



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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STI welcomes new appointment of WTO

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The Acting Secretary for Trade and Industry, Mrs Regina Ip, said tonight (Tuesday) that she was pleased that the issue of who should replace Peter Sutherland as Director-General of the new World Trade Organisation appears finally to have been resolved.

She said: "Hong Kong is happy to join a consensus to appoint Mr Ruggiero, the former Italian Trade Minister. He is without doubt, an extremely capable individual and I am sure that he will lead the new Organisation with great skill and determination. Hong Kong looks forward to working with him over the next few years."

Hong Kong had earlier supported Korean Ambassador Kim's candidature but he withdrew from the race this morning.

But Mrs Ip said she was delighted to learn that Ambassador Kim is considering accepting a Deputy Director-General post as this would mean that his talents would not be lost to the Organisation.

It is understood that members of the Organisation will meet early tomorrow (Hong Kong time) to confirm the arrangements.

Mrs Ip took the opportunity to express her appreciation of the tireless efforts of the outgoing Director-General, Peter Sutherland:

"Peter Sutherland has made an enormous contribution to ensuring the smooth functioning of the international trading system. His legacy is the World Trade Organisation and no one who was present in Geneva during the final days of the Uruguay Round can question the vital role which he played in ensuring its birth. We all owe him a great debt."

End/Tuesday, March 21, 1995

Lau appointed chief of Royal Observatory

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The Government announced today (Tuesday) that Mr Lau Chi-kwan, Robert, had been appointed Director of the Royal Observatory with effect from May 26 this year.

Mr Lau will succeed Mr Patrick Sham who will be retiring from the Civil Service at the age of 60.

The following is the brief biography of Mr Lau and Mr Sham:

Mr Lau Chi-kwan, Robert, JP

Mr Lau is aged 53. He joined the Hong Kong Civil Service as a Scientific Officer in 1966 and was promoted to Senior Scientific Officer in 1978 and then to Assistant Director of the Royal Observatory in 1984. He has acted as Director of the Royal Observatory on a number of occasions.

Mr Sham Pak, Patrick, ISO, JP

Mr Sham joined the Civil Service as a Scientific Officer in 1958. He was promoted to Senior Scientific Officer in 1974, and to Assistant Director of the Royal Observatory in 1978. He has been Director of the Royal Observatory since 1984. He was awarded an ISO in 1988.

End/Tuesday, March 21, 1995

Land fund of future SARG

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In response to media enquiries on the Land Fund of the future Special Administrative Region Government (SARG), a Government spokesman said today (Tuesday):

"The Medium Range Forecast is a five-year forecast of government's revenue, expenditure and fiscal reserves. It is a planning tool to assist with the determination of budgetary policy.

"The Medium Range Forecast published with the Financial Secretary's Budget on March 1, 1995 covers a five-year period (1994-95 to 1998-99) in accordance with our normal planning practice.

"In his Budget Speech (para 95) the Financial Secretary has emphasised that this is a forecast only, presented to provide the appropriate context for planning purposes and that, in no way, does it impose any commitment on the future SARG.

"The final year of the Medium Range Forecast (1998-99) is the first full financial year after the change of sovereignty and the establishment of the SARG. It is clearly a matter for the SARG to determine how best to manage and use the balance it will inherit from the Land Fund come July 1, 1997.

"However, to properly present an overall picture of the likely financial strength of the future SARG, account must be taken of the forecast balance of both the fiscal reserves to be passed on by the Hong Kong Government and the Land Fund. This is what we have done in the published Medium Range Forecast.

"The estimate of the balance of the Land Fund of \$138.5 billion at July 1, 1997 is derived on the basis of :-

- * the published balance of the fund at March 31, 1994 (\$65.5 billion);
- * our published revised estimate of gross land revenue in 1994-95 and our published estimate of gross land revenue in 1995-96;
- * the forecast gross land revenue from 1 April 1996 to June 30, 1997 based on a historical analysis of the relationship between land revenue and GDP. We have adopted a conservative approach in making this forecast;
- * the sharing arrangement for gross land revenue as provided for in the Joint Declaration; and
- * a modest level of interest earnings on the accumulated balance of the fund.

"We believe this assessment to be realistic based on a historical analysis of land revenue and after taking account of the attractive and valuable sites which may be released to the market over the forecast period.

"We recognise that the HKSARG Land Fund Trust was established by the Chinese side of the Land Commission and it is of course for the trustees to manage the Fund until the balance is transferred to the SARG."

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All ECVIIs to return to China

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In response to press enquiries, a Government spokesman confirmed today (Tuesday) that all the ECVIIs in Hong Kong will be repatriated to China pursuant to the agreement reached between the Hong Kong and Chinese Governments on March 14 and 15. They number about 340 in total.

