



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Friday, March 22, 1996

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Governor's transcript

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Following is the transcript of the Governor's media session after opening the Museum of Medical Sciences this (Friday) afternoon:

Question: Yesterday the Preparatory Committee recommended that permanent residents ...

Governor: I don't know what they recommend.

Question: They recommend ...

Governor: I mean I read the newspapers, but what we're all waiting for is some formal statement. Clearly everyone in Hong Kong and a lot of Hong Kong families outside would like as soon as possible the practical details of how the Preparatory Committee and Chinese officials propose to implement the assurance Mr Qian Qichen gave in January that everybody who has permanent residence in Hong Kong today will have it after 1997. Now I read the reports this morning which were interesting and suggested that we are soon going to hear some proposals. All I would add is that I hope that those proposals can be swiftly discussed by our experts because it will be the Hong Kong Government, it will be the Immigration Department after 1997 which will actually have to implement these proposals whatever they are. So I very much hope that we can have expert talks very quickly and that the proposals themselves will be as generous and open-minded as possible.

Question: ... suggested that it is not feasible for international law for one to give up his own consular protection in such way.

Governor: Well, I don't want to be a spoilsport, but you can't really expect me to comment on something which hasn't yet been announced. I read the things that have been leaked in newspapers and they may or may not be accurate. But what it underlines is the importance if there are proposals of them being discussed with us as soon as possible because there are all sorts of matters to consider. There is the administrative problems that may arise and our Immigration Department are in the best position to discuss how those could be solved. There are conceivably questions of international agreements which have to be considered as well. All I want to make clear is that we would welcome as rapidly as possible a pragmatic and open-minded way of dealing with this issue and of honouring the promise that was very sensibly made by Mr Qian Qichen in January. The sooner we can have a proposal and the sooner we can discuss it with our experts the better. But we've been pressing for expert talks since January, so I hope they can go ahead soon.

Question: (inaudible)

Governor: Well, certainly the last lot of proposals that came out were precisely that for reasons which I set out in an interview recently with the Hong Kong Economic Journal. There are huge complexities in these issues. We're not being spoilsports, but we want to see proposals which are generous and which will work. That's what Hong Kong wants to see. So the sooner we can have expert talks the better.

Question: In what sort the Government prepares for those proposals put forward after the second plenary of the Preparatory Committee ...?

Governor: The sensible thing before any conclusions are reached would be for experts to discuss these matters. I repeat something which is very simple. This is going to have to be administered by the Hong Kong Government, not by the Governor of Hong Kong, but by officials in the Immigration Department of Hong Kong. So the sooner those things can be discussed between experts the better.

Question: I'm referring to the co-operation of liaison committee, between the liaison office and the Preparatory Committee.

Governor: There is a liaison office which has been set up and is just waiting to hear from the Preparatory Committee. It's like waiting to hear whether you've got a date; the phone's there; everybody knows the telephone number; the liaison office sitting behind it waiting to discover whether it is the cinema this evening or out to supper or what it is. To be serious, we're very happy to co-operate within the sensible, principal parameters that I've suggested on a number of occasions. So we'll look forward to hearing the phone ring.

End

Transcript of FS's media session

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, after addressing the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce today (Friday):

Question: Mr Tsang, the World Bank has decided to issue one billion dollar fixed rate bond in Hong Kong with maturity of five years. Given that Hong Kong and China will be separated by then, because theywon't issue paper in places where they give aids to. Can you explain why the World Bank decided to make that decision? Can you.....?

FS: I think the World Bank has accepted now that although Hong Kong after 1997 will be a Special Administrative Region of China. But it is a distinctly different set of economic entity. They have accepted Hong Kong and the rest of China will be two separate economic entities although falling into one same country. So their policy of not borrowing from a place in which they are aiding in the case of China is totally consistent with this policy in that Hong Kong is a separate territory, a separate region within China but operating on a completely different economic setting.

(Questions and answers in Cantonese)

Question: What are the plans for working with China over the Budget and what are the steps you wouldn't be talking to ..?

FS: We've already outlined, we went through it the whole of last year. We've got a procedure which is familiar to both sides. We have also in the last expert group, my colleague K C Kwong passed on a whole table, a schedule of meetings that will set out a programme of work for the whole year.

(Questions and answers in Cantonese)

Question: On the record prices fetched in the recent land auction, are you more optimistic that land revenue for the current fiscal year will be higher?

