



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

Thursday, January 18, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Transcript of the Governor's media session	1
Report on 1995 LegCo general election published	3
Tuen Mun Road closed lane partially re-open	4
Work to deepen Rambler Channel due to start	5
Payroll and wage statistics	6
Soldiers in training for charity trek	9
Modern imaging technology makes land search an easier task	9
Fresh water cut in Yuen Long and Western District	11
Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations	12

Transcript of the Governor's media session

* * * * *

Following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after attending the 50th Congregation of the Chinese University of Hong Kong this (Thursday) afternoon:

Governor: I'm delighted to have been taking part in this ceremony, honouring for very distinguished men, and of course in particular meeting and honouring my predecessor and house guest Lord Wilson who made such a significant contribution to the well-being and the stability of Hong Kong. So it's a very enjoyable occasion for me and I know for the honorary graduands too. Any questions?

Question: The Chinese officials criticised the cost of the Western Corridor, saying that the cost of infrastructure in Hong Kong should not be fluctuated. How do you react to this?

Governor: I haven't seen that report. I'd like to study it before I comment. But as you know, the infrastructure within Hong Kong is a matter within the autonomy of Hong Kong. Of course where there are questions involving the infrastructure in the region, connections with the infrastructure in the mainland in China, they need to be tackled for example through the Infrastructure Co-ordination Committee. But what happens in Hong Kong is before 1997 a matter of the Hong Kong Government and will be after 1997 a matter for the Hong Kong Government. But that is a general observation and I would not want to comment on the specific point you made until I am able to study the comments by the official.

Question: The Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office Lu Ping this morning criticised Mr Rifkind's speech to Qian Qichen in Beijing, saying that...

Governor: I am rather surprised at that comment by Director Lu. It doesn't seem to accord with the rest of Mr Rifkind's visit to Peking which went very satisfactorily. But if Director Lu thinks there are no concerns about the future, he should perhaps come to Hong Kong and see things for himself. If he would like to come to Hong Kong we would make him welcome again. And I hope that when he comes, he will speak to as wide a selection of the population as possible, including members of the Legislative Council and including the Governor of Hong Kong who is the head of the Hong Kong Government until 1997 and the Queen's representative.

Question: Do you think Lord Wilson's advice that the success of Hong Kong's future.. this sort of advice ... too late?

Governor: No. I think it is advice which I wholly agree with, just as I wholly agree with Lord Wilson's remarks that Hong Kong's autonomy should be respected.

Question: The Legco yesterday passed with a clear majority to urge the British Government to reflect Hong Kong people's wish for Wei Jingsheng's release. So what action would you take to the Chinese side on this matter?

Governor: A number of human rights cases including the one you mentioned were raised when Mr Rifkind was in Peking before the Legislative Council debate and I'm sure that if necessary British ministers particularly the Foreign Minister when it's appropriate will continue to raise human rights issues. The Legislative Council expressed its views yesterday as it is wholly entitled to do, and the views as expressed have of course been expressed by people elsewhere in the world.

Question: Lord Wilson mentioned that both sides, both Hong Kong and Chinese Governments, have to erase their stereotypes ...

Governor: I think it is a very sensible piece of advice.

Question: But do you think this stereotype will still exist even before the hand-over of the sovereignty?

Governor: I hope not. He called for dialogue which I wholly agree with, and that's why it would be sensible for Chinese officials to come to Hong Kong and to talk to members of the Administration including the Governor who runs the Administration.

Question: On Rifkind's comments on the Bill of Rights... Has the fact that the international community's pressure on China and the Foreign Secretary ... worsened the situation?

Governor: No. I don't believe so. It is not of course a matter for me. But I'm sure that the international community will continue to express its views on the human rights situation in China. And because of 1997, it's a question which causes a particular interest here in Hong Kong.

Question: The Chinese side has criticised that the achievement of Rifkind's visit has been exaggerated...

Governor: I don't think that the progress was exaggerated. But what we all hope is that the commitments made by Chinese officials will be followed through in the negotiations which are now necessary on detailed and technical issues on those major matters.

Question: Do you think you are still the obstacle of the Qian Qichen's visit to Hong Kong?