"The ECVIIs came from a number of provinces, principally Guangxi, Guangdong, Yunnan, Hainan and Fujian. They will be returned to their provinces of origin.

"As a number of provinces are involved, some operational details still need to be sorted out," the spokesman added. "We hope actual departures will commence in mid-April, and the repatriation process will take a few months to complete."

The spokesman also confirmed that in order to expedite the return of the residual caseload of ECVIIs, both sides agreed that certain formalities which otherwise would be dealt with in Hong Kong would now be completed after the ECVIIs had been returned to China.

He further confirmed that the Hong Kong Government had agreed to make a contribution of \$500,000, which was equivalent to keeping the 340 ECVIIs in Hong Kong for about 12 days, to the additional costs which would arise from this arrangement.

The spokesman emphasised that it was agreed by both governments that the ECVII saga should be closed as soon as possible.

"The Chinese side will incur some additional costs in expediting the process under the new arrangement and the Hong Kong Government agrees to contribute to some of these costs.

"Both sides agreed that it sets no precedents for any future ECVIIs, to whom the previously agreed arrangements will continue to apply," he said.

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Tate's Cairn Tunnel tolls up

The Governor-in-Council today (Tuesday) advised that tolls at the Tate's Cairn Tunnel should be increased with effect from May 1.

The new toll structure will be as follows:

<u>Vehicles</u>	<u>Existing Toll</u>	<u>New Toll</u>
Private cars, taxis & motorcycles	\$4	\$6
Light buses & light goods vehicles	\$7	\$10
Medium goods vehicles, heavy goods vehicles & buses	\$8	\$15
Extra axle	\$5	\$5 (unchanged)

A Government spokesman said this was the first toll increase for the company since the tunnel was opened to traffic in June 1991.

"The toll revision is necessary to allow the company to repay bank loans and to keep them on target to secure a reasonable return on their investment over the 30-year life of the franchise," he said.

The spokesman added that from a transport management viewpoint, the toll increase would not result in a major traffic diversion from the Tate's Cairn Tunnel to other alternate routes such as the Lion Rock Tunnel.

"The new private car tolls would be the same as that charged at the Lion Rock Tunnel, that is, \$6," he said.

The spokesman added that since tunnel tolls accounted for only a small proportion of total household expenditure, the inflationary impact would be insignificant.

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Consumer Price Indices for February 1995

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The Consumer Price Index (A) in February 1995 was 8.9% higher than in February 1994, according to figures released today (Tuesday) by the Census and Statistics Department. This was significantly lower than the corresponding increase of 10.1% in January this year.

Commenting on the moderation, a Government spokesman said the prices of vegetables and charges for hair-dressing and package tours had returned to a more normal level in the latter part of February after the seasonal upsurge around the Chinese New Year. Furthermore, the rates of increase in the prices of salt-water fish and pork also slowed down.

The rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index (B) and the Hang Seng CPI also moderated. Their respective rates of increase in February 1995 were 9.6% and 9.7%, compared with the corresponding increases of 10.4% and 10.3% in January.

The Composite CPI, which is compiled based on the combined expenditure pattern of households covered by the three CPIs, showed an increase of 9.4% in February 1995 over the same month in 1994. This was also significantly lower than the corresponding increase of 10.3% in January.

Comparing February 1995 with February 1994, relatively slower price increases than the overall average increase were recorded for durable goods (4.3% in the CPI(A) and 4.5% in the CPI(B)); alcoholic drinks and tobacco (4.4% and 4.9%); food (excluding meals bought away from home) (6.5% and 6.2%); meals bought away from home (7.1% and 6.8%); fuel and light (7.6% and 7.8%); transport (8.3% in both the CPI(A) and CPI(B)); and miscellaneous goods (8.3% in the CPI(A) and 7.2% in the CPI(B)).

On the other hand, relatively faster price increases than the overall average increase were recorded for housing (12.8% in the CPI(A) and 14.4% in the CPI(B)); clothing and footwear (11.7% and 12.8%); and miscellaneous services (11.4% and 10.6%). Comparing February 1995 with January 1995, the CPI(A) and CPI(B) both increased by 0.8%. The corresponding increase for the Composite CPI was 0.7%.

Taking the first two months together, the increases in the CPI(A) and CPI(B) averaged at 9.5% and 10.0% respectively. The corresponding increase for the Composite CPI was 9.8%.

For the 3 months ended February 1995, the CPI(A) and CPI(B) were, on average, higher by 9.3% and 9.8% respectively over a year earlier. The corresponding increase for the Composite CPI was 9.7%.

