DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GARDEN ROAD, 5th–8th FLOORS, MURRAY BUILDING,
HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

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Contents **Page No.**

Infrastructure Coordinating Committee meets 1

Japanese Justice Minister visits Stanley Prison 2

124 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight 3

Monitors' Report submitted to CS 3

Lantau taxi fare to increase tomorrow 3

Industrial production index for first quarter of 1996 4

Grading of beach water quality 7

Medical examination result announced 10

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations 11

Infrastructure Coordinating Committee meets

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The following is a press release issued after a meeting held by the Sino-British Coordinating Committee on Major Cross-border Infrastructure between Hong Kong and the Mainland today (Thursday):

The Sino-British Coordinating Committee on Major Cross-border Infrastructure between Hong Kong and the Mainland(ICC) held its 5th plenary meeting in Guangzhou today (Thursday). The British side's leader Mr Bowen Leung, Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands and the Chinese side's leader Mr Zhang Liangdong, Director of the Economic Department, Hong Kong & Macau Affairs Office, State Council attended and chaired today's meeting.

The meeting received and discussed reports from the various panels on their work since the 4th plenary meeting, endorsed the progress made and the consensus reached in these panels, and also discussed the work arrangements for the next stage.

On the proposed Lingdingyang Bridge and the Shenzhen Western Corridor, the meeting discussed the report of the study presented by the British side "A Review of Hong Kong's capacity to cope with Additional Traffic Movement associated with Proposed New Cross-border Transport Links - Final Report".

The report affirmed that, from the perspective of long-term development, it is necessary to increase the transport link between Hong Kong and South China. The study also found that Lan Kwok Tsui in Tuen Mun was preferred as the landing point for the Lingdingyang Bridge in Hong Kong while Pak Nai was the preferred landing area for the Shenzhen Western Corridor.

This conclusion, which is in line with the Chinese side's proposals, has laid down the foundation for further in-depth studies for the two projects. The Chinese side understand and support the British side's need to undertake further investigations on the two proposals' impacts on Hong Kong and on issues related to convergence of the projects across the border.

The meeting agreed that a technical group should be set up under the Roads and Bridges Panel for technical discussions and exchange of information between experts from both sides to facilitate their respective further studies and investigations.

On the proposed Tonggu Channel, the Chinese side support the British side's study on the possible impacts of the Western alignment of the channel on Hong Kong. The two sides agreed to step up their exchange and sharing of information.

On the additional rail passenger crossing at Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang, the two sides reiterated support for its early planning and implementation. The meeting also agreed that, pending completion of the proposed project, the focus of consideration should be on the question of how to enable the handling capacity of the Huanggang border crossing to reach the planned capacity of 50,000 passengers/day. As a first step, the two sides would study the proposal of raising the handling capacity of the Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang crossing for non-rail passenger to 16,000 per day.

On air traffic control, in order to enable the normal operation of Hong Kong's new airport upon commissioning, the two sides would on the basis of full exchanges of information, devote special efforts in preparing proposals on airspace management and co-ordination, with the view to beginning discussion of these proposals within the year.

The two sides hold the view that the continued enhancement of cooperation and coordination between the two sides on major cross-border infrastructure projects is conducive to the promotion of developments in both the Mainland and Hong Kong. The date of the next ICC plenary meeting will be decided in the light of the progress in its various tasks.

End

Japanese Justice Minister visits Stanley Prison

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The Minister of Justice of Japan, Mrs Ritsuko Nagao, this (Thursday) morning visited Stanley Prison to see the operation and management of the maximum security prison during her brief stopover in Hong Kong.

The Minister and her delegation were met by the Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Raymond Lai Ming-kee and the Chief Superintendent of Stanley Prison, Mr Chan Kong-sang. She was briefed by Mr Chan on the various functions and facilities of the institution which has a certified accommodation of 1,575 but holds a population of 2,012 prisoners.

Mrs Nagao toured the printing, envelope-making, shoe-making and silk-screening workshops. She also visited the kitchen and an accommodation hall.

End

124 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight

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A group of 124 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam, today (Thursday) on the 47th flight under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP).

All but one of the returnees, comprising 57 men, 28 women, 18 boys and 21 girls, are from North Vietnam.

The majority of them arrived in Hong Kong in 1989, with the remaining in 1988, 1991, 1995 and 1996.

The group brought the total number repatriated on ORP flights since November 1991 to 4,251.

End

Monitors' Report submitted to CS

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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 Kenneth Ho King-man; and a representative from a non-governmental organisation, Mr So Pui-tong from Oxfam.

End

Lantau taxi fare to increase tomorrow

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The Transport Department reminded today (Thursday) that the taxi fare on Lantau will be increased by 10 per cent from tomorrow (Friday).

The Lantau taxis' flagfall charge for the first two kilometres (Km) and subsequent jumps for every 0.2 Km will be increased from $10 to $11 and from $1 to $1.1 respectively.

