



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL: 2842 8777

Tuesday, May 28, 1996

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Transcript of Governor's media session

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Pattan, after attending the foundation laying ceremony of the Hong Kong Institute of Education Tai Po Campus this (Tuesday) afternoon:

Question: Governor, Mr Lu Ping said that if he met with you in the handover ceremony, he would shake hands with you and said farewell to you. Are you delighted to hear about this? And do you think that that means the Chinese side now welcome you to join in the handover ceremony?

Governor: That's never been an issue.

Question: Are you delighted that he would shake hands with you and say farewell with you?

Governor: Well, I can't imagine any circumstances in which he wouldn't. I don't think there's anybody who I haven't been prepared to shake hands with. Director Lu Ping is a civilised man and I'm sure if he met me he'd shake hands with me just as he would with anybody else. So all you're saying is that he would behave in those circumstances with the courtesy that I would behave. So I don't regard that as a special breakthrough.

Question: Lu Ping has denied that China is frightened at the speeding up of democracy in Hong Kong, though no democrats had been put on the Preparatory Committee. So what can China do ...?

Governor: The best thing they could do would be to announce that they intended to work with the present Legislative Council. The second best thing they could do would be to announce that they were prepared to enter into a dialogue with the democrats who represent between 60 and 70 per cent of opinion in Hong Kong according to the opinion polls and the elections. Those would both be very welcome steps forward. They'll be tremendously welcomed in the community. They'll be welcomed internationally as well. And I think that it wouldn't then just be a question of everybody wanting to shake Director Lu's hand, everybody would want to throw their hats in the air.

Question: Governor, Lu Ping said the first legislation would likely begin at the end of the 1998. If that's the case, that means the provisional legislature will run as long as two years. You see any problem with that?

Governor: Of course. But I think you're obviously referring to a lengthy statement or press conference which Director Lu has given. I haven't had the chance of studying it and I don't think it's fair to comment before I've done so. I'm answering questions in the Legislative Council on Thursday, and I dare say you'll all be there and I'll be able to answer any questions on it then.

Question: Mr Lu Ping also said that the democratic party can still be operated after 1997. What's your remark on that? And also do you think that the Chinese side also should give the green light to the alliance for the patriotic and democratic movement in China?

Governor: I think that Chinese officials should continue to recognise that Hong Kong is a free society and its freedom is guaranteed after 1997. In a free society, people can make their views known, can express their views and can meet for discussion, within the law they can march and assemble. Those are all aspects of freedom. The important thing I think about these remarks and I want to repeat that you've asked me three or four questions about a statement which I haven't been able to read in full, and from what you're saying it was obviously a significant and interesting and useful statement. I imagine, I haven't seen all the subordinate clauses. But if Director Lu is saying that that the democrats have a role in Hong Kong after 1997, then I welcome that. I think it's a statement of the truth. If it's true, then the sooner Chinese officials start to talk to the democrats the better. And I think I'm sure that the democrats would themselves welcome that -- I can't speak for them -- but they'll still be here after 1997 and it's important that there is a bridge between Chinese officials and the largest political party in the community.

Question: Do you think that it is right time to invite Director Lu again ...?

Governor: You know perfectly well that as far as I am concerned, Director Lu can come to Hong Kong whenever he wishes, whenever he wants to come he will be a welcome guest. Whenever he wishes to talk to me about the future or talk to the Chief Secretary about the future, we will welcome him courteously and warmly. It's no secret that we haven't agreed with everything over the last four years, but that doesn't usually stop people talking about things.

Question: Back to the last two questions. I'd like to know do you mean that even if the alliance abide by the Hong Kong law, there is no reason for the Chinese authority to disband it after 1997?

Governor: Can I just repeat that it would be much more sensible and much more helpful for your viewers and readers if before I answer any more questions about what Director Lu has said, I've actually read it. And between now and Thursday when I'm answering questions in the Legislative Council I'll give it the attention which it deserves.

Question: An official from the Chinese Ministry of Radio, Film and Television has raised objection to your giving the opening speech to an international broadcasting conference in November ...? Governor: I saw a headline in your great organ this morning, if it's yours.

Question: It's not mine. But ...

Governor: The last I think I'm right in saying that this important organisation met in Hong Kong it was addressed by Sir Edward Youde who you'll recall was Governor.

Question: (on the Chief Executive-Designate)

Governor: I've always taken the view that the sooner there is a Chief Executive (Designate) in place the better. But obviously the most important thing is the acceptability and experience of the Chief Executive (Designate). That matters more than the speed in choosing him or her, and if it takes a bit of time to arrive at the right choice, I think people in Hong Kong will understand them. We just have to buy our time with our usual patience and cheerfulness.