For the 12 months ended February 1995, the CPI(A) and CPI(B) were, on average, higher by 8.5% and 9.0% respectively than in the preceding 12-month period. The corresponding increase for the Composite CPI was 9.1%.

Seasonally adjusted series are also available for the CPIs. The deseasonalised CPI(A), CPI(B) and Composite CPI all increased at an average rate of 0.7% per month during the three months ended February 1995.

The Consumer Price Index Report

More details are given in the "Consumer Price Index Report" for February 1995, which is available at \$23.0 per copy from the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, Ground Floor, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong; or from the Publications Section of the Census and Statistics Department, 19/F., Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. For local and overseas mailings, contact should be made with the Information Services Department, French Mission Building, 1 Battery Path, Hong Kong.

For enquiries about the indices, please telephone the Consumer Price Index Section of the Census and Statistics Department at 2805 6403. Details regarding the Hang Seng CPI are contained in the Hang Seng CPI Report issued by the Economic Research Department of Hang Seng Bank Ltd.

Table 1 Consumer Price Indices and Rates of Increase for February 1995
(Oct. 89 - Sep. 90 = 100)

Component	CPI(A)		CPI(B)		Hang Seng CPI		Composite CPI	
	Index for Feb 95	% change over Feb 94	Index for Feb 95	% change over Feb 94	Index for Feb 95	% change over Feb 94	Index for Feb 95	% change over Feb 94
Food	149.4	+6.8	151.0	+6.6	152.9	+7.1	150.7	+6.8
Meals bought away from home	159.7	+7.1	159.1	+6.8	159.8	+7.7	159.5	+7.1
Food, excluding meals bought away from home	139.2	+6.5	139.9	+6.2	141.2	+6.1	139.8	+6.3
Housing	177.5	+12.8	181.9	+14.4	185.1	+13.4	181.5	+13.6
Fuel and light	131.2	+7.6	130.8	+7.8	130.1	+6.7	130.9	+7.5
Alcoholic drinks and tobacco	189.8	+4.4	179.9	+4.9	174.9	+4.6	184.2	+4.6
Clothing and footwear	139.9	+11.7	141.3	+12.8	151.2	+12.2	144.3	+12.3
Durable goods	114.8	+4.3	114.2	+4.5	119.4	+4.8	115.9	+4.5
Miscellaneous goods	139.3	+8.3	134.6	+7.2	132.4	+7.0	135.8	+7.6
Transport	153.5	+8.3	153.3	+8.3	153.2	+8.4	153.3	+8.3
Miscellaneous services	171.5	+11.4	165.4	+10.6	153.1	+8.0	163.6	+10.1
All items	155.4	+8.9	156.6	+9.6	159.0	+9.7	156.7	+9.4

Monthly consumer price indices are compiled on the basis of (a) expenditure patterns of relevant households and (b) prices collected currently in the month. The expenditure patterns underlying the 1989/90-based consumer price indices are based on those patterns derived from the 1989/90 Household Expenditure Survey. The CPI(A) is based on the expenditure pattern of about 50% of households in Hong Kong, which had an average monthly expenditure of \$2,500-\$9,999 in 1989/90 (broadly equivalent to \$3,600-\$14,600 at 1994 prices). The CPI(B) is based on the expenditure pattern of the next 30% of households, which had an average monthly expenditure of \$10,000-\$17,499 in 1989/90 (broadly equivalent to \$14,600-\$26,000 at 1994 prices). The Hang Seng CPI is based on the expenditure pattern of the next 10% of households, which had an average monthly expenditure of \$17,500-\$37,499 in 1989/90 (broadly equivalent to \$26,000-\$56,000 at 1994 prices).

Whereas the CPI(A), CPI(B) and Hang Seng CPI are based on the expenditure patterns of groups of households with different magnitudes of household expenditure, the Composite CPI is compiled based on the expenditure pattern of all these households taken together. Thus, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and Hang Seng CPI show the impact of consumer price changes on different groups of households, the Composite CPI shows the impact of consumer price changes on the household sector generally.

