DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Tuesday, April 18, 1995

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Chief Secretary's visit to Europe

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, will depart Hong Kong on Saturday (April 22) for a week-long visit to Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

On the first day of her visit in Brussels, Mrs Chan will have separate sessions with the President of the European Commission, Mr Jacques Santer, and the Vice-President of the Commission, Sir Leon Brittan.

On April 25 (Tuesday), she will call on the Belgian Prime Minister, Mr Jean-Luc Dehaene, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

She will also call on the President of the European Parliament, Mr Klaus Hansch, and meet with the European Parliament-Hong Kong Friendship Group.

She will attend a luncheon hosted by the Royal Institute for International Affairs in Brussels and address members of the Institute on "Hong Kong: Europe's Partner for the Pacific Century".

On April 26 (Wednesday), she will address a dinner hosted by the Netherlands-Hong Kong Society in Hague which will be attended by over 120 guests from the business community, including traders, bankers, manufacturers and shipping and airline executives. She will speak on "Hong Kong into the 21st Century".

While in Hague, Mrs Chan will call on the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Mr Wim Kok.

She will also call on the Vice-Minister-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Hans van Mierlo, and the Director-General for Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr Franciscus Aloysius Engering.

On April 27 (Thursday), Mrs Chan will depart for Dusseldorf and attend a luncheon hosted by Westdeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale where she will meet prominent members of the business community.

On arrival in Bonn on the same day, she will call on the Federal Minister for Special Tasks and Head of Federal Chancellery, Mr Friedrich Bohl.

Mrs Chan will return to Hong Kong on April 29 (Saturday).

End/Tuesday, April 18, 1995

Unemployment and Underemployment Statistics for December 1994 - February 1995

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 1994 - February 1995 was 2.5%, and the underemployment rate was 1.5%, according to the latest labour force statistics released today (Tuesday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The provisional seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period of January - March 1995 was 2.8%, while the provisional underemployment rate was 1.4%.

Commenting on these figures, a Government spokesman said the rise in the unemployment rate was partly due to workers quitting jobs at around the Chinese New Year to seek jobs with better terms of employment, but in part it was also due to lay-offs.

Nevertheless, the continued low underemployment rate suggested a generally high intensity of manpower utilisation for those in employment.

During the period of December 1994 - February 1995, the number of unemployed persons, adjusted for seasonal variations in the proportion of first-time job-seekers in the labour force, was estimated at 73,500, while the number of underemployed persons was estimated at 43,800.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous General Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department.

The survey for December 1994 - February 1995 covered a quarterly sample of some 12,600 households or 42,900 persons, selected scientifically to represent the land-based civilian non-institutional population in Hong Kong.

Relevant data were obtained from the survey by interviewing each individual member aged 15 or over in the households sampled.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the report on the General Household Survey which is published four times a year. The next report covering the quarter ending March 1995 will be available at the Government Publications Centre by the end of June at $32 a copy.

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Board of Discipline to investigate ship collision

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The Director of Marine, Mr Ian Dale, has appointed, under the Pilotage Ordinance, a Board of Discipline, to investigate the circumstances leading to the collision of two container vessels on Sunday (April 16) night.

The Board will investigate in particular how the collision occurred when each of the vessel was under compulsory pilotage.

The two container vessels, M V Tanghe, inward and the other, M V California Luna, outward bound, each piloted by a licensed pilot, collided about one and half nautical miles north west of Green Island at about 7.30 pm on Sunday (April 16).

The two vessels sustained minor damage in the collision. There were no injuries.

Some containerised fireworks on board the California Luna caught fire after the collision. A total of 13 containers, four laden with fireworks and the others general cargo, were damaged in the fire. The fire was put out at about 1.30 pm the following day.

The Marine Department started its investigation immediately after the collision. The department has interviewed the masters and senior officers of both vessels.

Based on the findings of these initial investigations, Mr Dale ordered the setting up of the Board to take the matter further.

The Board will make its recommendations to the Pilotage Authority who is the Director of Marine.

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Plans to mitigate marine risks in reclamation projects

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The Government had assessed the marine risks involved in reclamation projects at the early planning stage and had incorporated plans to mitigate the risks if there were such a need, the Director of Marine, Mr Ian Dale, said today (Tuesday).

"These plans have been, and will continue to be phased in as reclamation proceeds," Mr Dale said, adding that he was satisfied that with these plans in place levels of marine risk would continue to be acceptable.

He believed recent comments in the media which linked reclamations to unacceptable marine risks stemmed from misunderstanding or uninformed views.