Question: Is it difficult to find such a person ...?

Governor: No.

Question: Do you have some ideal persons?

Governor: I've got lots of ideas, but I'm not going to tell you what they are.

Question: Your row with the business groups. Do you think it's been resolved satisfactorily?

Governor: Well, it wasn't an argument of my making. I'm pleased to hear some of those who wrote the statement a week or so ago saying they want now to end the argument. I don't want to ... it's not in Hong Kong's interest.

Question: Do you regret saying what you did ...?

Governor: I'm absolutely determined to go on speaking the truth about Hong Kong and when you look at the coverage that I got in the United States, you'll see that I spoke up vigorously for Hong Kong and was regarded by the American press in headline after headline and article after article as setting out the best possible case for Hong Kong.

Question: Paul Harris of Human Rights Monitor ... business community and challenge them to put their money ... Human Rights Monitor ...?

Governor: Well, I don't think that I'm in quite the same position as some of those that he's mentioned. But I have privately in the past donated money to organisations which have taken an interest in human rights.

Question: What do you suggest to rebuild the mutual confidence between you and the Hong Kong business ...?

Governor: I think it's a help if some people have decided not to make any more statements. Okay. Nice to see you. I'm sorry I haven't seen that statement by Director Lu. But next time, next time I answer questions about it No, I have been out of the office for a couple of hours. But I'll answer it on, maybe if I'm out tomorrow, but otherwise on Thursday. Okay.

End

Measures to address problem of better-off tenants

* * * * *

The Governor-in-Council accepted today (Tuesday) for implementation the Housing Authority's proposed measures to address the problem of better-off tenants in public rental housing.

"Views collected during the public consultation exercise on the Housing Authority's proposals were generally supportive of the principles underlying these proposals. In particular, public housing is a public asset, and it should be allocated to those in genuine need," said the Secretary for Housing, Mr Dominic S W Wong.

"The new measures represent a realistic and reasonable step forward in addressing the problem of better-off tenants living in public rental housing flats. Better-off tenants are encouraged to buy their own homes by imposing market rents for continued stay in public rental housing, and giving affected tenants without property the priority to purchase Home Ownership Scheme flats," Mr Wong explained.

Tenants paying double rent on or before April 1, 1995, will be required to declare assets this year under the new policy. If their incomes and the net value of their assets exceed the prescribed limits, and if they choose to remain in public rental housing, they will be required to pay market rent as from April 1, 1997.

Upon introduction of the new policy, tenants paying double rent or market rent and not in possession of domestic property will enjoy second priority status in the purchase of Home Ownership Scheme flats. Those owning domestic property will have the same status as other public rental housing tenants.

"We will seek to amend the Housing Ordinance to provide for a fine, at three times the rent undercharged for the relevant period, to be imposed upon those found guilty of knowingly providing false information when declaring income and assets," Mr Wong said.

End

Estimates of US Special 301 Action's impact on HK's economy

* * * * *

The Hong Kong Government today (Tuesday) announced its broad estimates of the potential adverse impact on Hong Kong's economy, if the United States implemented its proposed Special 301 punitive tariffs on imports from China, and China implemented its counter-retaliation measures.

"According to our assessment, if the US imposed prohibitive tariffs on US\$2 billion of products drawn from the preliminary list which it published on May 15, it is possible that approximately four per cent or HK\$8.5 billion of Hong Kong's re-exports from China to the US would be lost.

"Taking into account the likely spill-over effects on other trading and economic activities, this could mean a loss of about 7,800 jobs in Hong Kong and a reduction of about 0.27 of a percentage point of the GDP growth in the year of incidence," a Trade and Industry Branch spokesman said.

"As for the Chinese government's counter-retaliatory measures, the assessment is that approximately 12.7 per cent or HK\$4.9 billion of Hong Kong's re-exports from the US to China could be affected.

"Taking into account the likely spill-over effects on other trading and economic activities, this could affect about 3,700 jobs in Hong Kong and a reduction of about 0.13 of a percentage point of the GDP growth in the year of incidence.

"So if both governments implemented their sanction action, approximately 5.3 per cent or HK\$13.4 billion of Hong Kong's re-export trade (involving China and US) could be lost, about 11,500 jobs in Hong Kong could also be lost and GDP growth could be reduced by about 0.4 of a percentage point in the year of incidence."

The assessment has not taken into account Hong Kong people's investments in China because the Government has no accurate information on them.

However, given the substantial Hong Kong investment in the manufacturing industry in Southern China, there is reason to believe that the negative impact on Hong Kong would be greater than currently assessed.

On May 15, the US government published a US\$3 billion preliminary retaliation list targeting Chinese exports to the US.