The waiting time charge for every one minute will also be increased from $1 to $1.1.

The surcharge for each large baggage, animal or bird carried will from the same time be increased from $4 to $5 while that for every hiring through telephone booking will remain unchanged at $5.

A Transport Department spokesman said that before the taxi meter was calibrated and sealed, a fare conversion table showing old and new fare scales would be displayed to avoid misunderstanding and confusion.

End

Industrial production index for first quarter of 1996

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The index of industrial production for the first quarter of 1996 decreased by 2.6% over the same quarter in 1995, according to the results of a survey released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Nevertheless, this could have been affected by a relatively high base of comparison a year earlier when an appreciable increase of 3.7% was recorded.

Analysed by industry group, the production of the paper products and printing industry increased slightly by 1.6%.

On the other hand, decreases of 13.7% and 7.2% were registered in the basic metals and fabricated metal products industry and the textiles (including knitting) industry respectively.

Moderate decreases were recorded in the food, beverages and tobacco industry (-3.6%); and the wearing apparel (except footwear) industry (-2.8%).

Output of the chemical, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products industry decreased by 2.1%. Within this group, the production of plastic products decreased by 8.1%.

A slight decrease of 0.3% was recorded in the industry group of electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods. Within this group, the production of machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components increased by 5.9%, but the production of consumer electrical and electronic products decreased by 8.2%.

Compared with the fourth quarter of 1995, the index of industrial production showed a marked decrease of 18.9%. This decrease was, however, largely seasonal as the first quarter is usually a low season for manufacturing production due to the lunar new year holidays.

The index of industrial production reflects changes of local manufacturing output in real terms. In other words, it measures the volume of local production after discounting the effect of price changes.

More detailed information can be obtained from the Quarterly Index of Industrial Production, First Quarter 1996 report, which is on sale at $11 a copy at the Government Publications Sales Centre, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

The report is also available at the Census and Statistics Department Publications Unit, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai. Regular subscription may be arranged.

Enquiries about the survey result may be directed to the General Economic Surveys Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6643.

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Indices of industrial production by industry group and selected component industry
(1986 = 100)

Industry group / Selected component industry	Index for 1st Qtr. 1996	% change over 1st Qtr. 1995	% change over 4th Qtr. 1995
1. Food, beverages and tobacco	144	-3.6	-16.6
2. Wearing apparel (except footwear)	94	-2.8	-27.3
3. Textiles (including knitting)	82	-7.2	-27.3
4. Paper products and printing	240	+1.6	-7.8
5. Chemical, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products	57	-2.1	-11.8
within which : Plastic products	(33)	(-8.1)	(-13.3)
6. Basic metals and fabricated metal products	79	-13.7	-16.7
within which : Fabricated metal products (except machinery and equipment)	(75)	(-11.0)	(-18.3)
7. Electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods	159	-0.3	-19.7
within which : Consumer electrical and electronic products	(105)	(-8.2)	(-2.0)
: Machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components	(252)	(+5.9)	(-21.8)
8. Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	74	-1.8	-12.7
ALL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES	108	-2.6	-18.9

Notes : 1. Four selected component industries, which carry relatively large weights and are major components of their relevant industry groups, are also included in the above table. For easy reading, the figures of these selected component industries are shown in brackets.

2. As from the first quarter of 1992, the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) is used to form the industry groups and selected component industries presented in the above table. For the exact coverage of the industry groups and component industries in terms of HSIC codes, please refer to the publication 'Quarterly Index of Industrial Production, 1st Quarter 1996'.

End

Grading of beach water quality

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The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (Thursday) announced the latest gradings of Hong Kong's beaches, based on the bacteriological water quality, for the 1996 swimming season.

The purpose of the grading system is to inform swimmers and the general public about the state of bacteriological pollution at various beaches.

The grading will be announced biweekly during the bathing season to coincide with the frequency at which beach waters are usually sampled.

The grading is based on the most recent E. coli data obtained by EPD in its routine monitoring programme.

As with last year, the grading also includes an estimate of the risk of suffering some minor skin or gastrointestinal complaints as a result of swimming at a beach which has some degree of pollution.

The estimate is based on a large body of statistical information gathered in Hong Kong in recent bathing seasons.

The grading of some beaches may vary during the summer. This represents a natural fluctuation in the bacteriological quality of bathing waters in most cases, as rain and tides bring more or less pollution to the beaches.

However, the grades give a good general picture of the water quality at bathing beaches at the time of reporting and form the best available forecast for the immediate future.

Beaches with highly developed hinterlands are likely to be more polluted than the grades suggested during and after heavy rain.

"Bathers should avoid such beaches for two or three days after a storm, longer if the weather remains overcast or less if there is strong sunshine", Acting Principal Environmental Protection Officer, Dr Lawrence Wong said.