"The theory that more vessels and less water equals increased risks is true only if no corrective action is taken," Mr Dale said.

From a strictly marine traffic planning and safety view point, he said, calls to stop reclamations would be counter-productive in the longer term.

Contrary to common belief that the marine risk levels in the harbour will increase because of reclamation, Mr Dale pointed out that reclamation projects in Victoria Harbour would eventually help to improve overall marine traffic management.

"The final lines of reclamations in the central part of Victoria Harbour will create a properly defined and safe east-west channel for forecast traffic, providing specific zones for crossing traffic and reducing haphazard movements," he said.

Marine Department's longer term traffic management plans were made on that basis, Mr Dale added.

"Let us not turn the clock back by heeding calls for a moratorium on these necessary projects," he said.

He also corrected the apparent widely held opinion that the Comprehensive Study on Marine Activities, Associated Risk Assessment and Development of a Strategy for the Optimum Usage of Hong Kong Waters (MARAD Study) was to be carried out in acknowledgment of current marine risk levels in the harbour.

The MARAD Study concept began as two separate studies, strategic water planning and risk throughout territorial waters, which were later sensibly combined into one consultancy.

"The study is part of an on-going process to look at future needs based on forecast marine traffic growth and to improve our planning of the use of Hong Kong's waters," Mr Dale said.

He said his department aimed at providing an accident-free environment for marine operators but in reality no marine traffic system could eliminate all accidents as there would always be some vessel operators taking dangerous short cuts.

"It is the Marine Department's responsibility to police fairways to reduce to a minimum acts which contravene the rules, through advice, education, instruction, and if necessary prosecution," Mr Dale said.

"As Hong Kong's maritime trade expands and marine traffic levels rise, we must acknowledge that our waters must be subject to increasing level of control. Like our roads where we have one way systems, traffic lights, and clearways, I am implementing the marine equivalents," he added.

The Marine Department is implementing the necessary controls in Hong Kong waters. The first stages are in place. Others will follow.

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Attention News Editors:

The Director of Marine, Mr Ian Dale, will give a press conference at 3 pm today (Tuesday) on marine safety issues.

Also present will be the acting Assistant Director of Marine/Port Services, Mr Barrie Hird, and Senior Surveyor/Shipping Casualty, Mr B B Rao.

It will be held at Conference Room A, Marine Department Headquarters, 22nd floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

You are invited to attend.

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7,495 agreements lodged with Land Registry in March

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A total of 7,495 sale and purchase agreements for building units, which include both residential and non-residential properties, were lodged with the Land Registry last month.

The figure represents an increase of 85.7 per cent from that of February 1995, and a 43.4 per cent drop compared with March 1994.

The total consideration of these agreements is $20.4 billion, up 71.6 per cent and down 62 per cent as compared with the amounts for February 1995 and March 1994 respectively.

The figures are contained in the monthly statistics released today (Tuesday) by the Land Registry on deeds relating to property transactions received for registration in the Urban and New Territories Land Registries last month.

Relevant statistics for February 1995 and March 1994 were provided for comparison.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months and the year-on-year rate of change were also released.

The statistics generally relate to land transactions executed up to four weeks prior to their submission for registration, as there is usually a time lag between the execution of deeds and their lodgement for registration.

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Index of industrial production for 1994

* * * * *

The index of industrial production for the whole year of 1994 decreased marginally by 0.1% over 1993, according to the results of a survey released today (Tuesday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The industry group of electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods registered a moderate increase of 3.3%. Within this group, the production of machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components increased by 3.4%, while that of consumer electrical and electronic products increased slightly by 0.4%.

Output of the paper products and printing industry group also increased by 2.7%.

Small increases were recorded in the food, beverages and tobacco industry group (1.5%) and the wearing apparel (except footwear) industry group (0.2%).

On the other hand, decreases were recorded in the industry groups of chemical, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products (-8.8%); basic metals and fabricated metal products (-1.1%); and textiles (including knitting) (-0.8%).

The index of industrial production for the fourth quarter of 1994 increased slightly by 0.7% and 0.4% respectively over the same quarter of 1993 and the third quarter of 1994.

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, 4th Quarter 1994" report, which is on sale at $5 a copy at the Government Publications Centre, Low Block, Ground Floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, or at the Census and Statistics Department Publications Section, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai. Regular subscription may also be arranged.

