



## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES  
GARDEN ROAD, 5th-8th FLOORS, MURRAY BUILDING,  
HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Dear DIB Clients

I write to thank you for your support over the past years in subscribing to the Daily Information Bulletin (DIB).

In the meantime, I am glad to inform you that DIB has now been uploaded onto the Hong Kong Government Home Page on the Internet (<http://www.info.gov.hk/isd/news/index.htm>) from April 1, 1997.

This arrangement has ensured that existing DIB subscribers as well as the general public can have quicker access to the press releases issued daily by the Hong Kong Government through the Information Superhighway.

Following the upgrading of services, the DIB will no longer be printed in hard copies and distributed by post to subscribers with effect from May 1, 1997.

This decision will do good to the community at large in terms of environmental protection as 3.1 million sheets of A4-size paper will be saved each year, not to mention the saving of postage and large quantity of ink for printing.

If you wish to have the DIB sent directly to your Internet e-mail account, please complete and return the attached slip to GIS, 8th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong, before May 1, 1997 or by fax through 2845 9078. You can, of course, provide your e-mail account to us through our Internet mail account : [isdnews@isd.gcn.gov.hk](mailto:isdnews@isd.gcn.gov.hk).

It is the policy of this department that we should aim at running a paperless office in the long run, but if you have difficulties in the new arrangements, please contact the undersigned at 2842 8738.

*Robert Yip*  
(Robert YIP)

for Director of Information Services

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### Return Slip

To : GIS, 8th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong  
(Attn : Robert Yip)

I would like to receive the Daily Information Bulletin  
through my Internet e-mail account \_\_\_\_\_  
from May 1, 1997.



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Thursday, April 3, 1997

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Measures taken to tackle TB cases in Tsuen Wan kindergarten .....	1
Situation closely monitored .....	3
US additional import measures .....	3
First expressway completed on Lantau .....	5
Secretary for Treasury to attend APEC Finance Ministers Meeting .....	7
Land Registry statistics for March released .....	8
Vessel masters urged to be cautious before fireworks voyage .....	8
Simplified procedures for applying travel ex gratia payment .....	10
Director convicted for tax evasion .....	11
Roving exhibition to promote consultation on housing strategy .....	12
VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight .....	14
Monitors' report submitted to Chief Secretary .....	14
Mail services to Italy may be subject to delay .....	14

Measures taken to tackle TB cases in Tsuen Wan kindergarten

\* \* \* \* \*

The following is issued in response to press enquiries on TB contact screening conducted in a Tsuen Wan kindergarten:

A number of measures including contact screening had been taken by the Department of Health (DH) upon notification of two tuberculosis (TB) cases in a Tsuen Wan kindergarten.

Parents of the kindergarten were asked to take advantage of these measures to provide the best care and protection possible for their kids.

Consultant Chest Physician i/c of the Department, Dr Tam Cheuk-ming said today (Thursday) that treatment available now for most TB cases are highly effective. The most important thing is for those with symptoms suspicious of TB to come forward for examination and treatment.

"The most effective way of controlling TB is by noting symptoms which are suspicious of TB, like cough over three to four weeks, blood in sputum, loss of weight, fever, and night sweating," he said.

"Anyone who has such symptoms should seek medical advice early."

Dr Tam noted that in the past two and a half months, four TB cases had occurred in a Tsuen Wan kindergarten.

The notification of the first two cases, one involving a student and the other a staff, were received by DH in late January and early February.

Upon notification, the Department started public health measures including contact screening for staff and students.

In the meantime, notification of a third case involving another student was received.

The contact screening and examinations conducted also uncovered a fourth TB case involving a student. Dr Tam stressed that all four cases identified were not the infectious type of tuberculosis.

Appropriate treatment had been given to the four patients immediately upon diagnosis and all were making satisfactory progress.

Of the some 290 students in the kindergarten, about 50 students had yet to come forward for screening and examinations. Parents are again urged to contact the South Kwai Chung Chest Clinic for assistance (Tel no. 2419 1721).

The Department of Health had organised talks for the school and parents to update them on progress of the investigation and clarify matters relating to the disease.

At the same time, the Department would continue to monitor the situation in the next three months and take chest X-ray examinations again for children that required follow-up.

To tackle the TB problem effectively, Dr Tam advised the public:

- to take children for BCG vaccination if they have not been vaccinated before
- to consult doctors promptly if they have symptoms suspicious of TB, like cough over three to four weeks, blood in sputum, loss of weight, fever and night sweating
- to ensure good indoor ventilation
- to maintain good bodily resistance by leading a healthy life-style, including balanced diet, adequate rest and avoiding overwork and stress

At present, there are 17 Chest Clinics under the Department of Health which provide chest X-ray examinations and free medical treatment to TB patients throughout the territory.