The US announced that if China failed to take action to satisfactorily implement the bilateral agreement on intellectual property rights (IPR) agreement, prohibitive tariffs would be imposed on June 17 on approximately US\$2 billion worth of products drawn from the list.

In response the Chinese government announced a list of counter-retaliatory measures, to be implemented at the same time as the US retaliation.

"Given that the US and China are our two largest trading partners, Hong Kong is naturally concerned about the adverse effects on Hong Kong of any retaliation and counter-retaliation actions which the US and the Chinese governments might take, if the two sides failed to reach a mutually acceptable solution over IPR protection," the spokesman said.

"We are therefore passing our assessment to the Chinese and US governments, together with a request that they take into account Hong Kong's interests in any decisions they may take.

"Hong Kong urges both Governments to find a mutually satisfactory solution to the dispute through dialogue and discussion."

When asked about the Government's further action, the spokesman reiterated that the IPR negotiations between China and the US was a bilateral trade issue that should be resolved by the two sides through bilateral discussions. "The Hong Kong Government does not have a direct role. Hong Kong traders may wish to respond to the US Government's invitation for public comments.

"The results of our impact assessment may be helpful to them in deciding how they might be affected, and in preparing submissions to the US government arguing against the proposed retaliation.

"We will be happy to provide the trade with information and analyses for their reference," said the spokesman.

Written comments should reach the US government by June 14. In addition, the US is holding a public hearing on June 6 and 7. The deadline for requesting attendance at the hearing was May 22 and the deadline for submissions to be presented at the hearing is May 31.

"We have been in touch with the four Hong Kong organisations which are sending representatives to the hearing, and providing assistance where we can.

"Our Washington Office will be happy to provide further assistance when the delegates arrive in Washington for the hearing. Representatives of the Hong Kong Government will also attend the hearing as observers," the spokesman said.

End

New heads for housing and trade appointed

* * * * *

The Government today (Tuesday) announced the appointment of Mr Tony Miller, currently Director-General of Trade, as Director of Housing upon the retirement of Mr Fung Tung in July. Formerly Deputy Secretary for the Treasury, Mr Alan Lai, will take over from Mr Miller as Director-General of Trade.

Commenting on the two appointments, the acting Chief Secretary, Mr Michael Suen, said he had full confidence in the two officers.

"They are veteran administrative officers who will continue to lead the two key departments with competence, determination and vision," he said.

Mr Suen also commended Mr Fung for his dedicated and distinguished service in the Housing Department in the past 36 years. Mr Fung will proceed on pre-retirement leave on July 3. Following are the biographical notes of Mr Miller, Mr Lai and Mr Fung:

John Anthony Miller, JP

Aged 46, Mr Miller joined the Government in 1972 as an Administrative Officer and rose to his present rank of AO Staff Grade A in 1993.

During the early years of his career with the Administrative Service, he served in a number of branches and departments including Urban Services Department, Home Affairs Department, Housing Branch, Housing Department, Government House and the former Administrative Services and Information Branch.

He was the first Information Co-ordinator from 1989 to 1991, and was Director of Marine from 1991 to 1993. He took up his present appointment as Director-General of Trade in March 1993.

While in the Housing Branch and Housing Department, Mr Miller was responsible for the development and review of public housing policies and programmes involving public rental estates, flatted factories, temporary housing areas and squatter areas.

Alan Lai Nin, JP

Aged 45, Mr Lai joined the Government in 1974, first as a Judicial Clerk and later as an Executive Officer II. He became an Administrative Officer in 1976 and rose to his present rank of AO Staff Grade B1 in January 1996.

The early years of his career with the AO grade were spent in Civil Service Branch, New Territories Administration, Home Affairs Department and the former Office of the Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative councils.

After a three-year secondment to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Mr Lai served for six consecutive years in the Trade Department, first as Assistant Director-General (1987-1991) and later as Deputy Director-General (1991-1993), covering various trade sectors and policy areas over the years.

He was appointed Deputy Director of Administration in 1993 and was most recently the senior Deputy Secretary for the Treasury (1995-1996). Mr Lai left the Finance Branch in mid-May.

Fung Tung, OBE, JP

Aged 60, Mr Fung joined the Government as a Housing Assistant in 1960. Rising through the ranks in the Housing Department, he became Deputy Director of Housing in 1982 and was appointed as Director in December 1990.

Mr Fung reached the retirement age of 60 in April and will proceed on pre-retirement leave on July 3 after a 90-day extension of his service. He received an OBE in 1994.

End

Salary adjustment for heads of UGC-funded school proposed

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The Government has considered the recommendations by the University Grants Committee (UGC) on the appropriate salary scales for the heads of its seven tertiary institutions, following a consultancy review recently conducted by UGC.