FS: Well, you wouldn't have believed me when I say that I have forecast that. Now, I think you have to look at the land market not from the point of view of one or two land sales. You have to look at the entire land disposal portfolio we have for the coming year. As regard the locations and the timing of sales are very much dependent on the prevailing market conditions at the time. So it is very early to say whether one land sale is going to influence events for the remaining part of the year. Thank you very much.

End

Consensus on Government's budgetary principles

* * * * *

The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, said today (Friday) that there was a clear consensus in the community that the Government should adhere firmly to the guiding principle of living within our means.

Speaking at the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce luncheon, Mr Tsang said the Hong Kong community had already shown by its response to this year's budget that it supported the set of budgetary principles as the basis of next year's budget as what the Government was now doing "has been effectively enshrined in the Basic Law as the guidelines for the preparation of future budgets".

He said making the budget readily accessible and at every stage professionally and intellectually sound were the two key objectives in preparing for the 1996 Budget.

"Over the years we have tried to present the budget in a way not just economists could readily follow its contents, people from all walks of life also now understand the key budget proposals without difficulty.

"This year we took our public accountability even further," he said.

"This year for the first time all the budget material including the Draft Estimates and its presentation are fully bilingual. There was also the greater use of Chinese."

Mr Tsang said the Government had decided to keep the Budget on the straight and narrow, notwithstanding the superficially attractive ideas floated a few months ago for the 1996 Budget.

"We decided to abide by our fundamental budgetary guidelines and discarded all of populist ideas which were being floated for the 1996 Budget.

The populist ideas Mr Tsang was referring to included earlier suggestions that the Government should "dip into the reserves" to kick-start the economy.

Mr Tsang dismissed these by noting that any transitory popularity gained from such suggestions was an illusion...."and the price - the real price - to be paid for it is lasting damage to Hong Kong's reputation for prudent management of its public finances".

"So we produced a budget which holds firm to our guiding principle of living within our means. It is a balanced budget.

"We have kept our tax system low, simple and predictable. And we have adhered firmly to our revenue principles," he said.

On the 1997-98 Budget, he said there was a very wide measure of consensus, both within the community and in the JLG expert group, on the principles to be adopted for preparing next year's budget.

"In 1997 Hong Kong's budget will be prepared on the basis of our traditional prudent approach. The detailed preparation of the 1997-98 Budget will remain the responsibility of the relevant Hong Kong government departments."

He said experts of both sides of the JLG had already agreed that the 1997-98 Budget would cover the whole financial year.

"A 12-month Budget ensures continuity in all the public services. It also provides certainty over Hong Kong's financial and tax policies through the transition, which is what the community - especially the business community - needs."

"This will be an enterprise with both sides dedicated to its success. At each critical stage of the preparation, the aim will be to achieve a rapid consensus," he said.

He said the Chinese side had made it very clear that their involvement in the 1997 Budget is a one-off affair and after 1997, Hong Kong's budget would be a matter which would fall entirely within the autonomy of the Special Administrative Region government.

"So what we are dealing with now are the exceptional arrangements for the exceptional year," he said.

"I have no doubt that the two sides will be able to reach consensus in all areas, and that the exercise will proceed smoothly," he said.

End

Firearms and Ammunition (Amendment) Bill

* * * * *

The Government is seeking to amend the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance in order to improve the safe use of licensed firearms, a Government spokesman said today (Friday).

The Firearms and Ammunition (Amendment) Bill 1996, gazetted today, will tighten the law and licensing arrangements regulating the possession of, and dealing in, firearms and ammunition.

The spokesman said that an inter-departmental working group had made recommendations which covered the regulation of shooting clubs, holders of arms licences, arms dealers, air guns, deactivated firearms and the use of modified firearms for film production.

"Some of the recommendations will be implemented by the amendments proposed in the Bill, and others by administrative measures," he said.

"The Bill has also taken into account the views expressed in the consultation exercise on the review of the firearms law and the licensing policy held from January 25 to February 24 this year," he added.

The Bill proposes to regulate all shooting clubs under licences for possession of firearms.

"The licence is to be held by a responsible officer of the club. The officer and the club shall comply with their respective licence conditions.

"To ensure safety, tighter licence conditions will be imposed on the clubs to regulate the conduct of the club in the possession and use of firearms and ammunition and the running of its range, armoury or other facilities," the spokesman said.

He said that before members of shooting clubs could be exempted from the licensing requirement under the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance, they would be required to complete a course on the safe handling of firearms under the supervision of an arms instructor, whose appointment needs to be approved by the Commissioner of Police.

"The appointment of an agent or a servant of a licensee will be subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Police.

