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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1993

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1993

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INFLUX OF ECVII'S A SETBACK TO SOLVE VM PROBLEM

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THE ONLY WAY TO STEM THE RECENT INFLUX OF EX-CHINA VIETNAMESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (ECVII'S) WAS TO RETURN THEM TO CHINA IMMEDIATELY AS EVERY DAY OF DELAY WOULD ACT AS A MAGNET FOR MORE TO FOLLOW, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING TO THE PRESS AFTER TOURING FACILITIES FOR ECVII'S AT CHI MA WAN DETENTION CENTRE ON LANTAU ISLAND, MR ASPREY SAID ABOUT 2,200 ECVII'S HAD ARRIVED IN HONG KONG SINCE JUNE 25 AND IT WAS THE LARGEST INFLUX SINCE 1987.

"THIS IS AN UNWELCOME SETBACK TO EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE VIETNAMESE MIGRANT (VM) PROBLEM.

"DIRECT ARRIVALS FROM VIETNAM HAVE VIRTUALLY DRIED UP IN THE PAST TWO YEARS AND THE OVERALL VM POPULATION IN THAT TIME HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM OVER 64,000 TO SOME 39,000 TODAY," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID HONG KONG'S RESOURCES WERE ONCE MORE BEING STRETCHED ESPECIALLY THE MANPOWER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT.

"IF THE PROBLEM IS RESOLVED SPEEDILY, THERE WILL BE NO SIGNIFICANT SLIPPAGE IN OUR CAMP CLOSURE PROGRAMME BUT IF THE INFLUX CONTINUES AND THE ECVII'S HERE ARE NOT RETURNED SOON, IT WILL POSE A MAJOR SETBACK TO OUR PLANS," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD REPEATEDLY STRESSED TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES THE URGENT NEED FOR EARLY REPATRIATION, BUT HAD HAD NO SPECIFIC RESPONSE SO FAR TO THIS REQUEST.

"THE MATTER IS BEING TAKEN UP DAILY WITH THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY IN HONG KONG, MINISTERS IN LONDON AND THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO PEKING WILL SHORTLY AGAIN ASK THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT THE RETURN OF THE ECVII'S," HE SAID.

ALSO VISITING CHI MA WAN TODAY WAS THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MR ERIC MCCOSH.

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PATIENTS TO MAKE HEALTH CARE CHOICE

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THE OPTIONS LISTED IN THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED CONSULTATION DOCUMENT "TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH" AIM TO GIVE GREATER CHOICE TO INDIVIDUAL PATIENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS WONG NOTED THAT HONG KONG'S PRESENT HEALTH CARE SYSTEM OFFERS LITTLE REAL CHOICE AS IT IS SEPARATED INTO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS WITH LITTLE INTERFACE.

"THE PERCEPTION IS THAT YOU EITHER WAIT FOR PUBLIC SERVICE OR PAY FOR PRIVATE SERVICE," SHE SAID.

WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, THERE IS EFFECTIVELY ONLY ONE CLASS OF HOSPITAL BEDS AVAILABLE AND EVERYBODY PAYS THE SAME FEE, WHETHER RICH OR POOR.

"THOSE PATIENTS WHO DESIRE A HIGHER STANDARD OF PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOMMODATION HAVE NO CHOICE," MRS WONG SAID AT A SYMPOSIUM ON "HEALTH CARE CHOICES FOR HONG KONG".

SHE POINTED OUT THAT THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF A CO-ORDINATED VOLUNTARY INSURANCE APPROACH, ONE OF THE OPTIONS IN THE DOCUMENT AIMS TO IMPROVE THE INTERFACE BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICE PROVIDERS TO GIVE PATIENTS GREATER ABILITY TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO.

THROUGH THE TARGET GROUP APPROACH, ANOTHER OPTION AIMS TO CREATE A NEW CLASS OF SEMI-PRIVATE ROOMS IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS TO GIVE PATIENTS A GREATER CHOICE OF ACCOMMODATION.

THROUGH THE PERCENTAGE SUBSIDY APPROACH, A THIRD OPTION AIMS TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY ABOUT FEES SO THAT PATIENTS WILL KNOW EXACTLY HOW MUCH THEY WILL HAVE TO PAY AND HOW COSTS HAVE BEEN DETERMINED.