"The Government accepts the findings of the consultancy and the UGC's recommendations that the heads of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) are within the same job evaluation boundaries as policy secretaries in the civil service and that they should be remunerated at the D8 salary level on the Civil Service Directorate pay scale.

"As for the heads of the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and Lingnan College (LC), we accept that the former is within the same job evaluation boundaries as heads of Group I departments in the civil service whereas the latter the heads of Group II departments.

"The two should therefore be remunerated at the D7 and D6 salary levels respectively," a government spokesman said today (Tuesday).

The present salary levels of the heads of HKU, CUHK and HKUST are pegged at 98% of the Chief Secretary's salary, and those of the heads of PolyU and CityU at D7, while that of the head of HKBU and LC at D6 and D5 respectively. The spokesman pointed out that the proposed salary levels would lead to downward adjustments in the salaries of the heads of HKU, CUHK and HKUST.

However, he stressed that the incumbents would not be affected.

"We accept that these institutional heads are entitled to their contractual rights and should therefore be allowed to retain their present salaries under their current contracts until their salaries are overtaken by the D8 salary.

"Moreover, we accept that for staff management reasons and in the interests of continuity, the governing bodies of the institutions should be allowed the flexibility of offering the incumbents their present salary levels in dollar terms on a personal basis upon entering into further contracts, provided the salary levels would be frozen until they are overtaken by the D8 level," the spokesman said.

As regards the upward salary adjustments for the heads of PolyU, CityU, HKBU and LC, the spokesman said the Government had difficulty backdating the salary adjustments for the four heads to November 1994 as recommended by UGC.

The UGC's recommendation is based on the fact the PolyU, CityU and HKBU legally acquired the status and title of universities in November 1994.

Although LC has yet to attain university status, in order to maintain relativities with academic staff on university salary scales at other institutions, UGC recommends that the proposed revised remuneration of the head of LC should be backdated to the same date.

"As it is not generally government policy to backdate the implementation of salary reviews in the Civil Service, this policy should apply equally to subvented organisations," the spokesman explained. "Subject to the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council of the proposed salary levels, the upward adjustment of salaries should therefore be from a current date."

The Government would seek the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council next month of the proposed salary levels and implementation arrangements.

The consultancy study reviewed the current salary levels of the heads of UGC-funded institutions, having regard to two factors:

- * the broad comparability of the total remuneration packages of the heads with those of grades of similar level of responsibilities in the Civil Service; and
- * the comparability with remuneration packages of heads of leading universities in which English is used as a medium of instruction in the Asia Pacific region, the United Kingdom and the United States.

End

Lantau taxi fare increases approved

* * * * *

The Governor-in-Council today (Tuesday) approved a 10 per cent fare increase for Lantau taxis with effect from July 19.

Under the new fare scale, the flagfall charge for the first two kilometres will be increased by \$1 to \$11, while the fare for every subsequent 0.2 kilometre and the waiting time charge per minute will be increased by 10 cents to \$1.10. The baggage surcharge will be increased by \$1 to \$5, and the telephone booking surcharge will remain unchanged at \$5.

A government spokesman said Lantau taxi fares were last increased by 11.1 per cent in July last year. The Lantau Taxi Association has applied to increase fares by 19 per cent.

"The Executive Council considered that the fare rise is necessary to ensure the financial viability of Lantau taxi operations," the spokesman said.

"It will also help maintain an acceptable level of taxi service on Lantau, and a reasonable fare differential between Lantau taxis and New Lantao Bus services."

End

Eighth JLG meeting on transitional budget

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The Sino-British Joint Liaison Group will hold their eighth round of expert talks on May 29 and 30 in Hong Kong to discuss the preparation of Hong Kong's transitional budget and related matters.

The British team will be led by the Secretary for the Treasury of the Hong Kong Government, Mr K C Kwong. The Chinese team will be led by the Chinese Representative on the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group, Mr Chen Zuo'er. They will be assisted by experts.

End

Government land adjoining Hilton Hotel site granted

* * * * *

The Director of Lands, Mr Bob Pope, announced that the Governor-in-Council agreed today (Tuesday) to grant to Cheung Kong the government land adjoining the old Hilton Hotel site, where the Garden Road Multi-Storey car park and Beaconsfield House currently stand.

The grant would be at a premium of \$3,027.4 million.

He said that the premium was assessed at full market value and reflected the fact that Cheung Kong are required to reprovide a 800-space public car park, a post office and a public toilet and to provide at least 5,200 square metres of open space at their own expense.

He emphasised that the premium charged was in line with assessments made by two independent valuers commissioned by the department.

Mr Pope said that Cheung Kong were required to ensure that at least 80 per cent of the car parking spaces were available to the public on an hourly basis. They are also required to provide at least 500 public car parking spaces within their development before the existing car park is demolished.