Governor: It would be astonishing were it so, not least because I shall be here until the 30th of June 1997. Where else in the world, dealing with what great problems elsewhere in the world, do some people refuse to talk to others. Frankly it is not a very sensible way of behaving. And I don't think it is in Hong Kong's best interests. I don't think it is in China's best interests either. I think that great nations and the governments of great nations have dialogue with people over the years.

Question: Do you think there will still be absence of dialogue until the day you have left Hong Kong?

Governor: That would be to China's and Hong Kong's considerable disadvantage. And those who were responsible for that lack of dialogue would have to explain themselves. Thank you very much.

End

Report on 1995 LegCo general election published

* * * * *

The Government has made public the report submitted by the Boundary and Election Commission (BEC) on the 1995 Legislative Council general election held on September 17 last year, a government spokesman said today (Thursday).

In accordance with the BEC Ordinance, the commission submitted its report on the LegCo general election to the Governor on December 15 last year.

"The report reviews the LegCo elections and makes a number of proposals for improving the electoral arrangements," the spokesman said.

"In line with past practice, the Government has decided to make the report public."

The spokesman added that upon the advice of BEC, sections of the report which are the subject of election petitions currently under the consideration by the court are not published until after the petitions have been determined.

"This is to avoid prejudicing the relevant judicial proceedings," he said.

Among its recommendations, BEC has proposed to make use of the census and by-census to assist in the verification and updating of the voter register.

The spokesman said the Government would need to consider this proposal carefully.

"The initial assessment is that there would be difficulties with this recommendation, given that the primary objective of the census is to obtain up-to-date information on the population for planning and policy formulation purposes," he said.

"In any case, as preparation for the forthcoming by-census in March is already in the final stage, it would not be practicable to adopt BEC's recommendation in the coming by-census," he said.

Copies of the BEC report will be distributed to members of the Legislative Council, Municipal Councils and District Boards. Members of the public can obtain copies from District Offices; the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, 66 Queensway; and the Registration and Electoral Office at Harbour Centre, Wan Chai.

End

Tuen Mun Road closed lane partially re-open

* * * * *

A section of the New Territories-bound Tuen Mun Road between Sam Shing Hui and So Kwun Wat will resume three-lane traffic from 6 am tomorrow (Friday), the Highways Department announces today (Thursday).

"The length of the road section to be re-opened to dual three-lane traffic tomorrow is about two kilometres.

"A section of the road about 600 metres in length at Sam Shing Hui will continue to operate for two-lane traffic to Tuen Mun until the necessary works completed," a spokesman for the department said.

"The existing temporary reduction of lane width for a section of about 300 metres on the Tuen Mun bound carriageway at So Kwun Wat will also remain unchanged until the end of this month. Therefore, motorists are advised to drive with care and patience," he added.

To facilitate the re-painting of road markings for the re-opening of the section, one-lane traffic will maintain at the Tuen Mun bound carriageway at So Kwun Wat between 12.01 am and 6 am tomorrow.

End

Work to deepen Rambler Channel due to start

* * * * *

The chairman of the Port Development Board's Container Handling Committee, Mr Gerry Forsgate, today (Thursday) hit out at critics who claim large container ships can not use Hong Kong's port because approach channels are not deep enough.

He pointed out that at 15 metres, the approach to Container Terminal Seven and Eight could take even the biggest container vessels when fully loaded.

He said: "Work is expected to start later this year on a \$120 million project to dredge the Rambler Channel. This will allow the bigger vessels to use Terminal One to Six, fully loaded if necessary.

"But the present channel, with a depth of 12.25 metres is adequate for any vessel wishing to use the older terminals.

"The fact that OOCL's 4950 TEU vessel the OOCL Hong Kong was recently named in the port, and will call here regularly, proves that Hong Kong is approachable by the latest generation ships." His remarks follow suggestions that delays in dredging the Rambler Channel will mean ships being diverted from Hong Kong to other ports.

"There have been no cases of vessels being unable to use the port because of lack of depth in the Rambler Channel," Mr Forsgate emphasised.

"The port and shipping industry has been aware for some time that the introduction of bigger container vessels will necessitate the dredging of the channel from its current depth of just over 12 metres to 15 metres.

