



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Broadcasting Authority to review exemption granted to Metro

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A spokesman for the Broadcasting, Culture and Sport Branch said the Branch had approached the management of Metro Broadcast Corp Ltd today (Saturday) to find out the reasons of its decision to cut three daily news bulletins.

The management of Metro has assured the Branch that it understands fully its licence obligations and is committed to fulfilling them.

The spokesman noted that Metro applied in March 1991 to the Broadcasting Authority (BA) for waiver of its licence requirements in respect of news programmes. The application was approved on the following grounds:

- * Metro already operated a 24-hour news service at that time. The information needs of the listeners would not be unduly compromised.
- * In line with BA's general policy not to interfere with a broadcaster's programming arrangements, some flexibility should be allowed.

BA reviewed the above exemption in 1993.

"The Branch will invite BA to review the exemption granted to Metro to see if the justifications and considerations given to the exemption are still valid," the spokesman said.

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Purpose-built hostel a milestone in serving "bedspace" lodgers

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The Shun Ning Road Singleton Hostel, the first purpose-built hostel planned and constructed by the Home Affairs Department (HAD), is a milestone in its efforts to solve the housing problem of bedspace apartment (BSA) lodgers, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, said today (Saturday).

Speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony of the hostel project in Sham Shui Po, Mr Suen said HAD had spared no efforts in improving the living environment of BSAs in the past few years.

"Since the enactment of the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance in 1994, staff of the HAD Licensing Authority have conducted regular inspections to these apartments, and gave the operators the advice on fire and building safety in order to ensure the BSAs meet the safety standards," Mr Suen said.

"Apart from introducing legislative measures, we have also made efforts in various aspects to provide accommodation for BSA lodgers so that they will not be rendered homeless as a result of the licensing scheme under the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance.

"The Shun Ning Road Singleton Hostel is planned with this aim in mind and the completion of this project will mark a great step forward in our work in improving the living conditions of BSA lodgers," he said.

Costing over \$60 million and funded by the Land Development Corporation (LDC), the 16-storey hostel will provide 312 places for eligible single persons in an environment better than any existing facilities. Each lodger will be provided with a partitioned room, equipped with basic facilities.

Mr Suen noted that the hostel will also include a multi-service centre for the elderly and a sitting-out area. These are important community facilities which will serve both the BSA lodgers and residents in the district.

"Construction of the hostel will commence in September and is expected to be completed in mid-1998 to tie in with the full implementation of the licensing scheme," Mr Suen added.

Mr Suen said the materialisation of the hostel project was a result of the concerted efforts of various departments and community organisations. It also serves as a good example of what can be achieved by involving the community.

He expressed his gratitude to LDC for funding the project, the constructive comments made by the Sham Shui Po District Board, and the Urban Council for releasing the site of the temporary sitting-out area for the construction of the hostel.

Mr Suen also revealed that plans are in hand to build a similar hostel at High Street, Sai Ying Pun. Designed by the Architectural Services Department, it has gained the support of the Central and Western District Board and other organisations. Subject to the availability of funds, construction of the hostel will be completed in a few years' time.

"Moreover, with the subsidy from the General Chinese Charities Fund and LDC, HAD has purchased suitable flats in the urban area for conversion into singleton hostels.

"There are at present 23 such hostels with a combined capacity of 364 places. We are indeed grateful to the Agency for Volunteer Services for managing these hostels for us.

"In solving the problems associated with BSAs, we not only have to provide accommodation for the lodgers, but also make efforts to enhance their quality of life.

"You are all most welcome to express your views on the management of the hostel, as well as suggestions on how to encourage the lodgers to integrate and participate in the community when the Shun Ning Road Singleton Hostel opens," he said.

Mr Suen said with the assistance of various departments and organisations, HAD had played a crucial role in solving the housing problems of many BSA lodgers in the past few years.

"Through the arrangements of the Housing Department and the Social Welfare Department, BSA lodgers aged 60 or above are eligible for compassionate rehousing in public housing flats," he noted.

Also speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony, the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau, said one of HAD's priorities was to improve the living conditions of BSA lodgers.