He added that Cheung Kong are required to provide 300 car parking spaces for use by occupants of the building in addition to the 800 spaces in the public car park.

End

External trade figures for April

* * * * *

There was a significant rebound across-the-board in trade performance in April 1996 as compared to that in March. Re-exports rose markedly, while domestic exports and imports also registered increases. These are shown in the external trade figures for April released today (Tuesday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The value of total exports (comprising re-exports and domestic exports) increased by 14% over a year earlier to \$116.1 billion in April 1996.

Within total exports, the value of re-exports rose by 17% to \$98.9 billion. The value of domestic exports likewise returned to a positive growth of 1.8%, to \$17.2 billion. Meanwhile, the value of imports increased by 8.4% over a year earlier to \$133 billion in April 1996.

As the value of total exports in April 1996 was smaller than that of total imports, a visible trade deficit of \$17 billion, equivalent to 13% of the value of imports, was recorded. This was nevertheless smaller than the deficit of \$21.3 billion, equivalent to 17% of the value of imports, in April 1995.

For the first four months of 1996 as a whole, the value of total exports grew by 8% over the same period last year. Within this total, the value of re-exports rose by 10%, while that of domestic exports decreased by 4%. The value of imports showed an increase of 6.9%.

In the first four months of 1996, a visible trade deficit of \$56.7 billion, equivalent to 12% of the value of imports, was recorded. This was also smaller than the deficit of \$56.9 billion, equivalent to 13% of the value of imports, recorded in the same period last year.

Commenting on the latest trade figures, a government spokesman said the sharp rebound in April suggested that the abrupt setback in March was probably only temporary.

On retained imports, a decline was however recorded, and this probably reflected some slow-down in inventory build-up after the substantial accumulation in the earlier periods.

A detailed analysis of Hong Kong's external trade for April 1996, by commodity and country, will be released in mid-June.

Census & Statistics Department, Hong Kong
香港政府統計處

External Trade Figures for April 1996

一九九六年四月份對外貿易數字

(HK\$ Million)
百萬港元

| MERCHANDISE TRADE VALUES for April 1996 | | 一九九六年四月份商品貿易貨值 | | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|-------|--|---------|
| | Domestic Exports | | 港產品出口 | | 17,177 |
| | Re-exports | | 轉口 | | 98,907 |
| | Total Exports | | 整體出口 | | 116,083 |
| | Imports | | 進口 | | 133,037 |
| | Trade balance | | 貿易差額 | | -16,954 |

| COMPARATIVE FIGURES | 比較數字 | Change 變動 | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| | | April 1996 一九九六年四月 | April 1995 一九九五年四月 | Value 貨值 | % 百分率 |
| Same month last year | 去年同期 | | | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 17,177 (14.8%) | 16,868 (16.6%) | +308 | +1.8 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 98,907 | 84,552 | +14,355 | +17.0 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 116,083 | 101,421 | +14,663 | +14.5 |
| Imports | 進口 | 133,037 | 122,755 | +10,282 | +8.4 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -16,954 | -21,334 | +4,380 | |
| Last month | 上月 | April 1996 一九九六年四月 | March 1996 一九九六年三月 | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 17,177 (14.8%) | 14,379 (14.9%) | +2,798 | +19.5 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 98,907 | 82,304 | +16,603 | +20.2 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 116,083 | 96,683 | +19,401 | +20.1 |
| Imports | 進口 | 133,037 | 120,808 | +12,229 | +10.1 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -16,954 | -24,125 | +7,172 | |
| Latest 3 months | 最近三個月 | Feb 96 to Apr 96 九六年二月至四月 | Feb 95 to Apr 95 九五年二月至四月 | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 45,747 (15.1%) | 49,278 (16.9%) | -3,531 | -7.2 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 257,438 | 241,478 | +15,960 | +6.6 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 303,185 | 290,756 | +12,429 | +4.3 |
| Imports | 進口 | 349,819 | 344,074 | +5,745 | +1.7 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -46,634 | -53,318 | +6,684 | |
| Calendar year to-date | 本年首四個月 | Jan-Apr 1996 九六年一月至四月 | Jan-Apr 1995 九五年一月至四月 | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 64,741 (15.3%) | 67,456 (17.2%) | -2,715 | -4.0 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 358,629 | 324,620 | +34,009 | +10.5 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 423,370 | 392,077 | +31,294 | +8.0 |
| Imports | 進口 | 480,097 | 449,018 | +31,079 | +6.9 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -56,727 | -56,941 | +214 | |
| Last 12 months | 過去十二個月 | May 95 to Apr 96 九五年五月 至九六年四月 | May 94 to Apr 95 九四年五月 至九五年四月 | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 228,942 (16.6%) | 228,190 (18.6%) | +752 | +0.3 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 1,146,479 | 1,000,464 | +146,015 | +14.6 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 1,375,421 | 1,228,654 | +146,767 | +11.9 |
| Imports | 進口 | 1,522,200 | 1,341,906 | +180,295 | +13.4 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -146,780 | -113,252 | -33,528 | |

Note: Value of domestic exports and value of re-exports may not add up to the value of total exports due to rounding.