"This was recommended in the South-east Tsing Yi Development Study in 1991. Dredging work was included in the Container Terminal Nine project and was scheduled to have been completed last year.

"As you know," he continued, "the CT9 project was delayed for political reasons.

"Because of this, the Government has decided to carry out some of the infrastructure work associated with CT9 as separate projects as soon as possible. These include dredging the Rambler Channel and building the Duplicate Tsing Yi South Bridge.

"The Port Development Board, at its meeting last December, said that the dredging should be completed by mid-1997. Every effort is being made to meet that target. It is hoped that work can start in September this year and be completed by June 1997."

Mr Forsgate pointed out that though some of the latest generation container ships had a maximum draught of 14 metres when fully laden, it was very rare that any vessel arrived at, or left Hong Kong, with a full load.

"However," he added, "once the dredging is completed by the middle of next year, the Rambler Channel will be able to accommodate even the biggest ship loaded down to its maximum marks, if necessary."

End

Payroll and wage statistics

* * * * *

According to statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department, average labour earnings in all major sectors of the economy, as measured by payroll per person engaged, recorded an increase of 11.7% in nominal terms in the third quarter of 1995 over a year earlier.

After discounting changes in consumer prices, there was an increase of 2.9% in real terms.

Analysed by major sector, average payroll per person engaged in the manufacturing sector recorded the largest increase, by 12.9% in nominal terms or 4% in real terms in the third quarter of 1995 over a year earlier; followed by financing, insurance, real estate and business services, by 12.7% in nominal terms or 3.9% in real terms; wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels, by 11.5% in nominal terms or 2.7% in real terms; transport, storage and communications, by 11.4% in nominal terms or 2.7% in real terms; and community, social and personal services, by 10.9% in nominal terms or 2.1% in real terms.

Thus all major sectors surveyed recorded increases in average labour earnings both in nominal terms and in real terms.

The overall wage index covering selected major sectors however showed a less rapid increase than average labour earnings. This index rose by 7% in nominal terms in September 1995 over a year earlier.

After discounting changes in consumer prices, the index showed a decrease of 1.8% in real terms.

The relatively faster increase in labour earnings as compared to wages was due to more overtime payment and the issue of non-regular payments in some sectors, which were covered in labour earnings but not in wages. On the other hand, the more moderate wage increase as compared to the earlier periods was in line with the easing in overall labour market conditions during the course of 1995.

The wage indices for selected major sectors all declined in real terms between September 1994 and September 1995. The decrease ranged from 0.7% in the financing, insurance, real estate and business services sector to 3.1% in the manufacturing sector.

Year-on-year changes in the indices of payroll per person engaged and wage indices for selected major sectors, in both nominal and real terms, are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively.

Statistics on average payroll per person engaged are compiled at quarterly intervals based on the results of the Labour Earnings Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department.

The wage indices are compiled from the same survey at half-yearly intervals for March and September of the year. The wage indices cover both manual and non-manual workers up to the supervisory level.

Average payroll includes wages as well as all other irregular receipts such as bonuses and overtime payments. Statistics on average payroll tend to show larger quarter-to-quarter changes, affected by the number of hours actually worked and the timing of payment of bonuses and back-pay.

Detailed breakdowns of the above statistics are published in the Quarterly Report of Employment, Vacancies and Payroll Statistics, September 1995 and the Half-yearly Report of Wage Statistics, September 1995.

They will be on sale shortly, at \$44 and \$35 per copy (exclusive of postage) respectively, at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, and at the Publications Section of Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

For enquiries about statistics on average payroll per person engaged, please contact the Census and Statistics Department on 2582 5076. As for enquiries on wage statistics, please call the department on 2582 4744.