Table 2 Consumer Price Indices for January 1992 - February 1995
(Oct. 89 - Sep. 90 = 100)

<u>Year/month</u>	<u>CPI(A)</u>	<u>CPI(B)</u>	<u>Hang Seng CPI</u>	<u>Composite CPI</u>	
1992	January	119.7	119.3	119.4	119.5
	February	121.8	121.2	121.0	121.4
	March	122.5	121.9	121.8	122.1
	April	124.0	123.4	122.9	123.5
	May	124.0	123.8	124.2	124.0
	June	125.3	125.1	125.2	125.2
	July	125.5	125.4	125.4	125.4
	August	125.6	125.9	125.8	125.8
	September	128.3	127.9	127.5	128.0
	October	128.4	128.4	128.6	128.5
	November	128.5	129.0	129.9	129.0
	December	129.3	129.8	130.0	129.7
1993	January	131.8	131.6	131.5	131.7
	February	132.4	132.2	132.0	132.2
	March	132.0	132.2	133.1	132.4
	April	133.5	133.9	134.5	133.9
	May	134.5	134.8	136.3	135.1
	June	136.0	135.9	137.1	136.3
	July	135.8	136.1	136.9	136.2
	August	136.3	136.6	137.4	136.7
	September	138.4	138.3	139.2	138.6
	October	140.0	139.6	140.7	140.0
	November	139.4	139.9	142.2	140.3
	December	140.4	140.9	143.3	141.3
1994	January	140.0	140.7	143.4	141.1
	February	142.7	142.9	144.9	143.3
	March	142.5	143.0	145.3	143.4
	April	143.8	144.8	147.9	145.2
	May	145.0	146.1	150.0	146.7
	June	146.2	146.9	151.0	147.7
	July	147.3	147.9	150.5	148.3
	August	149.6	149.6	151.7	150.1
	September	150.3	150.8	153.4	151.3
	October	151.1	152.2	155.3	152.6
	November	151.4	153.1	157.3	153.5
	December	153.0	154.3	158.1	154.8
1995	January	154.1	155.3	158.2	155.6
	February	155.4	156.6	159.0	156.7

Chart 1 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in CPI(A)

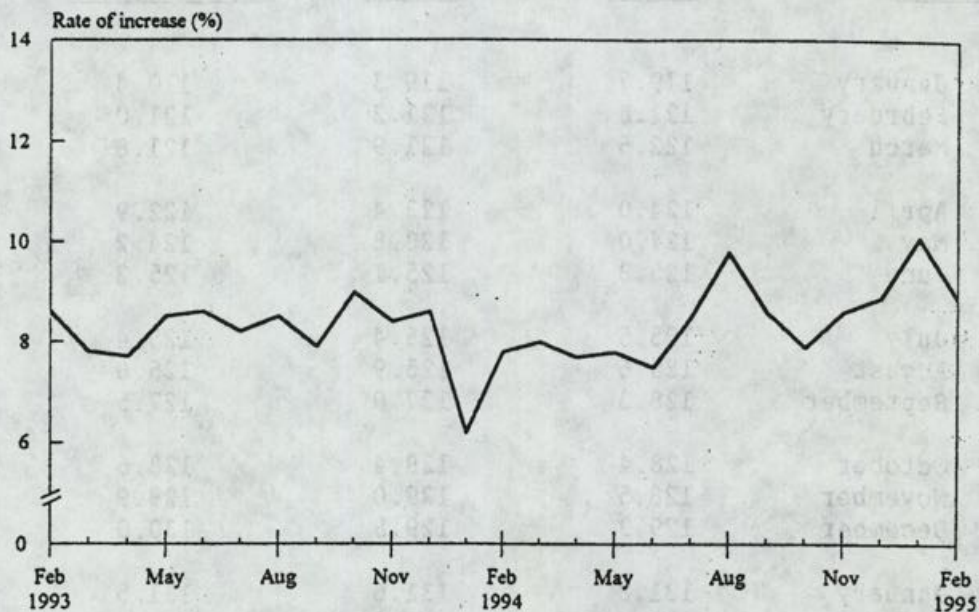


Chart 2 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in CPI(B)

