



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Government opposes Bill on anti-union discrimination

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The Government does not support the Employment (Amendment) Bill 1997 proposed by the Honourable LEE Cheuk-yan and gazetted today (Friday).

The Member's Bill seeks to increase the existing penalties for offences against provisions on anti-union discrimination and to give the District Court extensive powers to make orders on employment matters.

A spokesman for the Education and Manpower Branch said today that the Bill sought to improve employees' benefits in respect of anti-union discrimination without considering the legitimate interests of employers.

"This will not be conducive to the maintenance of a harmonious employer-employee relationship in Hong Kong.

"The existing penalty for offences relating to anti-union discrimination is in line with that for dismissals of employees on the grounds of pregnancy and of sick leave which are also prohibited under the law. The penalty level was last revised in December 1995. We do not see the need for the substantial increase proposed under the Bill.

The Bill also proposes that the court may make, as remedies for civil proceedings relating to acts of anti-union discrimination, orders for, among other things, employment, re-employment and even promotion of the employee, without the consent of the employer.

"The Government considers this proposal inappropriate. For example, an order for re-employment will only work if it is mutually agreed by both the employer and the employee. Once an employment relationship has turned sour, it would be difficult for an employee to continue working under the same employer," the spokesman said.

The spokesman went on to say that the Bill represented a unilateral attempt to amend labour legislation without going through the process of tripartite discussion amongst Government, employers and employees at the Labour Advisory Board(LAB). As a matter of principle, the Government will not support any bill which has not been considered by the Board.

"The Government is planning to improve protection of employees against anti-union discrimination in the context of a legislative package to strengthen employment protection against unreasonable termination of employment and variation of terms of employment contract which was drawn up on the basis of a consensus reached by the LAB. The relevant legislative amendments will be introduced into the Legislative Council within the current session. This Member's Bill contains provisions substantially different from the proposals agreed by the LAB and on which the LAB has not been consulted," he added.

End

No place for aggressive dogs in Hong Kong

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The Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) today (Friday) advised that there is no place for aggressive dogs in Hong Kong.

The advice was made by an AFD senior veterinary officer, Dr Les Sims, following this morning's coroner verdict on a case in which a baby was killed by an aggressive dog in Wong Tai Sin last March.

Dr Sims said dog owners should choose their pets carefully, taking into account the living environment into which the animal would be introduced. They should also seek professional advice on training and care of their dogs.

He pointed out that potential owners should not keep a dog such as the one involved in this fatality, which was a Pit Bull Terrier cross.

"Dogs of this type are derived from stock that were bred for fighting.

"They are highly likely to attack other animals and when fighting, do not respond to normal cut off signals such as signs of submission - they fight to the death."

Infants should never be left unsupervised with dogs, even for short periods of time, he stressed.

"When a dog bites a young child there is a high risk of serious injury which may lead to permanent disfigurement or even death," he added.

On prevention of attacks by aggressive dogs, Dr Sims said that the Dangerous Dogs Regulation had been tabled to the Legislative Council.

Under the proposed Regulation, importing and breeding of fighting breeds would be banned, with the result that fighting dogs would be phased out eventually.

It is also proposed that those contravening the Regulation could face a maximum penalty of \$50,000 fine and six months' imprisonment.

The Regulation includes provisions for owners of such dogs to surrender them during a transition period.

Those dogs that are not surrendered would be required to wear a muzzle and be kept on a leash when in a public place. They would need to be neutered, identified by a microchip and wear a bright collar to indicate that they are dangerous. Owners of the dogs would have to obtain a public liability insurance policy.

End

Majority confident of HK's continued prosperity: HAB poll

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The latest public opinion survey conducted by the Home Affairs Branch (HAB) in January has shown that 73 per cent of the respondents are confident that Hong Kong will continue to be prosperous and stable.

This represented an increase of 13 per cent as compared with the situation in November last year, an HAB spokesman said today (Friday).

A similar percentage of respondents were satisfied with the present situation, which was about the same as in the last survey in November, 1996.

The number of respondents who expected the situation to improve in the next 12 months increased from 15 per cent in last November to 25 per cent while 45 per cent of the respondents believed it would stay about the same.

Civil servants' working attitude struck 56 per cent as good while those who took the opposite view had gone down from 27 per cent to 23 per cent.

As to the overall performance of the Government, 48 per cent expressed satisfaction and 28 per cent thought otherwise. This compared with 54 per cent and 25 per cent respectively in the last survey.

