



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, March 19, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food commodities

Release time: 7.00 p.m.

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RICE SUPPLY SITUATION DISCUSSED

Arrangements to ensure a stable rice supply situation avoiding price speculation in the light of any further increases in import prices for rice were discussed today by the Rice Advisory Committee.

Mr. Jimmy McGregor, Deputy Director of Commerce and Industry, said after the meeting that it must be assumed that the present upward trend in the international price of rice would continue for some time. Hong Kong would be affected in the same way as all other importing countries.

It was important, therefore, to ensure that the announcement from time to time by exporting countries of price increases did not give rise to speculative activity in the rice trade in Hong Kong, leading to public fear of shortage.

The committee has agreed that the Commerce and Industry Department must use its legal powers to enforce sales of rice, if necessary, by importers to wholesalers and retail outlets to meet consumer demand.

"If sufficient rice is sold into the system by importers this makes it completely unnecessary for any panic-buying by the public," added Mr. McGregor.

Written guarantees have now been provided by wholesalers that they will not exceed the \$2 per picul mark-up agreed by the committee.

Mr. McGregor said that firm action would be taken against any wholesaler demanding undercover payments.

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"We shall show no hesitation in denying rice to wholesalers if it can be proved to our satisfaction that they are exceeding the agreed mark-up. The committee agreed that this course of action should be taken."

Detailed conditions for the direct purchase of rice by large organisations and retail outlets were agreed at the meeting.

The Commerce and Industry Department has so far received about 80 applications to participate in the direct purchase scheme. These will now be processed as quickly as possible.

Referring to reports that Thailand will place a temporary ban on rice exports, Mr. McGregor said that the department had not yet been able to obtain any firm information.

The committee also had no information, although several members, like the department, are seeking clarification from Thailand.

"Even if these reports prove to be correct, however, I do not believe that there is any real cause for alarm as other sources will make up for any shortfall in supply," commented Mr. McGregor.

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FEBRUARY G.C.P.I. UP FOUR POINTS

The General Consumer Price Index for February 1974 was 183, four points higher than that for the previous month.

This was due mainly to an increase of eight points in the index for foodstuffs.

The index for fuel and light advanced by 12 points while the index for durable goods advanced by two points.

Rises of one point each were recorded in the index for housing, the index for miscellaneous goods and the index for transport and vehicles.

On the other hand, the index for services dropped by three points. Movements in the indexes for other sections of commodity were insignificant.

Compared with the previous month, there were increases in the average retail prices of rice, fresh water fish, pork, beef, poultry, eggs and meals bought away from home. On the other hand, the average retail prices of salt water fish and fresh vegetables dropped.

As to non-food items, the rise in the index for fuel and light was attributable to increased charges for electricity and higher prices for kerosene and liquefied petroleum gas. The index for services was lowered as a result of reduced charges for hairdressing after the Chinese New Year Festival.

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U.K. CHINESE TRADERS DUE THIS WEEK

The Chamber of Chinese Traders in Britain will be paying a visit to Hong Kong later this week.

Headed by Mr. Chan Sau-on, the 11-man delegation will hold discussions with prominent businessmen and members of the Heung Yee Kuk during their week-long stay here.

The group will also call on the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose and other senior Government officials, including the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr. Denis Bray and the District Commissioner, New Territories, Mr. David Akers-Jones.

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Note to Editors: Mr. Chan and his party will arrive in Hong Kong by British Airways, Flight BA 808 (E.T.A. 6.00 p.m.) on Friday (March 22).

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WATER CUT

Water supply to a number of premises in Central District will be interrupted for five hours, starting from 1 a.m. on Thursday (March 21).

This will enable a leakage test to be carried out in the area.

The affected area is bounded by Queen's Road Central from Garden Road to Pottinger Street and south side of Des Voeux Road Central from Pottinger Street to Ice House Street.

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PREVENTIVE SERVICE TESTING INFLATABLE BOAT

A 16-foot inflatable boat is being tested by the Preventive Service to evaluate its effectiveness for "strike and search" activities to curb drug smuggling activities in Hong Kong waters.

The boat is powered by a 40 horse-power engine and is capable of carrying 12 people. Overall cost is in the region of \$20,000.

If trials prove satisfactory Government approval will be sought to equip the Preventive Service with a number of the boats for operational use.

They would be used for water-borne operations on outlying islands, patrolling inaccessible coastal areas and inshore patrols in shallow waters.

The craft is also being tested as a platform for Preventive Service divers to operate from when carrying out under-water searches for drugs dumped in remote areas.

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Note to Editors: You are invited to send a reporter and photographer to cover a trial demonstration of the inflatable boat by Preventive Service divers on Wednesday morning, March 20. Launches to convey the Press to the scene of the demonstration will be leaving the new Government Pier, East Arm, Connaught Road Central, at 9 a.m. sharp. The Pier is adjacent to the Outlying Islands Ferry terminal.

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N.T. LOTS FOR SALE

Two lots of Crown land on outlying islands are to be sold by public auction in the District Office, Islands, on Tuesday (April 2) at 10.30 a.m.

The first lot, located on Peng Chau, has an area of about 2,100 square feet.

The second lot, with an area of about 4,060 square feet, is located at Mui Wo, Lantau Island.

Both lots are for non-industrial purposes only.

Full particulars and conditions of sale may be obtained from and sale plans inspected at the New Territories Administration, North Kowloon Magistracy, Tai Po Road, Kowloon and at the District Offices of Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan, Tai Po, Sai Kung and Islands.