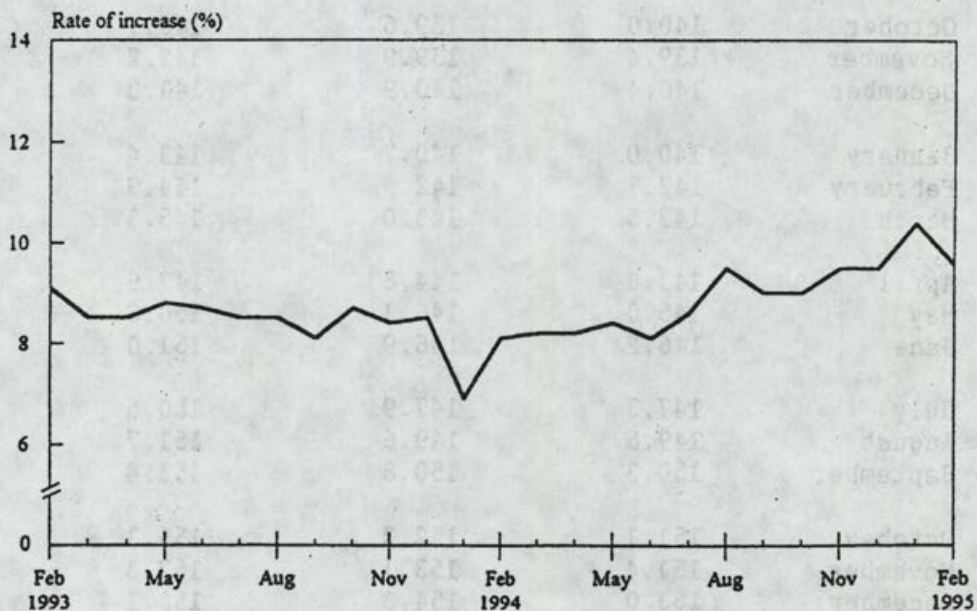


Chart 3 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in Hang Seng CPI

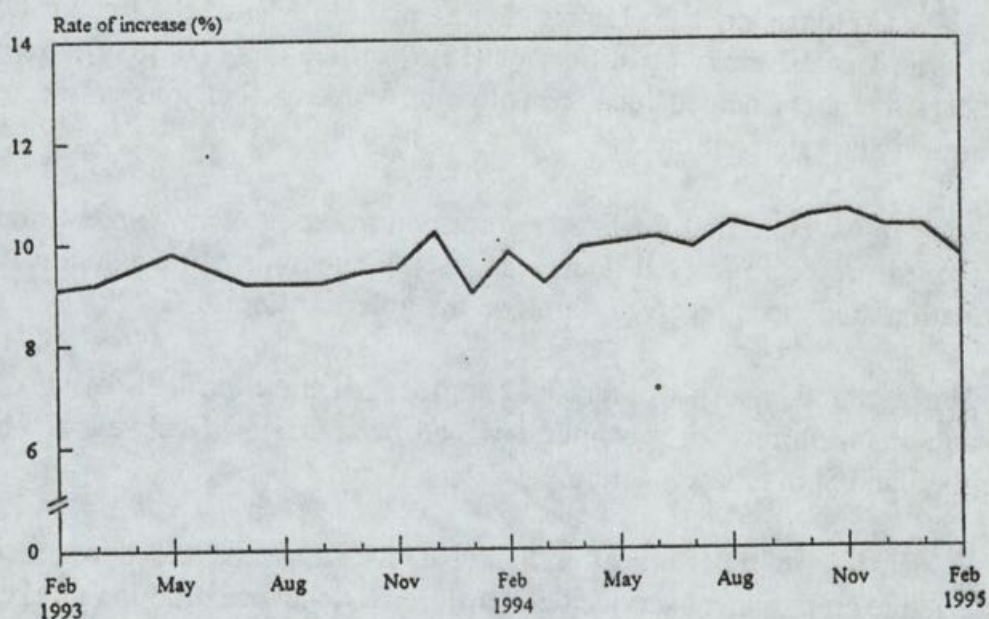
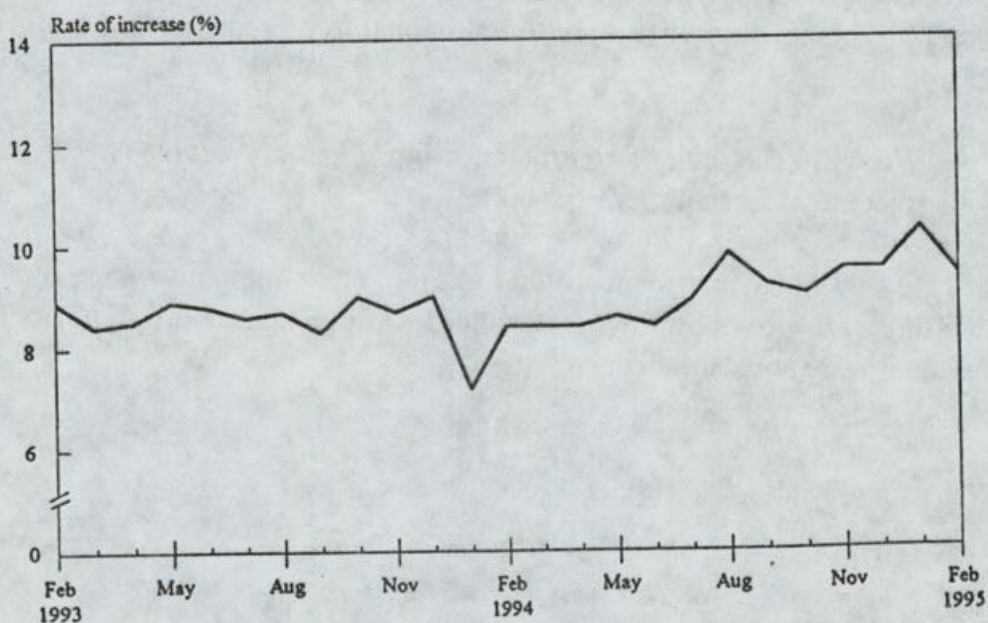


Chart 4 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in Composite CPI



Employment service well received by local workers

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The Commissioner for Labour, Mr Stephen Ip, visited the Labour Department's Tsuen Wan Local Employment Service (LES) Office this (Tuesday) afternoon to see how staff members helped local construction workers find jobs connected with the new airport and related projects.