"This will preclude a person who is ineligible to hold a licence for possession, or whose licence has been revoked, from possessing or handling a licensee's firearms in the capacity of the licensee's agent or servant," he explained.

To address the possible threat to public safety when a large number of firearms or ammunition are carried in public places or stored at the licensees' premises, the Bill proposes to give the Commissioner of Police the power to restrict the number of firearms and amount of ammunition to be possessed by a licensee.

As the misuse of low-powered air guns could also be dangerous, the Bill seeks to amend the Summary Offences Ordinance to make it an offence to discharge any low-powered air gun in a public place to the danger or annoyance of any person.

The spokesman said that shooting clubs and other licensees affected by the proposed changes would be given sufficient time to prepare for transition to the new licensing regime as the preparatory work for implementing the proposals would take about one year to complete.

"The authorities will further liaise with the clubs to ensure that the new licensing conditions are reasonable and practicable," he added.

The Bill is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council on April 3 this year.

End

Government attaches importance to special education: FS

The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, said today (Friday) that the Government attached great importance to special education.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of Caritas Jockey Club Lok Yan School, Mr Tsang said the Board of Education had set up a sub-committee on special education in late 1994 to review the existing level of service and the resources for special education.

The sub-committee would submit a report to the Board of Education next month and then to the Government for consideration, he said.

"We will actively and thoroughly consider the Board's views and proposals," he added.

Mr Tsang also pointed out that Hong Kong's special education had regularly developed over the past 25 years and government expenditure for this purpose had continuously increased with a total allocation of \$960 million in the current financial year.

End

Textiles consultations with US prove useful

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The Trade Department today (Friday) completed a round of two-day consultations with a visiting US delegation on various issues relating to Hong Kong's textiles and clothing trade with the US.

"The two sides had very useful discussions on all the subjects on the agenda," said Mrs Rebecca Lai, Deputy Director-General of Trade, who led the Hong Kong negotiating team.

The US side was led by Ms Caroyl Miller, Deputy Chief Textile Negotiator, Office of the US Trade Representative.

The consultations covered three subjects : the new US origin rules for certain textiles and clothing products which are scheduled to take effect on July 1; the US unilateral move to use its import data for quota accounting purposes, as opposed to the established practice of export control; and the notification of administrative arrangements to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as required by the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC).

"The unilateral change in US origin rules has been a major concern for our trade, particularly in the categories of cut-and-sewn garments and various made-up articles such as bed-linens, scarves, baby diapers etc.," Mrs Lai said.

"For cut-and-sewn garments, the first problem for traders in Hong Kong and the US is that the US authority has not given all information necessary for them to know how exactly they will be affected by the new rules."

The new rules require assembly of the garments to be origin-conferring, as compared to the present rule for cutting. However, at the same time, the rules stipulate that minor attachments, embellishments, and subassemblies will not affect the origin of the garment.

"The problem for traders is that there is no detailed information on what are these minor processes for each type of cut-and-sewn garment. Without such information, traders cannot plan ahead," she said.

"In anticipation, we have been asking the US side for this information in past exchanges and consultations. But the US approach is such that they can only give binding rulings on a case-by-case basis, and in response to requests. Accordingly, the Hong Kong Textile Council has sent 13 requests for such rulings to the US Customs earlier on.

"At the consultations, the US side were not able to give us such binding rulings. But they gave some useful information which increases our understanding of the rules. They also undertook to ask the US Customs to respond to our trade's 13 requests as early as possible."

As for made-up articles, Mrs Lai said, the Hong Kong side explained the problems that the change in rules would cause to its trade, and the US side agreed to consider the impact on Hong Kong.

At present, made-up articles can be made with imported fabrics. Under the new rules, such Hong Kong products using imported fabrics will not be able to be exported to the US under Hong Kong quotas.

On the question of data for quota accounting purposes, the two side focused on various issues concerning practical arrangements to minimise discrepancies in the two sides' respective data.

"We have earlier on given the US a number of cases where their data is different from ours. The US has now come back with their findings, and where their data is wrong has corrected their records. We are very grateful for their prompt response," Mrs Lai said.

"We are also grateful that they tabled data for the rest of the 1995 textiles year. This will enable us to compare our data with theirs for the whole year, and then to rectify any discrepancies with them quickly. This is important so that when in the middle of this year we have to notify the US of how we wish to use our flexibilities in quotas for this year, we will have an agreed picture of quota utilisation in 1995."