This sheet can be obtained free of charge from:
Trade Statistics Dissemination Section
Census and Statistics Department
Address: 19/F., Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Tel: 2582 4915 Fax: 2802 1101

註: 由於進位關係, 港產品出口貨值加上轉口貨值, 可能會與整體出口貨值略有出入。

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電話: 2582 4915 傳真: 2802 1101

SRC on official visit to Singapore

* * * * *

The Secretary for Recreation and Culture, Mr Chau Tak-hay, will leave for Singapore tomorrow (Wednesday) for an official visit at the invitation of the Singapore Minister for Information and the Arts. "The visit will enhance the friendly ties between Hong Kong and Singapore in the areas for which Mr Chau has policy responsibility - broadcasting, sport and culture," a government spokesman said.

In addition to his meetings with the Minister for Information and the Arts, Brigadier-General George Yeo, Mr Chau will also call on the Minister for Community Development, Mr Abdullah Tarmugi.

On Thursday (May 30), Mr Chau will attend the opening of the 1996 Singapore Arts Festival as a special guest of the Minister for Information and the Arts.

Mr Chau will also visit the Singapore Broadcasting Authority, the National Arts Council, the National Heritage Board, the Singapore Art Museum and the Singapore Sports Council.

Mr Chau will return to Hong Kong on Monday (June 3).

End

New measures for applying government temporary jobs

* * * * *

The Labour Department announced today (Tuesday) that from Saturday (June 1) until August 31, new measures would be introduced to handle applications for government temporary jobs in order to save time for job seekers.

Under the new arrangement, job seekers will not be required to queue outside the offices of the Local Employment Service (LES) for registrations. Instead, information on vacancies will be posted up in LES offices.

Those interested in the jobs can apply by filling in standard application forms (GF 340) and send them to the Central Recruitment Unit (CRU) of the Labour Department in Room 500-508, Citylink Plaza, No 1 Sha Tin Station Circuit, Sha Tin. CRU will then refer the applications to the relevant recruiting departments which in turn will arrange their own selection interviews. Enquiries on selection interviews can be made directly to the individual department concerned.

"An applicant can apply more than one job. However, each application should be made under a separate application form to be enclosed in a separate envelop to facilitate CRU's distribution process," a spokesman for the Labour Department said. "The job number and title together with the name of the recruiting department should also be indicated on the bottom left hand corner of the envelop.

"Failure to do so may result in the application not being transferred successfully to the relevant departments," he added.

Application forms could be obtained at all LES offices and district offices during office hours.

This special arrangement will only apply to government temporary jobs. Procedures for applying other government jobs remain unchanged.

End

Seat belt regulations effective on Saturday

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The Government has amended existing regulations to extend the requirement for compulsory fitting and wearing of seat belts to include the rear seats of private cars, and any middle front seats in private cars, taxis, light buses and goods vehicles.

New requirements have also been introduced for the wearing of child safety restraints.

Details of the new requirements are contained in the Road Traffic (Safety Equipment) Regulations 1995 which was gazetted on June 23, 1995.

The new requirements will take effect on Saturday (June 1). For private cars registered on or after this date, the rear seats must be fitted with seat belts. The wearing of rear seat belts will also be made compulsory from the date for those private cars in which they are fitted.

There was a clear evidence that the wearing of seat belts would reduce the number and severity of injuries suffered in traffic accidents, a spokesman for the Transport Department said today (Tuesday).

Statistics showed that the number of injuries to drivers and front seat passengers in private cars fell by 28 per cent in the year after seat belt wearing was made compulsory in 1983. Fatal and serious injuries dropped by 51 per cent. Meanwhile, traffic accident statistics for 1995 showed that 1,401 rear seat passengers in private cars (mainly unbelted) were injured in traffic accidents.

"Rear seat passengers in private cars are therefore an at-risk group to whom compulsory seat belt wearing should be extended," he added.

For children who are two years of age or less and are sitting in the rear seats, the spokesman said the new regulations required that they should wear a child restraints when one was available.

All private cars, taxis, light buses and goods vehicles registered on or after June 1, 1996, which have middle front seats will need these to be fitted with seat belts. The wearing of such seat belts, where provided, will also become compulsory with effect from Saturday (June 1).