Mr Ip was told that the latest exercise in assisting local workers finding jobs in new airport projects received good response as hundreds of telephone calls for job information had been received through the jobs hotline 2492 2001.

In addition, many workers had approached the nine LES offices looking for jobs and 129 referrals for job interview had been arranged between 9 am yesterday (Monday) and 5pm today.

Speaking to reporters after the visit, Mr Ip asked the news media to help publicise the employment service being offered to local construction workers.

The Commissioner reiterated that as a Government policy on importation of labour, local workers should be given priority in filling job vacancies available from the new airport projects.

Mr Ip stressed that to ensure the implementation of this policy, Labour Department officers would remind contractors applying for importation of foreign workers to make sure that their employment requirements are not restrictive or unreasonable.

"We will keep tack of contractors who ignore our advice and their applications may be rejected as a result," Mr Ip said.

He said his department would look into any complaints made by local workers concerning restrictive employment conditions and take appropriate measures if the complaints were substantiated.

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Newly reported drug abusers drop by 20 per cent

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The number of drug abusers reported for the first time to the Government's Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA) declined in the fourth quarter of 1994 after rising in the first three quarters of the year, according to quarterly figures released today (Tuesday).

The number of newly reported persons of all ages has dropped by 20.3 per cent to 988 in the fourth quarter of 1994 from 1,240 in the corresponding period in 1993, following increases of 15.2 per cent, 20.8 per cent and 9.3 per cent in the preceding three quarters.

Within the figure, the number of newly reported young drug abusers under 21 has decreased from 653 in the fourth quarter of 1993 to 513 in the same period of 1994, representing a decrease of 21.4 per cent. As for newly reported drug abusers aged 21 or above, the number has dropped by 19.1 per cent to 475 as compared with 587 in the same period in 1993.

The statistics, compiled by the CRDA, were given to members of the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) at its meeting held this afternoon.

Members were told that the whole year figure of all drug abusers reported to CRDA increased by 13.3 per cent to 20,046 and the new cases by 13.5 per cent to 4,863.

This showed a slacker growth when compared with the corresponding changes for 1993 over 1992, which were 16.3 per cent and 44.1 per cent respectively.

The number of drug abusers aged under 16 recorded a sharp rise of 47 per cent from 584 reported in the whole year of 1993 to 858 in 1994, leading to a slight decrease in the average age of all drug abusers reported, from 34.7 in 1993 to 34.4 in 1994.

Among drugs commonly abused in Hong Kong, heroin (93.5 per cent), cannabis (5.8 per cent) and cough medicine (2.9 per cent) remained the major types of drug abused by addicts of all ages.

In the fourth quarter of 1994, a total of 4,763 persons were admitted to the three major publicly-funded treatment programmes, run by the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers (SARDA), the Department of Health and the Correctional Services Department.

Of the total figure, 1,229 or 25.8 per cent were first time admissions. These represented an increase in total admissions by 40.2 per cent and an increase in new admissions by 42.2 per cent.

The increase in new admissions was highest in the under-21 group in the Methadone Treatment Programme, by 85.5 per cent, followed by the SARDA programme, by 46.9 per cent.

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36 pollution cases in February

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A total of 36 convictions were made in the courts last month for breaching anti-pollution law enforced by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

Among them, 17 were convictions made under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO), 11 under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO), four under the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO), three under the Ozone Layer Protection Ordinance (OLPO) and one under the Dumping At Sea Act 1974 (Overseas Territories) Order 1975 (DASO).

The fines ranged from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Man Luen Hong Motor Company Ltd was fined \$50,000 upon its second conviction for discharging polluting matter in the Deep Bay Water Control Zone.

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\$800 million for elderly services

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The Government will spend \$800 million over the next few years to implement the 71 recommendations of the Working Group on Care for the Elderly, the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Ian Strachan, said today (Tuesday).

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Po Leung Kuk Siu Ming Memorial Home cum Care and Attention Unit, Mr Strachan said there was a growing demand for services for the senior citizens in Hong Kong.

"In October 1994, the Executive Council endorsed the Report of the Working Group on Care for the Elderly.