So far, there have been no cases where discrepancies between the two sides' data have led to unilateral US embargo on Hong Kong's imports.

Separately, as a part of the on-going discussion on how to improve arrangements for administering Hong Kong's textiles and clothing exports to the US, the two sides had a useful exchange of ideas on how the current visa arrangements could be improved to reduce discrepancies in the two sides' data.

"We will continue our discussion on what administrative arrangements the two side should notify to the WTO under the ATC. Subject to a couple of points, which the US has agreed to consider, the two sides are close to agreement," Mrs Lai added.

End

Great demand for clinical psychologists

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The demand for clinical psychologists' services is fast outstripping supply as the value of their expertise becomes more widely appreciated.

This was stated by the Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mr Bob Wilson, when he officiated at the opening ceremony of Social Welfare Department's (SWD) Clinical Psychology Unit (1) and Child Protective Services Unit today (Friday).

Mr Wilson said the government had in hand a series of measures to address this problem including an increase in the number of student places, better co-ordination of clinical placements, scholarships for future training and overseas recruitment.

"This situation shows how far and fast things changed since SWD first employed a clinical psychologist in 1970.

"Today, the department has three clinical psychology units staffed by a total of 28 clinical psychologists.

"Their duties have expanded from intelligence assessment for mentally handicapped persons to assessment of much more complex cases involving child abuse, family discord and custody evaluation, as well as consultation and visiting service to adult rehabilitation centres, special child care centres and correctional homes," he said.

As for the Child Protective Services Unit, Mr Wilson said it had undergone major expansion and development since its establishment in 1983.

"In recognition of the growing complexity of the child abuse cases being handled, the rank of the unit's caseworkers was upgraded to Social Work Officer in 1991 and last year, the manning ratios were improved.

"At present, the Unit is staffed by 16 senior social work practitioners and will continue to expand to provide not only remedial services to child abuse victims and their families, but also to promote prevention of child abuse at both the district and territory-wide levels," he said.

Noting that it was not by co-incidence that the Clinical Psychology Unit (1) and Child Protective Services Unit had been accommodated in adjacent offices, Mr Wilson said it was necessary for social workers and clinical psychologists to work closely together, especially on child abuse cases.

"This need for close collaboration has most recently been demonstrated in the joint efforts required to implement changes to the law designed to protect vulnerable witnesses through the use of video-recorded interviews," he added.

Earlier, the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Ian Strachan, said family and child welfare received top priority as government considered its welfare policies.

"We are fully aware of all the rapid social changes that have led to family breakdown and malfunctioning.

"The SWD continues to strengthen families and to ensure that the children of Hong Kong are provided with a suitable environment for their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development," Mr Strachan said.

End

Voters urged to support Tuen Mun by-election

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The Tuen Mun district officer, Mr Patrick Chan, today (Friday) urged registered voters to cast their ballots in the Tuen Mun District Board by-election for the Siu Hei Constituency on Sunday.

Mr Chan reminded the electorate that the district boards are an important consultative body on government policies and had made important contributions to improving the living environment, public services and facilities in the district.

"In particular, the Tuen Mun District Board has made substantial efforts to bring about better town planning within areas under its jurisdiction. This has led to general enhancement in the quality of life," he added.

The balloting will be held from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm.

A polling station will be set up at the Yan Chai Hospital Law Chan Chor Si Primary School, 29 Wu King Road, Tuen Mun.

Two candidates - Mr Yim Tin-sang and Ms Wong Yin-ping - will be vying for the seat vacated by Mr Ng Wai-cho.

The Siu Hei constituency, comprising mainly Siu Hei Court, Marina Garden, Miami Beach Tower and Yuet Wu Villa has an electorate of 10,246.

Voters are also reminded to bring along their identity cards and their poll cards to the polling station.

Enquiries can be made to the Tuen Mun district office on 2464 4101.

End

Sham Tseng Treatment Works opens on World Water Day

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The Director of Water Supplies, Mr Hu Man-shiu, and the Chairman of Tsuen Wan District Board, Mr Chan Lau-fong officiated at the official opening of the Sham Tseng Treatment Works today (Friday) to mark the United Nations World Water Day.

This new treatment works at Sham Tseng, which has been put into operation on December 28 last year, is the major component of a water supply scheme implemented by the Water Supplies Department to provide a fully treated water supply to Sham Tseng, Tsing Lung Tau and Ma Wan.

"The completion of this important project is another milestone in demonstrating Government's long-term commitment to the continuous pursuit of improvement and upgrading of its services to the community," said Mr Hu.