The system for grading beach water quality is as follows:

Grade "1" indicates that the water quality is good. The E. coli count is no more than 24 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected risk of minor illness to swimmers is undetectable.

Grade "2" indicates that the water quality is fair. The E. coli count is no more than 180 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is no more than 10 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

Grade "3" indicates that the water quality is poor. The E. coli count is no more than 610 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is no more than 15 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

Grade "4" indicates that the water quality is very poor. The E. coli count is more than 610 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is more than 15 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

The decision whether or not to close a beach to swimmers is based on a judgement of what degree of pollution is acceptable.

Normally, the closure of a beach would only be considered by the Urban or Regional Council if a grade "4" occurred repeatedly, so that the average health risk over the bathing season exceeded 15 cases per 1,000 swimmers.

At present five gazetted beaches, namely Anglers', Approach, Castle Peak, Rocky Bay and Ting Kau, are closed to swimmers, while Old Cafeteria is re-opened. The decision to open or close the beaches has been made by the Regional and Urban Councils on the basis of beach water quality monitoring data for 1995. The public are advised not to swim at the closed beaches. They are identified by an "X" in the following list.

The grades of the bacteriological water quality of various beaches in Hong Kong today are listed below:

Beach	Previous Grading (as at 4.7.96)	Present Grading (as at 18.7.96)
Hong Kong South		
Big Wave Bay (S)	3	3
Chung Hom Kok (S)	1	1
Deep Water Bay (S)	1	1
Hairpin (S)	2	2
Middle Bay (S)	2	3
Repulse Bay (S)	1	1
Shek O (S)	2	2
South Bay (S)	1	1
St Stephen's (S)	2	2
Turtle Cove (S)	2	2
Stanley Main (S)	2	2
Rocky Bay	X	X

Tuen Mun District

Golden Beach	2	2
Old Cafeteria	3	3
New Cafeteria	2	2
Castle Peak	X	X
Kadoorie (S)	3	3
Butterfly (S)	3	3

Sai Kung District

Clear Water Bay 1st Beach (S)	2	2
Clear Water Bay 2nd Beach (S)	2	2
Hap Mun Bay (S)	1	1
Kiu Tsui (S)	1	1
Silverstrand (S)	2	3
Trio (Hebe Haven) (S)	2	2

Islands District

Cheung Sha Upper	1	1
Cheung Sha Lower	3	3
Discovery Bay*	2	2
Hung Shing Yeh	1	1
Kwun Yam Wan	2	1
Tong Fuk	1	1
Lo So Shing	1	1
Pui O	1	1
Silvermine Bay	2	3
Tung Wan, Cheung Chau (S)	2	1

Tsuen Wan District

Anglers'	X	X
Approach	X	X
Casam (S)	3	3
Gemini	3	4
Hoi Mei Wan	3	3
Lido (S)	3	4
Ting Kau	X	X
Tung Wan, Ma Wan	2	2

Note: "X" The beach has been closed for swimming purposes.
* Non-gazetted beaches.
(S) The beach has a shark-prevention net installed.

The following beaches have changed grading on this occasion:

Kwun Yam Wan and Tung Wan on Cheung Chau from "2" to "1"; Middle Bay, Silvermine Bay and Silverstrand from "2" to "3"; Gemini and Lido from "3" to "4".

The changes are within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of these beaches.

End

Medical examination result announced

* * * * *

The Licentiate Committee of the Medical Council of Hong Kong today (Thursday) announced that 22 candidates have passed the final part of the Licentiate Examination for unregistrable doctors while 36 others have failed.

This part of the examination, held between July 3 and 9, was an oral examination to test the ability of candidates to apply professional knowledge to clinical problems. Candidates were examined by two panels of examiners in each of the three disciplines: medicine, surgery and obstetrics and gynaecology.

Successful candidates will be required to undergo an 18-month period of assessment and training in approved hospitals, starting from September.

This batch of 22 candidates will be the last one to go through the Medical Council's Licentiate Scheme for unregistrable doctors.

With the inception of the scheme since 1977, 7,339 candidates have sat the examination and among those, 1,038 have successfully passed the examination.

With effect from September 1, the Licentiate Examination will be replaced by a universal Licensing Examination.

Medical graduates, other than those from the two local universities, are required to pass the new licensing examination and complete a 12-month internship training before they may register with the Medical Council of Hong Kong.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	1,870	0930	+88
Closing balance in the account	1,922	1000	+88
Change attributable to :		1100	+88
Money market activity	+92	1200	+88
LAF today	- 40	1500	+92
		1600	+92

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.0 *-0.2* 18.7.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.08	2 years	2805	6.30	100.06	6.36
1 month	5.10	3 years	3904	6.30	99.13	6.75
3 months	5.26	5 years	5106	7.23	99.77	7.42
6 months	5.46	7 years	7305	7.60	99.95	7.75
12 months	5.87	5 years	M502	7.30	99.33	7.62

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - $9,112 million

Closed July 18, 1996

End