General information on TB are also available by calling the Department's Central Health Education Hotline on Tel. no. 2833 0111.

End

Situation closely monitored

\* \* \* \* \*

In response to media enquiries on a tuberculosis case involving a staff member of a Tsuen Wan kindergarten, the Assistant Director of Education (Schools), Mr C K Tam, said today (Thursday):

"We are in close touch with our colleagues in the Department of Health to monitor the situation.

"We urge parents concerned to allow their children to take the contact screening and examination in their own interest, if they have not yet done so. Parents should also be alert over their children's health conditions.

"Meanwhile, our department is reviewing guidelines on recruitment health checks in respect of school staff."

End

US additional import measures

\* \* \* \* \*

A Government spokesman today (Thursday) welcomes the United States (US) Customs' decision to remove, with effect from May 1, the single entry bond requirement that has been imposed on eight categories of Hong Kong garment products since last June. The requirement has led to increased costs and administrative burden to the trade.

"This is welcome. We are also pleased to note that the US has decided not to impose the single entry bond requirement on the four categories of Hong Kong products on the US 'watch-list', and that the US Customs will no longer maintain this 'watch-list'," the spokesman said.

"We note the US Customs' recognition of the progress and co-operation by the Hong Kong Government in combating illegal transshipment, and their support for our continued work.

"We have never claimed that illegal transshipment is not a problem, otherwise we would not have been making so much effort in detecting and prosecuting firms for illegal transshipment.

"We believe that we have an effective system to deal with the problem of illegal transshipment, particularly with the series of new initiatives that we have introduced in the past year or so.

"We will continue with these initiatives," the spokesman added.

"As part of our efforts against illegal transshipment, co-operation with trading partners has always been important.

"We look forward to continuing to work in co-operation with the US and other trading partners to enhance both sides' effectiveness in the common objective of tackling illegal transshipment," the spokesman said.

With reference to the new measures announced by the US Customs, the spokesman said the Government has reservations as to the need for the US Customs to review the sufficiency of the coverage of the continuous bond for US importers who have been importing from Hong Kong.

"This is one of the things that we will continue to discuss with the US Customs and we will try to find out how in practice the US Customs implement the review of continuous bond coverage.

"We will wish to be satisfied that such review will not in actual practice lead to adverse impact on our trade with the US," the spokesman said.

The US Customs announced on April 2 (Washington time) the outcome of their review of the additional import measures imposed on certain Hong Kong garment imports since June 1996.

The US Customs also announced that it would be reviewing the continuous bond sufficiency for all importers of textiles products claiming country of origin of Hong Kong and that companies with insufficient coverage can anticipate that the US Customs would require increased bond coverage.

In June 1996, the US Customs imposed a number of additional import measures on 10 categories of Hong Kong garments. They are dresses (Categories 336/636), skirts (Categories 342/442/642), nightwear (Category 351), underwear (Categories 352/652) and suits (Categories 443/643).

The measures include additional requirements in import documentation, the requirement for a single entry bond, and the requirement for production verification by the US Customs in Hong Kong factories.

Hong Kong has objected to unilateral imposition of the additional requirements, pointing out that they are applied to the relevant products only from Hong Kong and are therefore discriminatory.

In September 1996, the US Customs started to put four more categories of Hong Kong products on a "watch-list": cotton gloves (Category 331), cotton knit shirts (Category 338/339), women's and girls' cotton pants (Category 348) and cotton dressing gowns (Category 350). Should the monitoring categories indicate the possibility of illegal transshipment, the US Customs could impose similar additional import measures.

In October 1996, after a third round of bilateral consultations, the US Customs decided to remove the single entry bond for two of the 10 categories subject to additional measures: suits (Categories 443 and 643).

The two sides conducted two rounds of joint factory visits in Hong Kong in September 1996 and January 1997. After the January joint visit, the US Customs said that they would review the way forward around end of March.

End

#### First expressway completed on Lantau

\* \* \* \* \*

The North Lantau Expressway, the first expressway constructed on Lantau, will be an essential link between the urban areas and the new airport and Tung Chung New Town, the Secretary for Works, Mr H S Kwong, said at a ceremony to mark the completion of the 12.5-kilometre highway this (Thursday) morning.