The first stage of the Sham Tseng Treatment Works, which has now been completed, costs \$140 million and provides 23,000 cubic metres of treated water per day. Stage II of the project, which is now being designed, will, when completed, increase the capacity of the Treatment Works to 36,500 cubic metres per day to meet the demand of the developments in this area.

The new installation is a two-stage treatment works which employs primary and secondary processes of clarification and filtration as a means of achieving optimum water quality. The quality of water is systematically monitored by means of chemical and bacteriological testing of water samples taken to ensure that the final water supplied to the consumers complies fully with the Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality recommended by the World Health Organization.

The inauguration of this new treatment works was also timed to mark the United Nations World Water Day.

"March 22 has been declared by the United Nations as the World Water Day," said the Deputy Director of Water Supplies, Mr Ko Chan-gock.

"The declaration is in consideration of the importance of water resource development to economic productivity and social well-being; the growing scarcity of water resources; and the requirement of public awareness at local, regional and international levels for the promotion of water conservation", he added.

Mr Hu and Mr Ko are the current Chairman and Secretary of the Asia Pacific Group of the International Water Supply Association respectively.

End

Quarterly employment and vacancies survey

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The Census and Statistics Department has just started the Quarterly Survey of Employment and Vacancies to collect data on employment and vacancies in major sectors of the economy in respect of March 1996.

This survey is conducted quarterly and the results are useful in serving as short-term economic indicators and providing information on the latest changes in the labour market.

This round of the survey covers about 71,000 establishments which are drawn from various sectors including the industrial sector (mining and quarrying; manufacturing; electricity and gas), the distributive trades sector (wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels) and the services sector (transport, storage and communications; financing, insurance, real estate and business services; community, social and personal services).

Information on number of persons engaged and vacancies as at March 29, 1996, will be sought from each sampled establishment.

Questionnaires are being mailed to sampled establishments.

In accordance with the Census and Statistics (Quarterly Survey of Employment and Vacancies) Order, these establishments are required to complete and return the questionnaires to the Census and Statistics Department within the specified period.

If they have difficulties in completing the questionnaires, they may contact the department for assistance on 2582 5076.

End

Rehabilitation programmes effectiveness study commissioned

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The Government today (Friday) awarded a \$800,000 contract to the City University of Hong Kong to conduct a research on the effectiveness of existing rehabilitation programmes for young offenders.

The study, which will commence on April 1, is commissioned by the Standing Committee on Young Offenders under the Fight Crime Committee.

The contract was signed by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, and the acting Vice-Chancellor of the City University, Professor Enoch Young.

Speaking at the contract-signing ceremony, Mr Lai said the conduct of such a study was one of the recommendations in the Action Plan To Tackle The Problem of Juvenile Crime released last December.

"It is hoped that the research will shed light on two policy objectives in tackling the problem of juvenile crime. They are: to arrest and punish the offenders through law enforcement and the criminal justice system, and to rehabilitate the offenders through family, social and correctional services," he said.

Mr Lai said during the one-year research, the City University research team would study and make recommendations on how rehabilitation programmes conducted by the Correctional Services Department in its detention centres, training centres and prisons could be improved.

"Programmes under the Social Welfare Department will also be covered.

"These include probation service, probation homes, remand homes, community service orders, community support service scheme and aftercare service," he added.

Also speaking in the ceremony, Professor Young said the City University research team would work closely with the government departments concerned to produce an independent, reliable and constructive research report.

"Through this kind of co-operation and involvement, we hope that the City University can contribute to the future development of rehabilitation services for young offenders in Hong Kong," he said.

End

More drug education courses for teachers

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The Education Department will, in April, repeat a two-day drug education course which has been very well received by secondary school teachers.

The activity-oriented Life Skills Training Course for Secondary School Teachers will be repeated on April 11 and 12, 1996. It will take place at Hong Kong Teachers' Centre at Pak Fuk Road, North Point, accommodating 50 participants.

The course, which comprises talks, group discussions and presentations, is aimed at familiarising teachers with a diversity of teaching methods, using available resources in drug education and creating a supportive learning environment.

Participants will examine attitudes towards drugs and drug users and the role of teachers and schools in promoting drug education in schools.

The course is provided by the Education Department in conjunction with the Community Drug Advisory Council.

Schools have been notified about the course. The Education Department reminded schools that nominations should be sent in to the department at Room 1208, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, on or before March 27.

End

Fees to be revised under two amendment regulations

* * * * *

Fees for registration as fire service installation contractors will be revised with effect from May 3, a government spokesman announced today (Friday).