End

International conference on value management

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The first international conference on value management will be held in Hong Kong tomorrow (Wednesday) and on Thursday.

With the theme "Value Management in the Pacific Rim", the conference is jointly organised by the Architectural Services Department (Arch SD) and the Hong Kong Institute of Value Management.

The conference, to be held at the Pacific Place Conference Centre, Queensway, between 9 am and 5 pm daily, is part of a series of functions being organised to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Arch SD. The Secretary for Works, Mr Kwong Hon-sang, will deliver a keynote address at the conference tomorrow.

A total of 17 international top-notch professionals and experts from Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States and Hong Kong will also be speaking on the subject.

Topics covered during the conference will include construction, business management, manufacturing, service industries, utility companies and human resources.

End

Findings on provision of primary graduate teachers released

The Government announced today (Tuesday) the findings of the Working Group on Provision of Primary Graduate Teachers.

The Working Group was set up last August to review the primary graduate teacher scheme in view of concerns expressed over the pace of the provision of primary graduate teachers and other issues concerning the scheme.

In releasing the findings of the Working Group, the Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joshua Law, noted that the Government had endorsed in general the Working Group's recommendations to improve the scheme. "The implementation of the proposed measures will commence in 1996-97," he said.

On the provision of primary graduate teachers, Mr Law said that to implement the scheme, 180 graduate posts were created in 1994-95 and 185 in 1995-96. An additional 300 graduate posts will be created in 1996-97 as announced by the Governor in his 1995 Policy Address.

"The Working Group notes that if the planning target of upgrading 35 per cent of the primary teacher posts to graduate posts is to be fulfilled by the year 2007 as recommended in the Education Commission Report No 5, the rate of provision would need to be increased to at least 500 per year.

"However, such increase would depend on the securing of the additional resources required. Given such constraint, it would not be possible for Government to make a commitment at this stage regarding the specific rate at which the provision of primary graduate teachers should be increased in future.

"But it remains our intention to speed up the rate of provision of primary graduate teachers, having regard to the planning target of 35 per cent by the year 2007, the additional resources that can be secured for this purpose, and the extent to which the quality of primary education has been enhanced.

"In this connection the Government agrees with the Working Group that a more comprehensive review should be conducted in 1999-2000, that is five years after the scheme has been operated."

Regarding other aspects of the review, Mr Law said that the Working Group had proposed to reserve for pre-service graduates 20 per cent of the primary graduate teacher posts created each year starting from 1996-97.

"This is to maintain the attractiveness of the teaching career in the primary school level to good quality new teachers," he said.

"To implement the proposal, the Working Group suggests that for appointment to the Primary School Master grade, a new teacher should possess a Bachelor of Education degree in Primary Education.

"For serving teachers, it is proposed that starting from 1996/97, those who possess a recognised Hong Kong first degree or equivalent should be eligible for appointment to the primary graduate teacher posts, and the School Management Committee's (SMC) assessment should be based on individual teachers' merits and performance.

"The relevance requirement to a degree in primary education or special education or primary school curriculum for serving teachers should be waived."

Mr Law pointed out that the Working Group recognised the need to preserve promotion prospects for non-graduates.

"However, in view of the complexity of the issues involved, it is recommended that the matter should continue to be pursued outside the Working Group, in order not to delay the implementation of other recommendations of the Working Group, in particular the appointment of primary graduate teachers in 1996-97.

"It is expected that the details should be worked out in time for the appointment of primary graduate teachers in 1997-98," Mr Law said.

The Working Group also recommended that starting from 1996-97, SMCs, instead of the Education Department (ED), should handle their own recruitment and appoint graduate teachers by themselves.

"The recommendation is made in response to an increasing demand from educational bodies for direct appointment of primary graduate teachers and in accordance with the Code of Aid for Primary Schools which states that the SMC is the employer of teachers in aided schools," said Mr Law.

The Education Department will soon issue circulars to both Government and aided schools on appointment of pre-service and serving teachers for 1996-97.

End

121 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight

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A group of 121 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam today (Tuesday) on the 39th flight under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP). All of the returnees, comprising 52 men, 31 women, 24 boys and 14 girls, are from North Vietnam.

The majority of them arrived in Hong Kong in 1989, with the remaining in 1991, 1995 and 1996.

The group brought to 3,129 the total number repatriated on ORP flights since November 1991.

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Orderly Repatriation Programme operation this (Tuesday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The two monitors came from two non-governmental organisations. They were Ms Dawn Li from Oxfam and Mr Daniel Chu from Christian Action.

End

Housing chief designate pleased with appointment

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In response to press enquiries about his impending posting to head the Housing Department in July, the Director-General of Trade, Mr Tony Miller, said today (Tuesday) that he was pleased with the appointment which he considered as a new challenge in a key area so close to the livelihood of the community.