Of the three most-mentioned problems facing Hong Kong, housing issues continued to top the list at 68 per cent.

Twenty-seven per cent of respondents expressed concern about labour-related problems while social welfare-related problems were mentioned by 25 per cent.

The survey was the 68th in the series to gauge the trend of public opinion on perceived problems in Hong Kong, the Government's overall performance and the community's view of the general situation.

Through a random sampling of residential telephone numbers, 1,506 respondents aged between 15 and 64 were successfully interviewed.

End

Land resumption at Sam Dip Tam in Tsuen Wan

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The Government plans to carry out slope improvement works at Sam Dip Tam in Tsuen Wan for public safety.

A Government spokesman said today (Friday) that the slope was adjacent to a new access road to be constructed by the Civil Engineering Department under the San Tsuen Pai Northeast Platform Village Layout project.

"The new road together with car parking facilities will be built along the top of the slope at the southeastern edge of the village.

"Ground investigation and laboratory test have concluded that slope improvement is necessary to enhance safety," the spokesman said.

Works will begin in June for completion in a year.

To enable the works to be carried out, a notice was published in the Government Gazette today announcing the Government's plan to resume two private agricultural lots at Sam Dip Tam.

The two lots have a total area of 539.2 square metres. Relevant plans can be seen at the Tsuen Wan District Lands Office, 10th floor, Tsuen Wan Station Multi-Storey Carpark Building, 174-208 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

End

Domestic Export Statistics by Industrial Origin for 1996

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In 1996, the four major industries of textiles; wearing apparel; machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components; and consumer electrical and electronic products together accounted for 69% of Hong Kong's total domestic exports of manufactured goods, according to statistics released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

In 1996, domestic exports of consumer electrical and electronic products; and machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components decreased by 18% and 8% over a year earlier to \$25.9 billion and \$36.5 billion respectively. Those of textiles and wearing apparel both decreased by 5% to \$43.2 billion and \$40.0 billion respectively.

As for other industries, more notable decreases in the value of domestic exports were also recorded for professional and optical equipment (-\$1,862 million or -11%); basic metals and fabricated metal products (-\$815 million or -8%); and chemicals and chemical products (-\$491 million or -6%). For the industries of footwear and non-metallic mineral products, although the changes in absolute value were not as large, marked percentage decreases of 42% and 31% were recorded respectively.

On the other hand, an increase in the value of domestic exports was recorded for food industry (+\$148 million or +5%). For the industry of transport equipment, although the change in absolute value was not as large, a marked percentage increase of 67% was recorded.

The above statistics of domestic exports classified by industrial origin are derived by re-grouping the merchandise export items originally grouped under the external trade classification system according to the industries in which these merchandise items are normally produced. Transactions in gold and specie are excluded.

The industrial classification used is the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC). The HSIC is to be distinguished from the United Nations Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) used in the regular trade statistics reports. In comparison, the HSIC is more related to production processes whereas the SITC is more geared to end uses of products.

Caution should be taken when referring to these domestic export statistics classified by industrial origin. There may be several intermediate processing stages in the production of certain merchandise export items. In compiling the above statistics, the total value of such an item has however been wholly related to the industry in which the item is finally produced. The above domestic export statistics of a particular industry may include products which are secondary products by establishments of other industries.

Further details of merchandise domestic export statistics classified by industrial origin may be found in the attached table which is obtainable from the General Economic Surveys Section of the Census and Statistics Department (Tel. No. 2805 6642). A table showing more detailed breakdowns of similar statistics for major manufacturing industries is also included in the report "Hong Kong External Trade, December 1996".