"THIS WILL ENABLE THEM TO MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE ABOUT TREATMENT MODALITY," MRS WONG SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT THESE OPTIONS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED INDIVIDUALLY OR IN DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS AND HAVE BEEN DRAWN UP AFTER MUCH RESEARCH INTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS AND REFORMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

"WE HAVE TAKEN THE BEST OF THE IDEAS FROM OVERSEAS AND ADAPTED THESE TO SUIT LOCAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS," THE SECRETARY SAID.

"BUT ULTIMATELY, WE NEED TO HAVE A SYSTEM WHICH MEETS THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS AND WHICH THE COMMUNITY IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT," SHE SAID.

"THE CHOICE IS THEIRS," MRS WONG STRESSED.

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PARENTS NOT COMPULSORY TO BUY TEXTBOOKS FROM SCHOOLS

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A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID STUDENTS AND PARENTS WERE NOT COMPULSORY TO BUY TEXTBOOKS, EXERCISE BOOKS, UNIFORMS AND OTHER ITEMS FROM SCHOOLS.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID ALL SCHOOLS FOLLOWED A CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE SALE OF TEXTBOOKS, EXERCISE BOOKS, UNIFORMS AND OTHER SCHOOL ACCESSORIES.

ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE FIRST INTRODUCED IN 1975, SCHOOLS SHOULD ENSURE THAT, SUBJECT TO SOUND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE, THE COST OF ITEMS SHOULD BE KEPT AS LOW AS POSSIBLE.

"SCHOOLS NORMALLY ISSUE LISTS OF BOOKS, INCLUDING TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCE BOOKS AND WORKBOOKS, TO EXISTING STUDENTS BEFORE THE END OF A TERM AND TO NEW STUDENTS OR THEIR PARENTS," HE SAID, ADDING THAT FULL DETAILS SUCH AS TITLE, EDITION, AUTHOR, PUBLISHER, AND PRICE WERE GIVEN.

THE LISTS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A STATEMENT TO ADVISE PARENTS THAT THEY CAN BUY THE ITEMS OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL IF THEY WISH.

STUDENTS, HE SAID, WERE ALSO NOT COMPELLED TO BUY UNIFORMS FROM THE SCHOOL TAILOR.

STUDENTS CAN PLACE THEIR ORDERS ELSEWHERE, THE MATERIALS SELECTED FOR THE UNIFORM ARE USUALLY OF A TYPE, QUALITY AND COLOUR GENERALLY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT ALL SCHOOLS KEPT PROPER ACCOUNTS WHICH REFLECTED ALL SALES.

"IF AN ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN MADE WITH A BOOKSELLER OR OTHER SUPPLIER, AND A DISCOUNT OR A BLOCK SUM OF MONEY IS RECEIVED, THIS MUST ALSO BE ENTERED INTO THE SCHOOL ACCOUNTS AS AN ITEM OF INCOME," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT SCHOOLS WERE REQUIRED TO RECORD IN AN INVENTORY ANY ADVANTAGES RECEIVED FROM SUPPLIERS IN THE FORM OF GOODS OR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1993

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USA YEAR OF ROOSTER STAMPS ON SALE

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THE ACTING POSTMASTER GENERAL, MRS DORIS HO, ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE WITH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE (USPS) TO SELL THEIR YEAR OF THE ROOSTER STAMPS IN HONG KONG AT THE SIX PHILATELIC OFFICES FROM AUGUST 9 TO DECEMBER 31.

THESE STAMPS ARE THE FIRST COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS EVER ISSUED BY THE USPS TO FEATURE THE LUNAR NEW YEAR.

FACE VALUE OF THE STAMP IS 29 US CENTS EACH. IT WILL BE AVAILABLE IN SHEETS OF 20 STAMPS AT HK\$45.5 PER SHEET.

ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE SIX PHILATELIC OFFICES FROM THE SAME DATE IS THE OFFICIAL COLLECTOR'S BOOKLET OF THE YEAR OF THE ROOSTER STAMP.

THE BOOKLET, PRICED AT \$62.5 EACH, IS A FOLDER CONTAINING INFORMATION ON THE STAMP, THE DESIGNER, AND A BLOCK OF FOUR YEAR OF THE ROOSTER STAMPS CANCELLED WITH THE FIRST-DAY-OF-ISSUE POSTMARK.