"I look forward to serving the Housing Authority with the best of my ability and co-operating harmoniously with its Chairman, Rosanna Wong, members of the Authority and colleagues in the Housing Department in implementing the Government's housing policy," he said.

Asked to comment on Mr Alan Lai's appointment as his successor, Mr Miller said: "Mr Lai is very experienced in the trade field, having previously served as Assistant Director-General of Trade and Deputy Director-General of Trade for six years. He is the best candidate for the job."

End

Recruitment of native-speaking English teachers

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The Education Department is recruiting some 100 native-speaking English teachers for Hong Kong's secondary schools in the 1996-97 school year.

The recruitment is part of a Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) Scheme. It followed the Government's acceptance of a recommendation in Education Commission Report No 6 that schools should be encouraged to employ on local terms more native English speakers, who are qualified English language teachers, to teach the subject.

It is intended that the first batch of native-speaking English teachers should be in service in September.

The NETs may be employed by participating schools directly or through the Education Department.

Candidates who wish to apply for the NET posts must be native English speakers who possess (i) a Bachelor's degree, preferably majoring in English Language or English Literature or English Studies or a Modern Language; and (ii) at least two years relevant post-graduate experience of teaching English at secondary level or above; and (iii) a Teaching of English as a Foreign Language or a Second Language (TEFL/TESL) qualification at least at the diploma level, or a Certificate in Education or equivalent.

The appointment of NETs will be on a two-year contract, subject to renewal after expiry. NETs will receive a 25 per cent gratuity on completion of the contract. Free passages and baggage allowance will be provided.

The salary scale will be \$18,145 to \$38,210 per month. Candidates with a Certificate in Education or equivalent will enter at \$19,990 per month. Those without such a certificate will enter at the lowest point of the pay scale and will not be permitted to proceed beyond \$29,005 per month. Increments may be awarded for recognised relevant post-degree teaching experience at secondary school level or above.

Applications should be made to the Teacher Recruitment Information Office, Education Department, 14th floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Enquiries can be directed to the same office on 2892 6305 or by fax to 2892 6304.

End

Souvenir cover to mark stamp exhibition

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The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, today (Tuesday) announced that a souvenir cover will be issued on June 8 to commemorate Hong Kong Post Office's participation in CAPEX '96 World Philatelic Exhibition which will be held in Toronto, Canada, from June 8 to 16.

The souvenir cover will be on sale at all post offices at \$2 each as from Saturday (June 1).

Hand-back service will be provided at all post offices on June 8 to official and privately made covers bearing an indication of the event. A special postmark and a cachet for general cancellation purposes will also be introduced on the same day.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

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| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Tender date | 28 May 1996 |
| Paper on offer | EF bills |
| Issue number | Q622 |
| Issue date | 29 May 1996 |
| Maturity date | 28 Aug 1996 |
| Coupon | - |
| Amount applied | HK\$6,048 MN |
| Amount allotted | HK\$1,500 MN |
| Average yield accepted | 5.13 PCT |
| Highest yield accepted | 5.13 PCT |
| Pro rata ratio | About 72 PCT |
| Average tender yield | 5.14 PCT |

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 3 Jun 1996

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Tender date | 4 Jun 1996 | 4 Jun 1996 |
| Paper on offer | EF bills | EF bills |
| Issue number | Q623 | H666 |
| Issue date | 5 Jun 1996 | 5 Jun 1996 |
| Maturity date | 4 Sept 1996 | 4 Dec 1996 |
| Tenor | 91 days | 182 days |
| Amount on offer | HK\$1,500+300MN | HK\$800+160MN |

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 | 2,258 | 0930 | -296 |
| Closing balance in the account | 1,627 | 1000 | -296 |
| Change attributable to : | | 1100 | -296 |
| Money market activity | -326 | 1200 | -299 |
| LAF today | -305 | 1500 | -299 |
| | | 1600 | -326 |

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.5 *+0.2* 28.5.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

| EF bills | | EF notes | | | | |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| Terms | Yield | Term | Issue | Coupon | Price | Yield |
| 1 week | 5.17 | 2 years | 2805 | 6.30 | 100.48 | 6.13 |
| 1 month | 5.08 | 3 years | 3904 | 6.30 | 99.52 | 6.59 |
| 3 months | 5.14 | 5 years | 5103 | 6.75 | 98.45 | 7.26 |
| 6 months | 5.22 | 7 years | 7305 | 7.60 | 100.11 | 7.72 |
| 12 months | 5.54 | 5 years | M502 | 7.30 | 99.78 | 7.49 |

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$8,881 million

Closed May 28, 1996

End