"The Government's goal is to improve the quality of life of old people so that they can enjoy a comfortable and dignified old age.

"A comprehensive approach will be adopted in the development of services for elderly people," he said.

Mr Strachan said the memorial home opened today marked a further step in Po Leung Kuk's expansion of residential services for the elderly.

"This new Home, being located in Lam Tin Estate, has been in operation since October 1994, providing 102 meal places and 44 care-and-attention places," Mr Strachan added.

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Royal Observatory's public weather services popular

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Members of the public can learn more about the work of the Royal Observatory at its "open day" from Thursday (March 23) amidst growing popularity of weather information.

In celebration of the annual World Meteorological Day, the "open day" will feature an exhibition on the theme "Public Weather Services", the Director of the Royal Observatory, Mr Patrick Sham, said today (Tuesday).

The Royal Observatory headquarters in Tsim Sha Tsui will be open to the public from 2 pm to 5 pm on Thursday after an opening ceremony in the morning and from 9.30 am to 5 pm on the next two days (Friday and Saturday).

Regarding the operations and services of the Royal Observatory, Mr Sham said at today's media session that the dial-a-weather system had been extremely popular last year.

The number of calls to the system soared to 13 million last year, about 36,000 a day, and reaching 110,000 during a day of bad weather.

Up to now, the number of callers had increased markedly, by about 60 to 70 per cent over that for the same period last year.

On weather forecasts, he said according to an independent survey, last year the public considered that the forecast accuracy level reached 76 per cent.

"This matched our performance target of 75 per cent in our pledge put out in the beginning of last year."

Airline operators assessed the Observatory's forecasts for aviation to be 98 per cent accurate or very accurate last year and ship captains' assessment of the marine weather forecast accuracy reached 95 per cent.

Organisers of public outdoor events such as the annual Lunar New Year Fireworks Display also found the special forecast services of the Observatory useful for planning purposes and in many cases, helped them to carry out the functions satisfactorily and cost-effectively.

Mr Sham said: "We are not complacent and we will strive to further improve on these services."

The Observatory, which monitors the environmental nuclear radiation in Hong Kong, has been providing daily information on the gamma radioactivity in Hong Kong to the media for the public starting two weeks ago.

"To enhance our capability of real-time monitoring of any atmospheric release from the nuclear power station, the Royal Observatory is in the process of acquiring an aerial monitoring system.

"This system will be fitted into a helicopter of the Hong Kong Government Flying Service which will be flown during a nuclear emergency to help us track any radioactive plume from the power station," he said.

On environmental and geophysical data and consultative services, the Royal Observatory plans to upgrade and expand some observational networks.

"These plans include the expansion of the seismological network within the territory, and the networking of automatic weather stations operated by Guangdong Weather Bureau, Macao Meteorological Observatory and Royal Observatory Hong Kong," he said.

The number of automatic weather stations for monitoring hazardous weather over the Pearl River Delta region will also be increased.

As the rainy season is approaching, Mr Sham called for precautions against flooding, landslip and typhoon damage.

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White Paper on Annual Report on HK 1994 to Parliament published

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The Annual Report on Hong Kong 1994 to Parliament (Annual Report) has been presented to Parliament by Her Majesty's Government today (Tuesday).

As in past years, the Annual Report has been published in the form of a white paper both in London and Hong Kong. The white paper will be tabled at the Legislative Council tomorrow (Wednesday).

A Government spokesman said Her Majesty's Government had agreed in 1985, during the Parliamentary debates on the Hong Kong Bill, to produce annual reports on Hong Kong and to lay them before Parliament.

The purpose of this series of reports is to keep Parliament informed of developments in Hong Kong regularly.

The Annual Report is the 10th such report. It contains a survey of major events in Hong Kong during 1994.

Topics covered include visits to Hong Kong by members of the Royal Family and Government ministers and visits by the Governor of Hong Kong.

They also include constitutional development, contacts between Hong Kong and China, human rights, Vietnamese migrants, migration and nationality, infrastructure, general economic and social conditions, law and order, legal and judicial systems and the civil service.

Copies of the White Paper on the Annual Report and the Chinese translation will be available, free of charge, to members of the public from tomorrow.

They can be obtained from all District Offices, the Government Publications Centre on ground floor, low block, Queensway Government Offices, and the Government Publications Sales Section of the Information Services Department at French Mission Building, 1 Battery Path, Central.

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Fire-fighters commended for saving lives

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Seven firemen were awarded the Chief Fire Officer's Commendation for rescuing four people in a fire at Sau Mau Ping Estate two weeks ago.

Speaking at a presentation ceremony today (Tuesday), Chief Fire Officer (Kowloon) Mr Henry Tang Siu praised the officers for their bravery and swift action in the fire-fighting and rescue operation.