Domestic exports of manufactured goods classified by industrial origin for 1996

\$ million

Industrial origin of the commodities exported	Merchandise domestic exports			
	1996	1995	Value change	% change
Food	2,918.2	2,770.0	+148.2	+5.3
Beverages	611.8	718.7	-106.9	-14.9
Tobacco manufactures	2,145.4	2,214.5	-69.1	-3.1
Textiles (including knitting)	43,240.5	45,716.7	-2,476.2	-5.4
Wearing apparel, except footwear	40,019.0	42,265.2	-2,246.2	-5.3
Leather and leather products, except footwear and wearing apparel	1,383.7	1,630.3	-246.6	-15.1
Footwear, except rubber, plastic and wooden footwear	43.7	75.1	-31.3	-41.7
Wood and cork products, furniture and fixtures	313.0	351.5	-38.4	-10.9
Paper and paper products, printing and publishing	8,240.3	8,448.6	-208.2	-2.5
Chemicals and chemical products	7,883.6	8,375.0	-491.4	-5.9
Products of petroleum and coal	27.7	23.0	+4.7	+20.2
Rubber products	62.4	72.9	-10.5	-14.4
Plastic products	4,471.1	4,803.2	-332.1	-6.9
Non-metallic mineral products, except products of petroleum and coal	338.5	493.2	-154.7	-31.4
Basic metals and fabricated metal products	9,043.2	9,858.1	-814.8	-8.3
Machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components	36,515.0	39,647.3	-3,132.4	-7.9
Consumer electrical and electronic products	25,903.7	31,567.6	-5,663.9	-17.9
Transport equipment	140.8	84.5	+56.2	+66.5
Professional and optical equipment	14,940.8	16,803.0	-1,862.2	-11.1
Other manufacturing industries	13,196.2	13,290.6	-94.3	-0.7
Total	211,438.6	229,208.9	-17,770.3	-7.8

Notes : 1. Individual entries of a column may not add up exactly to the corresponding total due to rounding. All percentage changes are calculated from unrounded figures.

2. The statistics presented in the above table are derived by re-grouping the merchandise export items (except gold and specie) under the external trade classification system according to the industries in which these items are normally produced. As from 1992, the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3 (SITC R3) has been adopted in place of the Revision 2 (SITC R2) for the classification of trade statistics. The above statistics may not be strictly comparable with those published for earlier years due to the change in trade classification.

General Economic Surveys Section,
Census & Statistics Department,
Hong Kong.

Tel. : 2805 6642

February 1997

End

Conference on drug education to be held next week

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Some 250 local educators, professionals, representatives of voluntary agencies and about 40 overseas participants will learn from the expertise of Pacific Rim countries on drug education next week.

First of its kind ever staged in Hong Kong, the International Conference on Drug Education in Schools is organised by the Education Department in support of the Beat Drug Campaign.

The Director of Education, Mrs Helen C P Lai YU, will officiate at the opening ceremony of the two-day conference at the Hong Kong Science Museum on February 18 (Tuesday).

On the first day of the conference, Professor Eric Single from University of Toronto will give an account on new developments in drug education in Canada.

Professor Shingo Katsuno from Hyogo University of Teacher Education, Japan will deliver a speech on school-based drug abuse prevention in his country.

Ms Thelma Guerrero-Santos from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Philippines will introduce health promotion and drug abuse prevention in schools there.

Dr Jiang-ping Sun from State Education Commission, China will give a speech on dealing with school drug use in China.

Local experts, Professor Chen Char-nei from Action Committee Against Narcotics and Mrs Jenny McGlynn from Life Education Activity Programme, will give presentations on perspectives of drug education in schools in Hong Kong and life education approach in primary schools respectively.

On the second day of the conference, Dr Jit Singh from Malaysia, Dr Teck-hong Ong from Singapore, Mr Sung-Tai Yoon from Korea, and Mr Prasert Tanskul from Thailand will brief the participants on recent developments on drug education in schools in their countries.

Professor Patricia Morgan from University of California, Berkeley will introduce ways to build relations between community-based youth drug prevention programs and schools in the USA while Mr Peter Slattery from Australia will focus on drug use and drug education.

Participants will also have opportunities to share their views and experiences on further initiatives to improve drug education in schools during the forum session.

End

Construction sites shortlisted for safety award scheme

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A total of 37 construction sites were shortlisted from 94 participating sites to enter the final assessment to compete for the six awards under the Hong Kong Construction Safety Award Scheme.

Factory inspectors of the Labour Department have inspected all the sites during the preliminary assessment period to select those with good safety performance for the final assessment. The preliminary assessment was completed earlier this month.

Final assessment will start next Monday (February 17) and will be concluded in early March. An assessment team comprising representatives from the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA), the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees' General Union (HKCIEGU), the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) and the Labour Department will visit the shortlisted sites to choose winners of the six awards.

The six awards are the Best Building Works Site Award, Best Building Works Contractor Award, Best Civil Works Site Award, Best Civil Works Contractor Award, Best Safety Team Award and Safety Workers Award.

The assessment team will base on the physical conditions and safety management system of the sites to select the winners.