Enquiries about the survey result may be directed to the General Economic Surveys Section of the Census and Statistics Department on tel 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 4th Qtr. 1994	% change over 4th Qtr. 1993	% change over 3rd Qtr. 1994	Percentage change in the index for 1994 as a whole
1. Food, beverages and tobacco	177	-5.2	+8.4	+1.5
2. Wearing apparel (except footwear)	133	+1.4	+6.3	+0.2
3. Textiles (including knitting)	135	+3.1	*	-0.8
4. Paper products and printing	270	+4.5	-14.7	+2.7
5. Chemicals, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products	67	-9.0	-5.5	-8.8
within which : Plastic products	(44)	(-14.8)	(-9.0)	(-18.7)
6. Basic metals and fabricated metal products	96	-2.6	-7.4	-1.1
within which : Fabricated metal products (except machinery and equipment)	(95)	(-3.9)	(-8.3)	(-0.5)
7. Electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods	179	+5.0	+4.9	+3.3
within which : Consumer electrical and electronic products	(115)	(+1.5)	(-9.4)	(+0.4)
: Machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components	(267)	(+4.0)	(+10.5)	(+3.4)
8. Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	88	-6.0	-0.3	-4.6
ALL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES	137	+0.7	+0.4	-0.1

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, 4th Quarter 1994'.
3. The % change figures in the above table are derived based on the more precise figures of the production indices up to 2 decimal places.

* Change within ±0.05%.

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Mid-term review on Commercial Radio's broadcasting licence

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The Broadcasting Authority (BA) reviewed at its meeting held last Thursday (April 13) the progress on the mid-term review being conducted on the sound broadcasting licence held by Commercial Radio.

The independent research firm commissioned to conduct the sound broadcasting survey has completed the fieldwork and is analysing the data.

"The survey will give us the quantitative input for the review," a spokesman for the Authority said. "As regards the qualitative input, we have plans for two public hearings which will take place between 6.30 pm and 9.30 pm on May 9 and 18 at the Science Museum, Tsim Sha Tsui.

"Community participation will greatly assist the work of the BA. Information pamphlets on the areas covered by the mid-term review will be available at District Offices for collection towards the end of April.

"The BA hopes that as many radio listeners as possible could come and give us their opinions," the spokesman added.

The BA also endorsed its Complaints Committee's recommendations on a number of complaints against television and radio programmes.

It decided that Wharf Cable should be given a serious warning for an advertisement appearing in a programme on January 7, 1995, in contravention of the licence condition which prohibits it from broadcasting any advertisement.

Wharf Cable was given another warning for allowing its subscribers who have not opened special accounts for its pay-per-view channel (Cineplex House C) to have free access to the channel at certain transmission hours. Controlled access is a condition imposed by the BA when it approved the adult channel.

Metro Broadcast received a warning in respect of the programme "Banana Club" broadcast on January 15, 1995. The programme contained conversations and expressions which were not suitable for broadcast at a time when there was likely to be a large group of young listeners.

Among the complaints considered by the BA were three against programmes broadcast on Star TV, two against programmes on ATV and one against programmes on Commercial Radio.

"The BA advised the broadcasters concerned to observe more closely the relevant provisions in the BA's codes of practice and in the licence concerned," the spokesman said.

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Tender for the seventh issue of 3-year Exchange Fund Notes

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The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announces that the tender for the seventh issue of three-year Exchange Fund Notes will be held on Monday (April 24) for settlement the following day.

Similar to the previous issue, an amount of HK$500 million three-year notes will be on offer.

In addition to that, another HK$100 million will be held as reserve by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority for supply to Market Makers in the secondary market.

The notes will mature on April 27, 1998, and will carry interest at the rate of 6.9% per cent per annum payable semi-annually in arrears.

Members of the public who wish to tender for the notes may do so through any of the market makers or recognised dealers on the published list which can be obtained from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority on 30th floor, 3 Garden Road, Hong Kong, tel 2878 8150.

Each tender must be for an amount of HK$50,000 or integral multiples thereof.

Following is a table giving detailed tender information for the seventh issue of 3-year Exchange Fund Notes:

Issue Number	: 3804
Tender Date and Time	: Monday 24 April 1995, 9.30 am to 10.30 am
Issue and Settlement Date	: Tuesday 25 April 1995
Amount on Offer	: HK$500 million plus an additional HK$100 million as reserve stock for the Monetary Authority
Maturity	: Three years
Maturity Date	: 27 April 1998
Interest Rate	: 6.9% per annum payable semi-annually in arrears
Interest Payment Dates	: 25 Oct 1995, 25 Apr 1996 25 Oct 1996, 25 Apr 1997 27 Oct 1997, 27 Apr 1998
Tender Amount	: Each tender must be for an amount of HK$50,000 or integral multiples thereof. Members of the public who wish to tender for the Notes may approach Market Makers or Recognized Dealers on the published list.
Other details	: Please see Information Memorandum published or approach Market Makers or Recognized Dealers.