It will also open up new opportunities for development on Lantau, he said.

"The North Lantau Expressway, as it stands completed in front of you all today, demonstrates the accomplishment of highway construction in Hong Kong through the hard work of all those involved in this project," he said.

Hong Kong had seen its most important changes in infrastructure development during the past few years, Mr Kwong said.

"As many projects are coming to fruition, the time has now come to reap the harvest. The West Kowloon Expressway, Kwai Chung Viaduct, Rambler Channel Bridge and Cheung Ching Tunnel have been completed recently and some have already been opened to traffic.

"The Western Harbour Crossing and the Lantau Link will also be complete later this month. By May 22 this year, the balance of the above highways will be open to traffic and we shall be able to travel on this first class transport corridor all the way from Hong Kong Island to Tung Chung and in April 1998 to the new airport," he said.

Mr Kwong said that various activities had been organised to commemorate the completion of the road link to the airport, including an international duathlon race on the North Lantau Expressway on April 20, an opening ceremony of the Lantau Link on April 27, an international marathon and 10-kilometre run on the Lantau Link and the North Lantau Expressway on May 4 and the Community Chest's Walk for a Million on the Lantau Link on May 11.

"These international events will, I trust, bring our new infrastructure works to the attention of our international friends, and will enable the public to experience the scale and magnificence of this highway before it is opened to traffic," he said.

Mr Kwong later performed the ribbon-cutting with other officiating guests, including the acting Secretary for Transport, Mr Paul Leung, Director of Highways, Mr K S Leung, and Director of the New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office, Mr Billy Lam.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Mr K S Leung said that the North Lantau Expressway is a dual three-lane, high speed road running along the northern coast of Lantau Island. It connects the Lantau Link at the east with the new airport at Chek Lap Kok at the west.

The expressway project also provides a services road to accommodate public utilities to serve the new airport and the Tung Chung New Town. This special road would reduce the effect of utility maintenance on expressway traffic to a minimum, he said.

Mr Leung said that the expressway represented an "international effort" with consultants and contractors from various parts of the world participating in the project, including Hong Kong, China, Australia, Germany, Holland, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

"Within a period of four-and-a-half-years, the rugged and uninhabited shoreline of the north Lantau coast has been completely transformed. About seven million cubic metres of soil and rock have been excavated, 20 million cubic metres of marine sand have been imported forming 190 hectares of land and more than nine kilometres of seawalls built.

"During peak construction, the project deployed a dredging fleet which was one of the largest in the world. Vehicular bridges, pedestrian subways and various highway structures have also been constructed amongst which are the three big bridges each 320 metres long, spanning the sea channel between Lantau and Chek Lap Kok Island," he said.

The expressway had been divided into three sections, namely Yam O, Tai Ho and Tung Chung, for construction to suit the location and nature of works, the completion dates of sites for airport support facilities and the Tung Chung new town development programme, Mr Leung said.

"Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the project has been the co-ordination of the numerous interfaces with projects of other parties, such as the Airport Authority, Mass Transit Railway Corporation, Territory Development Department and utility companies. This has required a high level of co-ordination and effort by all parties during the planning, design and construction stages of the project," he said.

End

Secretary for Treasury to attend APEC Finance Ministers Meeting

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The Secretary for the Treasury, Mr K C Kwong, will depart for the Philippines tomorrow (Friday) for the Fourth Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Finance Ministers Meeting (FMM) to be held in Cebu between April 4 and 6.

He will lead an eight-member delegation, with representatives from the Finance Branch, the Financial Services Branch and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. The APEC FMM will discuss a wide range of financial issues, including maintaining stable capital flows and exchange rates, accelerating the development of financial and capital markets and stimulating private sector participation in infrastructure development.

Mr Kwong will return to Hong Kong on Monday (April 7).

End

Land Registry statistics for March released

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A total of 16,124 sale and purchase agreements for building units, including residential and non-residential properties, were lodged with the Land Registry last month (March).

The figure represented a decrease of five per cent from February this year and an increase of 35.3 per cent over March last year.

The total consideration of these agreements in the month was \$64.9 billion, down 11.7 per cent but up 73.5 per cent respectively when compared with the amounts for February 1997 and March last year.

The figures were contained in the monthly statistics released today (Thursday) by the Land Registry on deeds relating to property transactions received for registration in the Urban and New Territories Land Registries in March 1997.

Relevant statistics for February 1997 and March 1996 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 related 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.