Also, fees for the granting, renewal, transfer, amendment and issue of a duplicate of a licence to operate a timber store will be adjusted on the same date.

Details of the fee revisions are set out in the Fire Service (Installation Contractors) (Amendment) Regulation 1996 and Timber Stores (Amendment) Regulation 1996 gazetted today.

The spokesman explained that the fees were to be revised to take into account the increase in cost since their last review in 1994.

Following are details of the fee revisions:

Under the Fire Service (Installation Contractors)(Amendment) Regulation 1996

<u>Item</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Existing Fees</u>	<u>Revised Fees</u>
1	FSI Contractors Registration Class 1 or 2 or Class 1 & 2	\$1,250	\$1,370
2	FSI Contractors Registration Class 3 - Written Exam	\$705	\$770
3	FSI Contractors Registration Class 3 - Interview	\$765	\$835
4	FSI Contractors Registration Class 3 - Workshop Inspection	\$630	\$690
5	FSI Contractor Registration Class 1 or 2 or Class 1 & 2 or Class 3 - Workshop Re-inspection	\$630	\$690
6	FSI Contractors Registration Class 1 or 2 or Class 1 & 2 or Class 3 - New Workshop Inspection	\$630	\$690

7	FSI Contractors Registration Class 1 or 2 or Class 1 & 2 or Class 3 - New Workshop Re-inspection	\$630	\$690
8	FSI Contractors Registration Class 1 or 2 or Class 1 & 2 or Class 3 - Change of Registered Name or Registered Address	\$320	\$350
9	FSI Contractors Registration Class 1 or 2 or Class 1 & 2 - Change of Qualified Person	\$400	\$435

Under the Timber Stores (Amendment) Regulation 1996

<u>Item</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Existing Fees</u>	<u>Revised Fees</u>
1	Grant of a licence	\$1,870	\$2,040
2	Renewal of a licence	\$840	\$920
3	Transfer of an existing licence to another person	\$190	\$210
4	Amendment of the conditions or the particulars of a licence	\$190	\$210
5	Issue of a duplicate of a licence	\$190	\$210

End

Study on Vocational Training Council commissioned

* * * * *

The Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joseph W P Wong, today (Friday) signed an agreement with a consultancy firm to conduct a comprehensive review on the working of the Vocational Training Council (VTC).

The three-month consultancy study to be steered by an inter-departmental working group led by the Education and Manpower Branch, will cover the following areas:

- * To review the systems and procedures by which VTC manages its activities to ensure that the Council's objectives can be achieved efficiently and in a cost effective manner;
- * To examine the activities of VTC and advise whether they are meeting Hong Kong's needs for a comprehensive system of technical education and industrial training in the light of economic restructuring;
- * To examine the contributions made by those training institutes in the private sector to vocational education and training;
- * To examine how to facilitate the transition of secondary school leavers from school education to vocational training.

After signing the contract with Segal Quince Wicksteed (Asia) Ltd, Mr Wong said the consultancy would help map out the future direction and strategy of the vocational education and training in the years to come.

"Human resource development is of paramount importance to Hong Kong's economy. VTC, being a major provider of vocational training must ensure that its programmes are responsive to the changing needs of the economy as well as appealing to potential students and parents," added Mr Wong.

End

Appeal for information on helicopter accident

* * * * *

The Civil Aviation Department is appealing for information in connection with the Lama helicopter accident which occurred in Tai Lam Gap on March 16.

Any persons wishing to make representation as to the circumstances or cause of the accident are requested to either write or telephone 2769 8896 to the Civil Aviation Department within 14 days of this notice.

Written representation should be sent to the Chief Inspector of Accidents c/o The Civil Aviation Department, 46 floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

The appeal was contained in a notice published in the Gazette today (Friday), announcing that an Inspector's Investigation is taking place into the cause of the accident involving an Aerospatiale SA315B Lama helicopter VR-HIP operated by Heliservices (Hong Kong) Limited.

During the accident, the pilot of helicopter was injured while the aircraft was substantially damaged.

End

New member appointed to committee of HK Philharmonic

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The Governor has appointed Dr Liu Ching-chih to the General Committee of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society, with effect from April 1, 1996.

The appointment was published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

The General Committee is responsible for the management of the affairs, administration and business of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society.

End

Monthly Digest of Statistics March issue now on sale

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A feature article entitled "Revisions to Hong Kong's Commodity Classification Systems" is published in the March 1996 issue of the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics.