"We have made a lot of efforts in this respect over the past few years, and with the support of the Home Affairs Branch, relevant Government departments, district boards and concern groups, we are confident that we will make further achievements in improving the living conditions of BSA lodgers," she said.

Other officiating guests included Director of Housing, Mr Tony Miller; Chairman of Sham Shui Po District Board, Mr Wong Chung-ki; Managing Board Member of LDC, Mr Pao Bing-wing; and Director of Society for Community Organisation, Mr Ho Hei-wah.

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Nominations of outstanding disabled employees invited

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The Labour Department's Selective Placement Division (SPD) is inviting employers to nominate disabled employees for the Outstanding Disabled Employees Award (ODEA) 1996.

"The ODEA, which is held annually, aims at giving formal recognition and appreciation to disabled employees with outstanding achievements in employment," acting Senior Labour Officer (Selective Placement), Mr Cheung Tak-tsai, said today (Saturday).

"We hope this event can help to promote public awareness of the working abilities of the disabled and hence to provide them with more employment opportunities.

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

The criteria for selection include the disabled employees' overall performance, efforts and achievements in overcoming difficulties, diligence, devotion and accomplishment in employment.

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

"Successful nominees will each be awarded a souvenir plaque and their nominators will receive a souvenir. They will also be invited to attend a souvenir presentation ceremony later this year," said Mr Chung.

Deadline for nominations is August 19. Re-nomination of candidates who were unsuccessful in previous attempts is welcomed.

Interested parties can contact Miss Cindy Yung of the Publicity and Promotion Unit of SPD on 2852 4803 for more information and nominations.

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	2,352	09:30	-400
Closing Balance in the account	1,512	10:00	-400
Change Attributable to:		11:00	-400
Money Market Activity	-400	11:30	-400
Laf Today			-440

Laf Rate 4% Bid/6% Offer TWI 123.7 *+0.0* 3.8.96

End

Transport Department's homepage on Internet

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The Transport Department (TD) will launch its homepage tomorrow (Monday) to provide an alternative access to the public on transport related information.

The homepage contains general information on Hong Kong's public transport, their fares and charges, licensing, facts and figures as well as a documentary film "Transport In Hong Kong".

The 13-minute documentary is a special feature on this homepage to allow world-wide net users to download the video clips for a visual brief on transport in Hong Kong.

TD's Homepage is stored in Hong Kong Government Information Centre (GIC) computer. The address is <http://www.info.gov.hk/td>.

In launching the homepage, a spokesman for the department said today (Sunday) the uploading of information to the Internet would be another move to serve the community better.

"The Home Page provides an information service to the public who may be interested to obtain facts and figures on transport related matters, such as the number of licensed vehicles and how to apply for a driving licence.

"For users who are commuters of public transport, they can find very detailed fare tables of buses, ferries, trains and taxis.

"We shall identify areas in which we can improve in the future the provision of information to better serve the community," the spokesman said.

Information on the homepage will be updated regularly to provide Internet users the latest available facts and figures related to Hong Kong's transport system.

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Classical Chinese imperial gardens seminar to be held in Beijing

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The Architectural Services Department and the Institute of Chinese Landscape Architects are jointly organising a seminar on classical Chinese imperial gardens.

The seminar, the first of its kind organised by the two parties, will be held in Beijing from August 20 to 24.

It will include in-house discussions, film presentations, photographic displays and visits to various imperial gardens in the Chinese capital such as the Imperial Garden in Museum Forbidden City, Beihei Park and many other historical monuments.

Through these activities, participants will have a chance to know more about classical Chinese imperial gardens, including their history, special art and techniques as well as impacts on Chinese culture.

Speakers will include the Director of Architectural Services, Mr Kenneth Chan, Professor Zhou Wai-quan of the Qing Hua University, Professor Meng Zhao-zhon of the Beijing Forestry University, Senior Engineers Liu Da-ke and Ma Bing-jian and Senior Architect of the Architectural Services Department, Mr S K Tse.

Interested parties can telephone 2374 5459 for details.

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35 new building plans approved in June

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The Buildings Department approved 35 building plans in June this year.