MRS HO SAID THE YEAR OF THE ROOSTER STAMPS WERE EXPECTED TO BE POPULAR WITH COLLECTORS.

THEY WILL ADD TO THE COLLECTION OF THE YEAR OF THE COCK STAMPS ISSUED BY THE HONG KONG POST OFFICE EARLIER THIS YEAR AND LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMPS ISSUED BY OTHER POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS IN THE REGION.

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RESPONSE TO LIAISON OFFICER RECRUITMENT EXERCISE GOOD

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR ALBERT C C LAM, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER THE RESULT OF THE LATEST RECRUITMENT EXERCISE FOR LIAISON GRADE OFFICERS IN THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION (CNTA).

SPEAKING AFTER PRESENTING PROMOTION LETTERS TO 20 LIAISON GRADE OFFICERS, MR LAM SAID A TOTAL OF 612 PEOPLE HAD APPLIED FOR THE POST OF LIAISON OFFICER II AND 412 HAD BEEN SHORT-LISTED FOR A WRITTEN TEST LAST MONTH.

HE EXPECTS A TEAM OF NEW RECRUITS WILL JOIN HIS ADMINISTRATION BY EARLY NEXT YEAR.

MR LAM SAID PROMOTION PROSPECTS FOR THESE OFFICERS HAD BEEN GREATLY IMPROVED AFTER THE GRADE BECAME A DEPARTMENTAL GRADE.

ALREADY THERE WERE 20 PROMOTIONS SO FAR THIS YEAR.

/FIFTEEN LIAISON

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1993

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FIFTEEN LIAISON OFFICERS II HAVE MOVED UP TO LIAISON OFFICERS I, WHILE FIVE LIAISON OFFICERS I HAVE BEEN PROMOTED TO SENIOR LIAISON OFFICERS.

AFTER LIAISON OFFICERS TOOK OVER THE LIAISON DUTIES FROM EXECUTIVE OFFICERS IN URBAN DISTRICTS IN JANUARY, CNTA HAS CREATED NINE MORE LIAISON OFFICER I POSTS AND FOUR MORE SENIOR LIAISON OFFICER POSTS, MR LAM SAID.

"AS IT BECOMES A DEPARTMENTAL GRADE, CNTA WILL CREATE MORE LIAISON OFFICER POSTS SO AS TO PROVIDE BETTER PROMOTION PROSPECT FOR THOSE WITH GOOD PERFORMANCE," HE ADDED.

HE CALLED ON THE LIAISON OFFICERS TO KEEP UP WITH THEIR BROAD COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCES TO PROVIDE A EVEN BETTER PROFESSIONAL SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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270 VM'S RETURNED TODAY

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A GROUP OF 270 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

COMPRISING 108 MEN, 65 WOMEN, 48 BOYS AND 49 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 159TH BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

THIS GROUP BROUGHT TO 4,662 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY THIS YEAR, AND TO 30,974 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES SINCE THE PROGRAMME STARTED IN MARCH 1989.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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\$ MILLION

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|--|-------|
| OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT | 1,760 |
| REVERSAL OF LAF | +240 |
| BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF | 2,000 |
| NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY | NIL |
| EFFECT OF LAF TODAY | -20 |
| CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT | 1,980 |
| LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 112.2 *-0.1* 4.8.93 | |

/HONG KONG

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

| EF BILLS | | EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS | | | | |
|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| TERMS | YIELD | TERM | ISSUE | COUPON | PRICE | YIELD |
| 1 WEEK | 2.25 PCT | 13 MONTHS | 2408 | 4.375 | 100.64 | 3.77 |
| 1 MONTH | 2.54 PCT | 16 MONTHS | 2411 | 4.625 | 100.80 | 4.01 |
| 3 MONTHS | 3.06 PCT | 19 MONTHS | 2502 | 4.75 | 100.80 | 4.25 |
| 6 MONTHS | 3.36 PCT | 22 MONTHS | 2505 | 3.75 | 98.79 | 4.51 |
| 12 MONTHS | 3.76 PCT | | | | | |

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 21,038 MN

CLOSED 4 AUGUST 1993