

**HONG KONG
GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
SERVICES**

**DAILY
INFORMATION
BULLETIN**

Wednesday, August 23, 1972

JAPANESE FIRM WINS \$337 MILLION DESALTING CONTRACT

The Government announced today that a Japanese firm, Sasakura Engineering Company Ltd. of Osaka, had been awarded a contract, worth approximately \$337 million, for the construction of the sea water desalting plant near Castle Peak in the New Territories.

The plant, which will be the biggest of its kind in the world, will be capable of producing 40 million Imperial gallons of fresh water a day. It will consist of six units each complete with its steam boiler, evaporator and associated ancillaries.

The first of these units is expected to be operational by the middle of 1974 with each of the remaining units coming into operation successively at three-monthly intervals after that date.

The Government's decision to build a large scale sea water desalting plant as a means of augmenting the fresh water supply was first announced by the Director of Water Supplies in May last year.

When it became apparent that the demand for fresh water continued to grow at a rate of between 8 per cent and 8½ per cent a year, a decision was made in January this year to double the capacity of the plant to 40 million gallons a day.

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At the beginning of this month an agreement was signed with the Asian Development Bank to finance a substantial portion of the plant by a loan of US\$21.5 million (equivalent to some HK\$120 million) which would be repayable in 10 years from 1976.

The final award of the contract is therefore subject to the Bank's approval, which is expected shortly.

A total of seven tenders were submitted by tenderers from five countries. These had previously prequalified on the basis of their capability in handling international contracts of similar magnitude, and their experience in the field of desalting engineering.

Sasakura's tender was chosen because it was the lowest tender in terms of both capital and operating costs. It also complied in all respects with the specifications and conditions of contract.

To ensure that the target completion date is met, failing which the risk of supply restrictions by 1974 would be greatly increased, a fairly tight programme has been followed right from the beginning of the project.

This necessitated a tender period of only 12 weeks being allowed. But to enable prospective tenderers to proceed with their design work before actual tenders were called on May 8, 1972, advance information on the principal plant parameters was sent to all tenderers while the specification and contract documents were being finalised.

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ECAFE MEETING ON SHIPPING FOR HONG KONG

Hong Kong will play host to a 10-day ECAFE meeting on shippers' co-operation next month.

About 40 representatives from 19 members and associate members of ECAFE are expected to take part in the meeting, which will be held from September 18-27.

The meeting is being organised by ECAFE with the assistance of the Governments of Hong Kong and Norway and the Shippers' Council of Hong Kong.

It is designed to familiarise participants with specific aspects of the formation and effective operation of shippers' organisations.

A Government spokesman said today that the problems of shippers in the ECAFE region were discussed last December at a meeting held in Bangkok by ECAFE.

The meeting concluded that there was an immediate need to establish effective shippers' councils.

The spokesman said next month's meeting was a follow-up to the Bangkok meeting.

Delegates will discuss, among other subjects, methods of forming shippers' organisations, the shipping industry, port efficiency and regional co-operation.

There will be lectures by experts on shipping, and in addition, case studies will be presented to the participants for discussion.

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DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION TO ATTEND OVERSEAS MEETINGS

The Director of Civil Aviation, Mr. T.R. Thomson, will leave Hong Kong tomorrow (Thursday) for London where he will attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Air Transport Council.

The meeting will be held from August 29 to September 8. The Council has been set up by Commonwealth Prime Ministers to consider means of promoting a closer understanding of the basic civil air transport requirements by member countries.

After the meeting, Mr. Thomson will attend air services talks and the 10th informal meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation for Asia and the Pacific Region to be held in Indonesia.

He is expected to return to Hong Kong in November. During his absence, the Assistant Director of Civil Aviation (Technical Administration), Mr. R.E. Downing, will act as Director.

Note to Editors: Mr. Thomson will leave by B.O.A.C. Flight BA919 at E.T.D. 2130 hours tomorrow (Thursday).