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MORE SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES NEEDED

The Education Department is anxious that many more special classes for children with learning difficulties are established in ordinary schools.

Under the Second Five Year Programme for the Development of Special Education "we should like to have a total of 10,000 places for children with learning difficulties by 1977," Miss Elizabeth Rowe, Senior Education Officer (Special Education), said today.

She was speaking at the opening of the special classes of the Po Leung Kuk group of schools and the Display of Teaching Aids.

Miss Rowe emphasised that it was most important that children who needed special education were integrated with ordinary children whenever possible in order that they could get the fullest benefit from the educational facilities available.

"The Department's Special Education Section", she said, "will be very happy to help with the selection of pupils, training of teachers and organisation of the curriculum."

She gave an assurance that the Department's fullest support would be given to any voluntary organisation which would like to establish special classes.

The aim of these special classes is to educate slow-learning children to the best of their potential and to prevent a minor handicap from becoming a major disability.

She stressed that if these children were not given the type of education they need, they would become bored and frustrated, and feelings of inadequacy and resentment would begin to grow.

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"It is also recognised that such negative attitudes in childhood if allowed to persist without being remedied, may develop into anti-social behaviour in youth and adult life.

"It is essential that every modern community should take measures to prevent this waste of human potential if as many of its citizens as possible are to become contributing members of the community," she said.

Miss Rowe praised the Po Leung Kuk for its quick response to the Department's appeal in April 1973 to voluntary organisations well established in the field of ordinary education to assist in implementing the Second Development Programme and provide special classes for children with learning difficulties.

She pointed out that the Kuk was the first voluntary organisation to offer this assistance. The Kuk opened three special classes in September 1973 and four more in February 1974.

"As a result, the Kuk now has seven special classes in ordinary primary schools," Miss Rowe said.

She thanked the Kuk's directors for their immediate response to the Department's request and for being so quick to put their words into action.

Miss Rowe commended the teachers of the special classes in the Kuk's schools for their enthusiasm and willingness in tackling their pupils' problems with such understanding.

"They have also been most enthusiastic, imaginative and creative in devising and making their own teaching aids and supplementary graded teaching materials," she said.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Miss Rowe's speech will be distributed separately in the G.I.S. press boxes this evening.

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COMMENTS ON EDUCATION GREEN PAPER

The Education Department has received a number of questions from newspapers asking for comment on yesterday's press release on the memorandum of Legco unofficials commenting on the Education Green Paper.

In reply, a spokesman for the Education Department said today:

"The full statement of the views of the ad hoc group of unofficial members of the Legislative Council was submitted to the government on February 1, 1974.

"Since then two discussions have been held by the Education Department and Secretariat officers with members of the ad hoc group.

"A paper is being prepared for consideration by the Board of Education collating all the views which have been expressed by the public, interested professional bodies and, of course, by the unofficial members.

"It would, therefore, not be proper under the circumstances for the Education Department to single out any specific suggestions for comment at this stage."

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

The following prices were realised today (Tuesday) at sales under the Rice Control Scheme and at the Vegetable Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market and the Fish Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market at Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon:

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Rice

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>
		<u>Average</u>
<u>China Rice</u>		-
See Mew -- old crop	Good	2.00
-- new crop		
S.C.Jion -- new crop	Good	1.94
Po Ngai	-	-
Chu Cho	-	-
<u>Thai Rice</u>		1.90
100% Whole	Good	
10-15% Broken	-	
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.67
A1 Super	Good	1.52
Whole Glutinous	-	-
<u>U.S. Rice</u>	Good	1.82
<u>Australian Rice</u>	-	-
<u>Pakistan Rice</u>	-	-
<u>Taiwan Rice</u>	-	-

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Marine Fish

<u>Species</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Golden Thread	Good	5.4	3.2	4.0
Big-Eyes	Good	2.2	0.7	1.8
Squid	Limited	5.2	3.2	4.0
Hair-Tails	Good	2.4	1.0	1.8
Lizard Fishes	Normal	2.3	1.0	1.8
Croakers	Good	2.2	0.7	1.5
Conger-Pike-Eels	Good	2.5	1.8	2.0
Melon Coat	-	-	-	-
Breans	Limited	4.8	3.0	4.5
Yellow Belly	Good	1.5	0.6	1.0
Mackerels	Normal	4.7	3.3	4.0
Red Goat Fish	Normal	1.35	0.5	1.0
Fork-Tail	Normal	1.5	0.9	1.3
Horse-Head	Normal	6.5	3.0	5.0
Melon Seed	Normal	2.8	1.8	2.6
Pomfrets	-	-	-	-
Garoupas	Normal	7.0	5.0	6.0
Yellow Croaker	-	-	-	-

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of

Locally Produced Vegetables

<u>Type</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Flowering cabbage	Scarce	2.8	1.2	2.0
White cabbage	Limited	1.6	0.8	1.2
Chinese Lettuce	Limited	1.2	0.4	0.8
Chinese Kale	Scarce	2.0	0.8	1.5
Spring onion	Good	0.6	0.2	0.4
Spinach	Limited	1.8	0.8	1.4
Water cress	Limited	1.2	0.4	0.8
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	1.2	0.4	0.8
Tomato	Limited	1.8	0.8	1.4

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price</u>
		<u>(\$/ picul)</u>
		(Average)
Pork	Good	300

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