End

Vessel masters urged to be cautious before fireworks voyage

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Masters and operators of vessels intending to sail their vessels to the Lantau Link/Ma Wan Channel area on April 27 evening for viewing the fireworks display of the Lantau Link opening ceremony should be cautious and plan carefully before proceeding on the voyage, the Marine Department said today (Thursday).

The fireworks display will take place in the Ma Wan Fairway, in the area of Tsing Ma Bridge, at about 8 pm on April 27. The fireworks will be discharged from three barges anchored in the Ma Wan Fairway north of Tsing Ma Bridge.

A spokesman for the department reminded vessel masters and operators that the area is a busy and complicated water area. There are strong currents in the waters while navigation routes congruent.

The spokesman said that only those masters and persons-in-charge of vessels familiar with navigating in the water area should consider taking their vessels to the area for watching the fireworks display.

A closed area encompassing the fireworks display barges will be established between 2 pm and 11 pm on April 27. (The closed area is showed in the map with straight lines and shore lines joining positions A, B, C, D, E and F.)

During the period, the area will be closed to all marine traffic except craft directly involved in the display, Government launches and other vessels approved by the Director of Marine.

The viewing place for vessels will be designated to the south of the closed area.

The spokesman said all vessels staying within the designated viewing area should comply with the directions of Government patrol launches.

The designated viewing area is small and can only accommodate a limited number of such vessels. Government patrol craft will turn away vessels once the viewing area is full.

The spokesman reminded masters, owners and operators of vessels proceeding on the voyage for viewing the display should not let passengers congregate on one side of a vessel to view the display as this might adversely affect the stability of the vessel.

Also during the closure period of the Ma Wan Channel, vessels transiting Kap Shui Mun and north part of Ma Wan Fairway will not be allowed to anchor or linger in the vicinity.

End

Simplified procedures for applying travel ex gratia payment

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The Travel Industry Compensation Fund Management Board has decided to simplify procedures for claims of ex gratia payments not exceeding \$10,000 for each of the outbound travellers affected by a travel agent in the event of default.

The Chairman of the Board, Dr James Kung, said: "Under the new procedures, the average time taken for the Board to grant ex gratia payments to aggrieved outbound travellers will be shortened from over six months to less than two months.

"Under the existing procedure, every application for ex gratia payment must be accompanied by a sealed judgement in respect of the loss concerned, or documents showing that a proof of debt has been lodged or is to be lodged.

"This requirement is intended to safeguard the Fund against possible fraudulent acts. However, it takes considerable time to complete the necessary procedure."

He said: "Instead of requiring proof of debt or a sealed judgement, the simplified procedures will accept applications submitted with original receipts for the relevant outbound fare being franked or stamped to show the payment of the levy, verified by an auditor appointed by the Board.

"An applicant is also required to make a statutory declaration stating that payment of the outbound fare has been made."

Dr Kung noted: "To safeguard the Fund against possible fraudulent or dishonest acts, the Board, however, retains the discretionary power to direct an applicant to apply under the existing procedure and not in accordance with the simplified procedure."

He said: "The Travel Agents Ordinance empowers the Board to make rules specifying the maximum amount or rate payable as an ex gratia payment in respect of an outbound fare.

"Based on past experience, the Board has considered it appropriate to set the maximum amount of ex gratia payment that each person may apply for under the simplified procedures at \$10,000.

"Together with the increase in the rate of ex gratia payment from 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the outbound fare implemented last December, the new procedures will further enhance consumer protection," he added.

The simplified procedures will come into operation upon gazettal of the relevant rules tomorrow (Friday). This means that applications for ex gratia payments in relation to a loss suffered as from that date can be processed under the simplified procedures.

The new arrangements have been made after consulting the Advisory Committee on Travel Agents, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong and the Consumer Council.

End

Director convicted for tax evasion

\* \* \* \* \*

A director of a management service company was convicted in the District Court today (Thursday) for, wilfully with intent to evade tax, signing profits tax returns for the years of assessment 1990/91 and 1991/92 without reasonable grounds for believing the same to be true, contrary to section 82(1)(d) of the Inland Revenue Ordinance.

The defendant, aged 39, is the shareholder and director of a company which carried on a business of management consultancy and property investment during the relevant period.

He was charged with three counts of offences for, wilfully with intent to evade tax, signing three profits tax returns of the company for the tax years from 1990/91 to 1992/93 without reasonable grounds for believing the returns to be true.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to the three charges.

During the relevant period, the income of the company mainly comprised rental income and management fee received from a solicitor firm.