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ONE DEATH FROM MEASLES IN JULY

Monthly health statistics for July released today by the Medical and Health Department showed there was one death from measles.

A spokesman said the death supported the department's reason for the current campaign. This was to help educate the public on measles' prevention by the immunisation of susceptible children between nine months and five years.

Free measles vaccine is available at all government maternal and child health centres. During the campaign, special inoculation teams are on duty at various street corners, and health education vans keep appointed dates in all resettlement and housing estates.

During July, a drop was recorded in the number of notifiable infectious diseases, which totalled 837 compared with 1,088 in the previous month.

No cases of diphtheria, poliomyelitis or puerperal fever were recorded, and Hong Kong remained free from cholera and other quarantinable diseases.

There was a slight increase in tuberculosis notifications, from June's 627 to 730 in July.

The spokesman said the increase was not thought to be significant. There was, for example, a decrease of 199 cases compared with the total of notifications in July last year.

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IMMIGRATION OFFICERS PASSING OUT PARADE

Note to Editors: A Legislative Councillor, Mr. T.K. Ann, will inspect the passing-out parade of a squad of 18 Assistant Immigration Officers on Friday, (August 25).

Mr. Ann will address the two female and 16 male Officers at the parade, which will be held at 9.30 a.m. at the Royal Hong Kong Regiment parade ground, Sports Road, Happy Valley.

You are cordially invited to have the passing-out parade covered.

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WAGE DISPUTE SETTLED

More than 100 casual labourers of the Vegetable Wholesale Market at Cheung Sha Wan are to receive a daily wage increase of \$2.00 back dated to June 1 this year. The agreement brings final settlement to a recent dispute over wage increases for these workers.

In addition, an ex-gratia payment of \$120 was given to 84 of the labourers who had worked for 75 days or more during the period from March 1 to May 31, 1972.

Officers of the Labour Relations Service visited the parties at the market when the dispute occurred. A joint meeting was held in the Labour Department followed by subsequent mediation resulting in the agreement.

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GRAPHIC-ART EXHIBITION AT CITY HALL

The Urban Council and the American Consulate-General are co-sponsoring an exhibition of original graphic prints by leading American artists entitled "Graphics Now U.S.A." at the City Museum and Art Gallery from Friday (August 25) until September 10.

Works on display include a wide range of techniques, and include 61 etchings, lithographs, screenprints and woodcuts by American painters, sculptors and printmakers.

The exhibition also illustrates some of the current trends in the American art scene with examples of Pop Art, Op Art, Hard-edge and lyrical Abstractionism.

A special section of the exhibition is devoted to contemporary photographs from the collection of the Eastman House, New York. This shows many new approaches in the creative use of the medium of photography.

Note to Editors:

A preview of the exhibition will be held tomorrow (August 24) from 5.30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and you are welcome to send a reporter and/or photographer to attend the function.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WAN CHAI

Monmouth Path will be closed to vehicular traffic entering from Queen's Road East from 8 a.m. on Friday (August 25) for about five days for essential road repairs.

During this period, Wing Fung Street will be made two-way so that motorists entering Wing Fung Street West, Star Street and Wing Fung Street may reach Queen's Road East via Wing Fung Street.

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected for the guidance of motorists.

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WATER INTERRUPTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF HARBOUR

Water supply to a number of premises in Hung Hom in Kowloon and Aberdeen on Hong Kong Island will be interrupted for five hours starting from 1 a.m. on Friday (August 25).

The temporary stoppage is to enable the Waterworks Office to carry out leakage tests.

The area affected in Hung Hom is bounded by Lok Shan Road, San Shan Road, Pau Chung Street, Ma Tau Kok Road, Tin Kwong Road and Argyle Street. The area affected in Aberdeen is from the Aberdeen Trade School at Wong Chuk Hang Road to Brick Hill Road and Shouson Hill Road.

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Release Time: 6.45 p.m.