576.471 million cubic metres of water, representing 96.4 per cent of capacity.

End

Fourth quarter rates due on October 31

\* \* \* \* \*

Rates for the fourth quarter of this year are payable on or before October 31, a spokesman for the Rating and Valuation Department said today (Monday).

Payment can be made using autopay under ratepayers' bank accounts, payment by phone service or by post addressed to the Director of Accounting Services, P O Box 8000, GPO, Hong Kong, or in person at any of the following offices:

- \* The Treasury Headquarters Collection and Payment Office, Immigration Tower, first floor, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong;
- \* The Central Sub-Treasury, Central Government Offices (West Wing), 11 Ice House Street, Hong Kong;
- \* The North Point Sub-Treasury, Max Share Centre, first floor, 373 King's Road, North Point, Hong Kong;
- \* The Sai Wan Ho Sub-Treasury, Eastern Law Courts Building, ground floor, 29 Tai On Street, Sai Wan Ho, Hong Kong;
- \* The Yau Ma Tei Sub-Treasury, Kowloon Government Offices, fourth Floor, 405 Nathan Road, Kowloon;
- \* The Kowloon City Sub-Treasury, Man Sang Commercial Building, first floor, 348-352 Prince Edward Road West, Kowloon;
- \* The District Office at Sai Kung, Sha Tin, Tai Po, North, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan or Kwai Tsing.

The spokesman said ratepayers who had not received their demand notes should bring along those for any previous quarter to any of the Treasury collection offices.

Duplicate demand notes will be issued to them, he said.

If they cannot produce demand notes for any previous quarter, they should enquire at the Rates Accounts Section, Rating and Valuation Department, Hennessy Centre, 17th floor, 500 Hennessy Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, or call 2881 1033.

Non-receipt of the demand notes does not alter the requirement that the rates must be paid by October 31 and unless so paid, ratepayers may be subject to a surcharge of five per cent under Section 22 of the Rating Ordinance.

A further surcharge of 10 per cent may be levied on the outstanding amount (including the five per cent surcharge) which remains unpaid six months after the due date.

Ratepayers who have submitted a valid direct debit authorisation should note that if the wording "payment to be made by autopay" is shown, payment will be made by direct debit to their bank accounts on October 31.

They should then ensure that their bank accounts contain the necessary funds on that date.

If the above wording is not shown, they should pay according to the instructions as set out in the demand notes.

To save queuing time, the spokesman urged ratepayers to use the payment by phone service, or pay by post using cheques or cashier orders, or by early personal attendance at any of the collection offices.

"However, the most convenient payment method is autopay," said the spokesman.

Application forms for autopay are obtainable from Treasury collection offices, district offices and all major banks in Hong Kong or by telephoning 2881 1033.

For additional information regarding the payment by phone service, please call 9000 0222 329.

End

Tender for the 13th issue of 3-year exchange fund notes

\* \* \* \* \*

Tender for the thirteenth issue of 3-year exchange fund notes will be held on October 14 for settlement on October 15, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announces today (Monday).

Similar to the previous issue, an amount of \$500 million 3-year notes will be on offer.

In addition to that, another \$100 million will be held as reserve by HKMA for supply to market makers in the secondary market. The notes will mature on October 15, 1999, and will carry interest at the rate of 6.28% per annum payable semi-annually in arrears.

Members of the public who wish to tender for the notes may do so through any of the market makers or recognised dealers on the published list which can be obtained from HKMA at 30th floor, 3 Garden Road, Hong Kong, Tel 2878 8150. Each tender must be for an amount of \$50,000 or integral multiples thereof.

Tender information for the thirteenth issue of 3-year exchange fund notes is as follows:

Issue number	:	3910
Tender date and time	:	Monday October 14, 1996, 9.30 am to 10.30 am
Issue and settlement date	:	Tuesday October 15, 1996
Amount on offer	:	\$500 million plus an additional \$100 million as reserve stock for the Monetary Authority
Maturity	:	Three years
Maturity date	:	October 15, 1999
Interest rate	:	6.28% per annum payable semi-annually in arrears
Interest payment dates	:	Apr 15, 1997, Oct 15, 1997, Apr 15, 1998, Oct 15, 1998, Apr 15, 1999, Oct 15, 1999

- Tender amount : Each tender must be for an amount of \$50,000 or integral multiples thereof. members of the public who wish to tender for the notes may approach market makers or recognised dealers on the published list
- Other details : Please see information memorandum published or approach market makers or recognised dealers

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

\* \* \* \* \*

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,949	0930	+211
Closing balance in the account	2,303	1000	+211
Change attributable to:		1100	+211
Money market activity	+211	1200	+211
LAF today	+143	1500	+211
		1600	+211

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.7 \*+0.0\* 7.10.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.81	2 years	2808	6.00	100.25	5.94
1 month	4.92	3 years	3907	6.80	101.43	6.33
3 months	5.11	5 years	5109	7.32	102.00	6.95
6 months	5.21	7 years	7308	7.24	100.41	7.29
12 months	5.45	5 years	M503	7.35	100.98	7.23

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$13,599 million

Closed October 7, 1996

End