During the three tax years from 1990/91 to 1992/93, the company charged in its tax returns, among other expenses, fictitious commission payments in the respective amounts of \$600,000, \$900,000 and \$1,400,000.

The defendant was convicted by Judge McMahon on two counts of offences for signing profits tax returns of the company for the tax years 1990/91 and 1991/92 without reasonable ground for believing the same to be true, but was acquitted in respect of the charge relating to the tax year 1992/93 due to insufficient evidence.

The total tax evaded as a result of the fraudulent commission claims for the tax years 1990/91 and 1991/92 was \$247,500.

The defendant was sentenced to six months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, and was ordered to pay a fine of \$495,000, equivalent to 200 per cent of the tax evaded.

An Inland Revenue Department spokesman today reminded the public that tax evasion is a serious offence and is liable to maximum sentence of three years imprisonment and a fine of \$50,000 on each charge, in addition to a further fine equivalent to three times the amount of tax undercharged.

End

#### Roving exhibition to promote consultation on housing strategy

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A roving exhibition on the Long Term Housing Strategy Review will be held in 15 commercial centres and Housing Department shopping complexes throughout the territory starting tomorrow (Friday) until mid-May to encourage the public to voice their opinions on the recommendations set out in the consultative document of the Review.

A Housing Branch spokesman said the housing goals of the Government would be to help all families to gain access to adequate and affordable housing, and to encourage home ownership in the community.

In order to achieve these goals, the consultative document of the Review outlined some 40 recommendations.

"In mounting the roving exhibition, we hope the general public will understand better the overall strategy by which the Government seeks to achieve these goals," the spokesman said.

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to see a video introducing the various aspects of the Review.

The spokesman said that the Housing Branch was particularly grateful to entertainment personality Ms Nancy Sit Kar-yin for her complimentary role in the video. Ms Sit can surely help "bring home" the message of the Government's housing goals to the general public.

The visitors can also take home a summary highlighting the recommendations of the consultative document. Interested parties can also collect the consultative document from District Offices.

"We welcome views from all sections of the community. We will take into consideration all views expressed," the spokesman said.

The first of the roving exhibition will be held at Shatin New Town Plaza, Phase 1, Level 4 on Friday and Saturday from 9 am to 9 pm.

To gain maximum exposure for the exhibition, a total of three sets of identical exhibits have been produced so that concurrent display can be mounted during the same weekends in different popular venues when shopping patronage will be at its peak. These exhibits can be seen between 9 am and 9 pm daily on the following dates and venues:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>
April 5 - 11	Cheung Fat Estate Shopping Centre, Tsing Yi Tai Wo Shopping Centre, Tai Po
April 12 - 13	Kowloon City Plaza
April 12 - 18	Wah Fu Commercial Complex, Pokfulam Lo Fu Shopping Centre, Wang Tau Hom
April 19 - 20	Metroplaza, Kwai Fong
April 19 - 25	Leung King Shopping Centre, Tuen Mun Tin Shui Shopping Centre, Tin Shui Wai
April 25 - 27	Tuen Mun Town Plaza
April 26 - May 2	Tak Tin Shopping Centre, Lam Tin Hau Tak Shopping Centre, Tseung Kwan O
May 3 - 4	City Plaza
May 3 - 10	Wo Che Commercial Centre, Shatin Wong Tai Sin Shopping Centre

Views and comments on the conclusions and recommendations in the consultation document should be forwarded in writing not later than May 31, 1997 to: Housing Branch, Government Secretariat, Suite 905 - 909, Citibank Tower, Citibank Plaza, 3 Garden Road, or by Email to [hb11@hkstar.com](mailto:hb11@hkstar.com).

End

VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight

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A group of 140 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam today (Thursday) on the 99th flight under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP).

The majority of the returnees, comprising 121 men, 16 women, one boy and two girls, are from North Vietnam. Only six of the returnees are from Central and South Vietnam.

Most of the returnees arrived in Hong Kong in 1996, with the remaining in 1989, 1990 and 1991.

The group brought to 10,063 the total number repatriated on ORP flights since November 1991.

End

Monitors' report submitted to Chief Secretary

\* \* \* \* \*

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

The two monitors comprised a non-official Justice of the Peace, Mr John Robertson Budge, and representative from a non-government organisation, Mr Alan Young Tim-tsan from Caritas, Hong Kong.

End

Mail services to Italy may be subject to delay

\* \* \* \* \*

The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Thursday) that due to industrial action of postal employees in Italy, all mail services to Italy, including Speedpost, may be subject to delay.

A further announcement will be made as soon as services return to normal.

End