There are at present two different commodity classification systems used in Hong Kong - the Harmonised System (HS) and the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).

HS is developed by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) as a multi-purpose classification of commodities. It harmonises a variety of customs, statistical and transport nomenclature and classification of commodities and is mainly used for customs purpose.

It was formally promulgated by WCO in 1983. Hong Kong has also adopted HS in full for trade declaration purpose since 1992.

On the other hand, SITC is developed by the United Nations as a commodity classification system for reporting merchandise trade statistics.

It has undergone several revisions and the current version is called the SITC Revision 3 (SITC R3). Hong Kong has adopted SITC R3 for trade statistics reporting since 1992.

This feature article introduces the basic structure of these two commodity classification systems and their relationship.

The revisions to them which have taken effect as from January are described and the implications to traders and users of trade statistics are also explained.

The March 1996 issue of the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics is now on sale at \$50 a copy. It contains most up-to-date information on Hong Kong's situation regarding economic growth, the labour market, inflation and many other social and economic issues.

Purchase of this publication can be made at the Government publication Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

It is also on sale at the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Regular subscription can be arranged with the Publications (Sales) Office of the Information Services Department, Tel 2598 8194.

End

Hiram's Highway Improvement Proposal

* * * * *

The Highways Department proposes to improve the junction of Hiram's Highway and Clear Water Bay Road to enhance road safety.

The project involves the realignment of roads and the Hiram's Highway/Clear Water Bay Road junction together with the construction of a vehicular flyover, an underpass and a footbridge.

The proposal is to provide additional traffic capacity to the Hiram's Highway/Clear Water Bay Road junction to cope with increasing traffic demand arising from the rapid population growth in the Sai Kung Peninsular and Tseung Kwan O.

The works will commence in early December for completion in May 1999.

A notice of the proposed works is published in the Government gazette today (Friday).

Plan of the proposed works can be seen at:

- * The Public Enquiry Service Centre, the Central and Western District Office, ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- * The District Lands Office, Sai Kung, third floor, Sai Kung Government Offices Building, 34 Chan Man street, Sai Kung, New Territories, and
- * The Sai Kung District Office, second floor, Sai Kung Government Offices Building, 34 Chan Man street, Sai Kung, New Territories.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address his/her objection in writing to the Secretary for Transport, second floor, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong not later than Tuesday, May 21, 1996.

End

Construction of new vehicular bridge in Tuen Mun

* * * * *

The Government proposes to construct a new vehicular bridge across a drainage channel at Wo Ping San Tsuen in Tuen Mun to replace the existing one nearby.

The proposed project is in connection with the widening of a drainage channel at Wo Ping San Tsuen under the Village Improvements and Development Schemes in the New Territories 1995-96 Programme.

The proposed bridge will be of 11.5 metres long and four metres wide. The project will also include other related ancillary works.

The existing bridge will be demolished when construction of the new one is completed.

A notice of the proposed works was gazetted today (Friday).

The plan of the proposed works can be seen at:

- * Central and Western District Office, Public Enquiry Services Centre, Ground Floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- * District Lands Office, Tuen Mun, Tuen Mun Government Offices, 6th Floor, 1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories;
- * Tuen Mun District Office, Tuen Mun Government Offices, 2nd Floor, 1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories;

- * District Lands Office, Yuen Long, Yuen Long Government Offices and Tai Kiu Market, ninth to 11th floors, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, New Territories, and
- * Yuen Long District Office, Yuen Long District Branch Offices Building, 269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long, New Territories.

Any person objecting to the works should send the objection in writing to the Secretary for Transport, Central Government Offices, East Wing, second floor, Lower Albert Road, Central not later than May 21, 1996, describing his interest and the manner in which he will be affected.

End

Tenders invited for construction of Sai Ying Pun Market

* * * * *

The Architectural Services Department is inviting tenders for the construction of Sai Ying Pun Market.

The market will be a four-storey building with a gross floor area of about 4,770 square metres.

Works are scheduled to begin in June for completion in February 1998.

Tender forms and further particulars can be obtained from the Architectural Services Department, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Tenders must be submitted by noon on April 19.

End

Tenders invited for works in Ma On Shan and Lantau

* * * * *

The Architectural Services Department is inviting tenders for construction projects in Ma On Shan and Lantau Island.

The project in Ma On Shan Area 92 is for the construction of Sports Complex Phase 1, which will include a sportsground with a covered 1,500-seat spectator stand and associated drainage works.

Works will commence in June for completion in about two years' time.