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Rock blasting for improvement works to Tuen Mun Road

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The first rock blasting operation for improvement works to Tuen Mun Road is to be carried out at Tai Lam, east of Brothers Point at noon on Thursday (April 20).

Both carriageways of Tuen Mun Road and Castle Peak Road will have to be closed during the operation for about 10 minutes.

Announcing details of the blasting operations today (Tuesday), the Government Engineer/Project Management of the Highways Department, Mr Peter Orange, said the rock blasting operations were required for the construction of climbing lanes at four uphill sections of the Kowloon-bound carriageway of Tuen Mun Road.

These sections are at Sam Shing, So Kwun Wat, Tai Lam and Ting Kau.

"The use of blasting methods for cutting back the existing rock slopes along the road is considered necessary in order to complete the road widening work in a reasonable time so as to minimise overall effects of the works on the travelling public and local residents," Mr Orange said.

"From now on, blasting operations will be carried out quite frequently until March 1996," he added.

The programme and frequency for the blasting operations are as follows:

Sections	Programme	Frequency (times per week)
Sam Shing Hui	May 95 to October 95	1-2
So Kwun Wat	July 95 to November 95	1
Tai Lam	April 95 to March 96	3-5
Ting Kau	May 95 to January 96	2-3

For safety reason and protection of the public, it was necessary to evacuate the area within 150 metre of the blasting site, Mr Orange said.

He said it was therefore necessary to close both carriageways of Tuen Mun Road during each blasting operation. For a short section at Tai Lam, it is also required to close Castle Peak Road during blasting because of its proximity.

The carriageways will have to be closed for about 10 minutes at each blast to provide time for the blasting operation and subsequent checking.

Results of traffic surveys show that the hour from noon to 1 pm is the least busy hour during the day with traffic flow figures at 2,500 each way on Tuen Mun Road and 200 each way on Castle Peak Road. The blasting operations are therefore planned to be carried out at this hour.

The Highways Department will maintain a close liaison with the Traffic Police and Transport Department.

In the event of unusual or emergency situation existing on Tuen Mun Road, the blasting operation planned for the day may be abandoned or deferred till later in the day.

Stringent controls will be exercised to limit the vibration due to each blast such that noise and vibration are kept within acceptable limits.

The Highways Department has awarded a contract in May last year to design and build climbing lanes with a wide hard shoulder in the Kowloon-bound carriageway of Tuen Mun Road at the four locations in order to alleviate the traffic congestion problem on the Road.

A trial closure at two sections of Tuen Mun Road was conducted on September 16 last year. The trial indicated that the queue lengths at Ting Kau and Sam Shing Hui on both carriageways were acceptable and traffic resumed to normal mode within five to seven minutes after the carriageways were re-opened.

Motorists are urged to drive with care and patience.

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Water storage figure

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Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 a.m. today (Tuesday) stood at 66.0 per cent of capacity or 386.989 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 389.771 million cubic metres of water, representing 66.5 per cent of capacity.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

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Tender date	18 Apr 95	18 Apr 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q516	Y588
Amount applied	HK$6,640 MN	HK$2,450 MN
Amount allotted	HK$1,500 MN	HK$500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.38 PCT	5.96 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.39 PCT	5.98 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 35 PCT	About 66 PCT
Average tender yield	5.41 PCT	6.02 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning April 24, 1995

Tender date	24 Apr 95	25 Apr 95	25 Apr 95
Paper on offer	EF notes	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	3804	Q517	H563
Issue date	25 Apr 95	26 Apr 95	26 Apr 95
Maturity date	27 Apr 1998	26 Jul 95	25 Oct 95
Tenor	3 years	91 days	182 days
Amount on offer	HK$500+100 MN	HK$1,500+300 MN	HK$800+160 MN
Coupon	6.90 PCT		

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	2,293	0930	+521
Closing balance in the account	3,275	1000	+521
Change attributable to :		1100	+421
Money market activity	+402	1200	+402
LAF today	+580	1500	+402
		1600	+402

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.0 *-0.8* 18.4.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.15	13 months	2605	6.35	100.45	6.00
1 month	5.16	22 months	2702	7.50	101.97	6.45
3 months	5.38	27 months	3707	6.95	100.85	6.64
6 months	5.58	33 months	3801	8.00	102.97	6.92
12 months	5.90	59 months	5003	7.75	101.76	7.45

Total turnover of bills and bonds - $15,199 million

Closed April 18, 1995

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