Of the plans, seven are for Hong Kong Island, six for Kowloon and 22 for the New Territories.

The approved plans include 17 for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, eight for commercial developments, three for factory and industrial developments, and seven for community services developments.

In the same month, consent was given for work to start on 33 building projects, which involve 98,618 square metres of usable domestic floor area and 67,325 square metres of usable non-domestic floor area.

During the same period, the Department also issued 23 occupation permits - seven for Hong Kong Island, 11 for Kowloon and five for the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation in the month, the usable floor areas for domestic and non-domestic uses are 52,348 square metres and 146,633 square metres respectively.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in the month totalled about \$2,477 million.

In addition, 18 demolition consents involving 32 buildings and structures were issued.

In the same month, the Buildings Department's Control and Enforcement Division received 693 complaints of unauthorised building works, and issued 249 removal orders on unauthorised works.

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Land Registry statistics for July released

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A total of 12,710 sale and purchase agreements for building units, which include both residential and non-residential properties, were lodged with the Land Registry last month.

The figure represents an increase of 15 per cent over June 1996 and an increase of 43.4 per cent compared with July 1995.

The total consideration of these agreements in July is \$42.2 billion, up 21.3 per cent and 99.3 per cent compared with the amounts for June 1996 and July 1995 respectively.

The figures are contained in the monthly statistics released today (Sunday) by the Land Registry on deeds relating to property transactions received for registration in the Urban and New Territories Land Registries in July 1996.

Relevant statistics for June 1996 and July 1995 were provided for comparison. Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months and the year-on-year rate of change were also released.

These statistics generally relate to land transactions executed up to four weeks prior to their submission for registration, as there is usually a time lag between the execution of deeds and their lodgement for registration.

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AFD subsidies for secondary studies

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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 15.

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 said.

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

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English language programme for eligible S5 students

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Secondary 5 students who have taken at least half of the subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) in Chinese may apply for the pre-S6 course of the Intensive English Language Programme (IELP) this August.

Senior Education Officer, Mr Ip Po Kuen, said students who would promote to Secondary 6 this September were invited to apply for the course.

"The purpose of the course is to help students studying through the medium of Chinese to attain the standard of English required by local tertiary institutions," he said.

IELP, operated by the British Council, will be conducted in three stages, he said.

The first stage is a two-week whole-day pre-S6 course held from August 19 to 30.

The second stage is a four-week post-S6 course to be held next summer, and the last stage, a four-week post-S7 course, will be held in the summer of 1998 before they enter local tertiary institutions.

Mr Ip said current S5 students who were eligible for the pre-S6 course 1996 might obtain application forms from their schools.

Private candidates may get the form from district education offices.

To be eligible for the pre-S6 course, students must:

- I) have been admitted to S6 in the 1996-97 school year;
- II) have satisfied the requirements for taking the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination in 1998; and
- III) have taken in at least 50 per cent of the subjects in HKCEE in Chinese apart from Chinese subjects, English subjects, mathematics, additional mathematics, computer studies, religious studies, Buddhist studies, shorthand, typewriting and principles of accounts.

Applicants obtaining S6 places should return the application forms to the Education Department through the schools offering them S6 places before 5 pm on August 12.

Students obtaining secondary 6 places through the Central Allocation should return the application forms through schools principals before 3 pm on August 17.

Those obtaining school places in a non-bought-place private school where admission is not governed by the secondary 6 admission procedure, should return the application forms through their schools not later than 3 pm on August 17.

Meanwhile, applicants taking HKCEE as private candidates are required to submit completed application forms through the schools offering them S6 places, together with a copy of their HKCEE admission slips and a copy of the HKCEE result notice.

The list of the first batch of successful applicants will be posted at the following places at 10 am on August 17:

- * The British Council Head Office, 255 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong; and
- * Education Department Kowloon Sub-Office, 405 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

Eligible applicants who are late to obtain a secondary 6 place through the central allocation or from a non-bought-place private school will be advised of the results as soon as possible.

They are reminded that their application forms must be returned to the Education Department through principals of the schools admitting them not later than 3 pm on August 17.

End