The project on Lantau Island covers the construction of Pa Mei North Village Resite at Tung Chung Road, together with associated drainage and external works.

The Resite will comprise 48 three-storey village houses and a three-storey village hall.

Works are expected to begin in June for completion in October 1997.

Tender forms and further particulars can be obtained from the Architectural Services Department, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Tender offer for both projects will be close at noon on April 19.

End

Submarine cable between Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau proposed

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The Governor-in-Council has approved the installation of a submarine cable within an area of about 247,000 square metre of foreshore and sea-bed between Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau to provide permanent electricity supply to a Civil Aviation Department (CAD) navigational aid station at Lung Kwu Chau.

A government spokesman said today (Friday) that the work would be carried out in two phases.

"Phase I will be conventional dredging at both sides of the landing points, while Phase II will include the laying of submarine cable by jetting method from Sha Chau to Lung Kwu Chau.

"The estimated total dredging volume of marine deposits will not be more than 500 cubic metres at both landing points," he said.

The cable laying is necessary for a reliable electricity power supply to a CAD Doppler VHF Omni-directional Radar/Distance Measuring Equipment Station at Lung Kwu Chau which in turn will facilitate the timely commencement of the navigational equipment testing of the station prior to Chek Lap Kok new airport opening and subsequent operation of the new airport.

The work is to be carried out by China Light and Power Company Limited which will be required to implement a water quality monitoring programme and mitigation measures including those for the protection of dolphins when carrying out the work.

The extent of the area affected is contained in a notice published in the Government Gazette today.

Any person who considers that his interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and sea-bed involved will be injuriously affected may deliver a written claim for compensation to the Director of Lands before March 22, 1997.

He should state in his submission the sum of money which he is willing to accept in full and final settlement of his claim and should submit such particulars which he possesses to substantiate his claim.

The notice together with related plans are available for inspection at the Lands Department Survey and Mapping Office, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong (where copies can be purchased on order).

They can also be seen at the Tuen Mun District Office, second floor, Tuen Mun Government Offices, 1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories, and at the New Airport Section (New Territories Office), Lands Department, 22nd floor, Tsuen Wan Government Offices, 38 Sai Lau Kok Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

End

Pier extension in north-east Lantau

* * * * *

The Government has been approved to reconstruct and extend a pier within an area of about 3,300 square metres of foreshore and seabed at Tso Wan in north-east Lantau.

The pier to be extended southward will be about 18 metres long and four metres wide with an area of 72 square metres.

Construction will commence later this month and scheduled for completion in mid-1996.

The extent of the area affected is contained in a notice published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

Any person who considers that his interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and seabed involved will be injuriously affected may submit a written claim for compensation to the Director of Lands before March 22, 1997.

He should state in his submission the sum of money he is willing to accept in full and final settlement of his claim and should submit such particulars which he possesses to substantiate his claim.

The notice together with related plans can be seen at the Lands Department Survey and Mapping Office, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong (where copies can be purchased on order) and at the Tsuen Wan District Office, 1st floor, Tsuen Wan Station Multi-Storey Carpark Building, 174-208 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

End

Fresh water cut in mid-levels

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Fresh water supply to some premises in the mid-levels will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Monday (March 25) to 6 am the following day to facilitate testing of watermains.

The suspension will affect:

- * all odd number premises between 63-95 and 99-113 and all even number premises between 62D-84 Robinson Road;
- * Seymour Terrace, Castle Steps, all odd number premises between 23-29 and at no 10 Castle Road;
- * all odd number premises between 7A-53;
- * Castle Lane, Woodlands Terrace and all even number premises between 2A-8 Seymour Road;
- * Breezy Path, Breezy Terrace, Caine Road Garden and all even number premises between 110-144 Caine Road;
- * Park Road, all even number premises between 28-38B and at no 8 Bonham Road, and
- * all odd number premises between 1-7 and at no 2 Lyttelton Road.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

* * * * *

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,638	0930	+166
Closing balance in the account	2,779	1000	+166
Change attributable to :		1100	+166
Money market activity	+166	1200	+166
LAF today	-25	1500	+166
		1600	+166

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.8 *+0.2* 22.3.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.82	2 years	2802	5.16	98.53	6.08
1 month	4.96	3 years	3901	5.57	98.33	6.31
3 months	5.15	5 years	5103	6.75	100.03	6.86
6 months	5.25	7 years	7302	6.02	94.40	7.18
12 months	5.60	5 years	M502	7.30	101.37	7.07

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$10,641 million

Closed March 22, 1996

End