"They demonstrated a very high standard of performance with professionalism," he said.

The fire broke out in the corridor outside two domestic units in Block 43 of Sau Mau Ping Estate at about 5 am on March 6. Minutes later, it burned fiercely and emitted thick smoke.

To avoid the heat and smoke, two men inside one of the affected units climbed out of the window and stayed on a small canopy waiting for help.

Firemen soon arrived at the scene and started putting out the fire. Some broke into the premises and rescued the pair within six minutes.

Another team of firemen also quickly dashed into the flame and smoke logged unit next door and rescued a couple.

The awardees were Senior Station Officer Chung Wing-kwong, Senior Firemen Ho Yau-sang and Leung Wai-tung, Firemen Chu Wai-kwok, Li Chi-hung, Chan Wai-kei and Chan Wai-hung.

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163 VMs return home voluntarily

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A group of 163 Vietnamese Migrants today (Tuesday) returned to Vietnam under the Voluntary Repatriation Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Comprising 78 men, 38 women, 27 boys and 20 girls, they were the 227th batch to go back under the programme.

The group brought to 673 the total number of Vietnamese Migrants who had returned voluntarily this year, and to 44,867 the total number of returnees since the programme started in March 1989.

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Hong Kong's terminal throughput jumps 19 per cent

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In the first two months of the year the eight container terminals at Kwai Chung and Stonecutters Island handled 1.15 million TEUs. That is a 19 per cent increase over the first two months of 1994.

In January, the terminals handled 665,703 TEUs, a rise of 18.43 per cent over the 562,126 TEUs moved in January 1994. In February, the terminal throughput was 482,398 TEUs, up 20.1 per cent over the February 1994 figure of 401,657 TEUs.

The lower February figures are a result of the terminals closing during the Lunar New Year holidays.

The 19 per cent increase in terminal throughput follows a record year in 1994 when Hong Kong handled more than 11 million TEUs. Of this total, the terminals handled 7.27 million TEUs, while 2.8 million TEUs were handled midstream and the rest was river trade.

So far, official figures for midstream and river trade throughput for the first two months of this year are not available, but Hong Kong's port seems headed for another record year.

End/Tuesday, March 21, 1995

Government committed to providing quality education

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The Government is fully committed to providing quality education and training for the young people in keeping with the changing circumstances of Hong Kong, the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, said today (Tuesday).

Speaking at the Topping-out Ceremony of the Tuen Mun New Campus of Lingnan College, Mrs Chan said since the announcement of the tertiary education expansion plan in 1989, the proportion of eligible students who had had access to first-year first-degree places had doubled.

She said: "In 1994, we reached our target of providing 18 per cent of our eligible students with first-year first-degree places which amounted to 14,500 places in the local tertiary institutions."

Turning to the College's new campus development project, Mrs Chan said it marked a milestone in the history of the College as it became the first residential liberal arts college in the territory.

"Construction cost of the main campus amounted to \$435 million and that of the student hostels, another \$107 million, all funded by the Government.

"I am certain that all staff and students will benefit greatly from the new campus," she added.

The new campus will house some of the most advanced academic, administrative and amenities facilities, in addition to providing student hostels, President's Lodge, staff quarters and an auditorium.

End/Tuesday, March 21, 1994

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date	21 Mar 95	21 Mar 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q512	Y587
Amount applied	HK\$7,260 MN	HK\$2,830 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN	HK\$500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.54 PCT	6.22 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.54 PCT	6.23 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 98 PCT	About 96 PCT
Average tender yield	5.58 PCT	6.27 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning March 27, 1995

Tender date	28 Mar 95	28 Mar 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q513	H561
Issue date	29 Mar 95	29 Mar 95
Maturity date	28 Jun 95	27 Sept 95
Tenor	91 days	182 days
Amount on offer	HK\$1,500+300 MN	HK\$800+160 MN

End/Tuesday, March 21, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,417	0930	+1,172
Closing balance in the account	1,366	1000	+1,199
Change attributable to :		1100	+1,200
Money market activity	+1,200	1200	+1,200
LAF today	-1,251	1500	+1,200
		1600	+1,200

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.2 *+0.1* 21.3.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills

EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds

Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.84	14 months	2605	6.35	100.15	6.30
1 month	5.11	23 months	2702	7.50	101.51	6.76
3 months	5.52	28 months	3707	6.95	100.34	6.90
6 months	5.79	34 months	3801	8.00	102.47	7.15
12 months	6.16	60 months	5003	7.75	100.86	7.68

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$20,547 million

Closed March 21, 1995

End/Tuesday, March 21, 1995