In addition, the team will review the safety program records of the sites and test participants' safety knowledge during the visits. Contractors should, therefore, keep their records and documents readily available at the sites for inspections.

Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Occupational Safety and Health), Mr Lee Kai-fat, today (Friday) extended his appreciation to the construction industry's support of the scheme.

"We will continue to organise more activities to promote industrial safety and we look forward to having their continued support in the future," he said.

Mr Lee noted that a gala evening will be held on March 24 at the Hong Kong International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kowloon Bay to present prizes to the award winners.

The Hong Kong Construction Safety Award Scheme is jointly organised by the Labour Department and the Radio Television Hong Kong and co-organised by the HKCA, HKCIEGU and OSHC. This is the first major award scheme which covers projects in both the public and private sectors.

End

Proposed flyover at Pok Oi Interchange

The Highways Department has proposed to construct a flyover at Pok Oi Interchange linking Route 3 Country Park Section in the north and Yuen Long Highway in the south.

Upon the opening of Route 3 Country Park Section in mid-1998, all southbound traffic along Route 3 heading for Yuen Long and Tuen Mun and along Yuen Long Highway for Route 3 will have to go through the Pok Oi Interchange.

On the project, a spokesman for the department said: "The proposed flyover will serve as an alternative route of through traffic for motorists and provide relief to the ground traffic at the interchange."

The proposed construction works will include:

- * construction of a dual-two lane trunk road of about 400 metres in length linking Route 3 Country Park Section and the proposed slip roads, including a flyover of about 130 metres in length above the existing roundabout at Pok Oi Interchange;
- * construction of a two lane slip road on each side of the proposed road to connect it with the district distributor roads of Yuen Long Highway;
- * reconstruction of part of the existing district distributor roads of Yuen Long Highway; and
- * ancillary works including drainage, landscape works, erection of noise barriers and slope works.

A notice of the proposed works was gazetted today (Friday).

A plan showing the extent of the proposed works can be seen at the following government offices:

- * Central and Western District Office, Public Enquiry Service Centre, ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- * District Lands Office, Yuen Long, 9-11th floor, Yuen Long Government Offices, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, New Territories; and

- * Yuen Long District Office, Yuen Long District Office Building, 269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long, New Territories.

Any person objecting to the works should send the objection in writing to the Secretary for Transport, Central Government Offices, East Wing, second floor, Lower Albert Road, Central not later than April 15, 1997 describing his interest and the manner in which he will be affected.

End

Air Quality Report for January released

The Environmental Protection Department today (Friday) released air quality information for January, 1997.

The information shows no violation of air quality objective values in the month.

The report includes the monitoring results from Mong Kok, Central/Western and Kwai Chung, which represent three important land use types in the territory:

- * locations close to road traffic in built-up urban areas;
- * combined commercial and residential districts; and
- * districts close to industrial areas.

Air pollutants reported sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, total suspended particulates, and the respirable suspended particulates. All these pollutants can affect respiratory health in sufficient concentration.

Air pollution originated from various sources, including combustion, industrial and construction processes. In terms of impact on local air quality, motor vehicle exhaust is the most important source of nitrogen dioxide and airborne particulate matter, especially the smaller respirable particles.

End

Sewerage construction works in Sha Tin and Tai Po

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Sewerage construction works will soon begin in Sha Tin and Tai Po as part of a Drainage Services Department project to improve water quality in the Tolo Harbour.

When completed in 2005, the Tolo Harbour Sewerage of Unsewered Area Scheme will improve the sanitary condition of the existing unsewered areas as all sewage from 165 locations within the Tolo Harbour Catchment will be collected and treated before disposal.

The department is inviting tenders for construction of a gravity sewerage system, a pumping station and three interceptor chambers in six unsewered areas in Tai Po and Sha Tin.

These areas include Tai Po Kau, Lai Chi Hang, Shek Kwu Lung, Pan Chung and San Uk Ka in Tai Po as well as Heung Fan Liu in Sha Tin.

Works will start in May this year for completion in November 1998.

Details of the tender are published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

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Infrastructure works in Tung Chung new town

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Construction will begin in May to provide infrastructure facilities in northern Tung Chung new town.

The works will include the building of roads, footpath, cycle track, a highway bridge, a pedestrian or cycle bridge, a public works regional laboratory, stormwater and sewerage systems, waterworks and landscaping.

Construction is expected to take 39 months.

The Territory Development Department is inviting tenders for these works. Details of the tender are published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

End