Table 1 : Year-on-Year Change in Indices of Payroll Per Person Engaged by Selected Major Sector

Selected Major Sector	% change for 3rd Quarter 1995 over 3rd Quarter 1994	
	in nominal terms	in real terms
Manufacturing	+12.9	+4.0
Wholesale, Retail and Import/Export Trades, Restaurants and Hotels	+11.5	+2.7
Transport, Storage and Communications	+11.4	+2.7
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	+12.7	+3.9
Community, Social and Personal Services	+10.9	+2.1
All Sectors	+11.7	+2.9

Table 2 : Year-on-Year Change in Wage Indices by Selected Major Sector

Selected Major Sector	% change for September 1995 over September 1994	
	in nominal terms	in real terms
Manufacturing	+5.6	-3.1
Wholesale, Retail and Import/Export Trades, Restaurants and Hotels	+7.2	-1.6
Transport Services*	+6.7	-2.1
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	+8.2	-0.7
Personal Services #	+7.9	-1.0
All Sectors Above	+7.0	-1.8

* Excluding industries related to storage and communications

Excluding industries related to community and social services

Soldiers in training for charity trek

* * * * *

Endurance, grit and determination - will be the three elements soldiers of 50 Hong Kong Workshop, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) will be demonstrating when they take part in Exercise Kiwi Dragon, in New Zealand in March.

In what will be their final expedition before the Sek Kong-based workshop disbands in July this year, the 10-man team will face arduous conditions as they trek more than 200 kilometres over some of the wildest terrain on both North and South Islands, and attempt white water rafting for three days down the Mohaka River.

However, although the expedition provides an excellent opportunity for the men to take part in adventurous training, the main aim of Exercise Kiwi Dragon is to raise thousands of dollars for charity, the 50 Hong Kong Workshop's way of repaying the local community for their support over the years.

The three charities to benefit are Bradbury Hospice in Sha Tin, Caritas Medical Centre in Sham Shui Po and Evergreen International (HK) Association (Home for the Aged) in Kam Tin.

The team have already raised \$15,000 in sponsorship but are looking for much more before they head for New Zealand in March.

End

Modern imaging technology makes land search an easier task

* * * * *

Search of registered land records at the Land Registry will become a much easier task with the introduction of a massive optical disk-based Document Imaging System (DIS).

DIS, which will commence operation in July, will offer Land Registry users the benefits of a fast and convenient document retrieval and delivery service.

Speaking at the project commencement ceremony for the system today (Thursday), the Land Registrar, Mr Kenneth Pang, said the project marked the beginning of a new era for the Registry's document storage and retrieval system.

"The present manual processes of storage, searching and photocopying land documents will soon be automated by a new system which can store, retrieve and reproduce the required land records much more efficiently and effectively.

"Our primary objective is to make registered land documents more readily accessible and available.

"The DIS project is part of our on-going commitment to delivering more efficient land record search services to our customers through the use of modern technology," he said.

At present, land documents in the New Territories Land Registries are stored in paper form and those in the Urban Land Registry in microfilms. Their storage and retrieval require an increasing amount of office accommodation and manpower resources.

Contractor of the project, Hewlett-Packard Hong Kong Limited, will soon start scanning the paper documents and converting them into computer readable images by means of high-speed scanners. These will be stored, for search and retrieval, on optical disks.

"All land documents received for registration by the Land Registry will be imaged at a Central Imaging Centre. Some 100 million pages of existing land documents in the New Territories Land Registries will be converted into electronic images.

"As for the land documents of the urban area which are already kept in microfilm, we will consider later whether they should also be converted into imaged record," said Mr Pang.

The project will be completed in about six months' time and DIS is expected to start operation in July.

Mr Pang said another advantage of DIS was that the imaged land documents would make cross-district searching possible.

"Customers will not have to travel to different regional offices of the Land Registry to obtain the required information. Moreover, a document can be accessed by several users simultaneously at different locations.

"Delivery of the imaged documents by means of facsimile will also be available.

"This means that subscribers to the Land Registry's on-line search facility, the Direct Access Services, will be able to place remote order and obtain facsimile copies of imaged documents at their own offices without calling at the Land Registry," he said.

End

Fresh water cut in Yuen Long and Western District

* * * * *

Fresh water supply to some premises in Yuen Long and Western District will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Monday (January 22) to 6 am the following day to facilitate testing of watermains.

In Yuen Long, the affected premises include those along Tai Tong Road, Kau Yuk Road, Shan Pui River, Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long Hong Lok Road, Hong King Street and Yu King Square.

In Western District on Hong Kong Island, the suspension will affect all even number premises at 426-470 Des Voeux Road West, all even number premises at 506-606 and odd number premises at 443-543 Queen's Road West, all even number premises at 2A-6 Belcher's Street, Yat Fu Lane, Woo Hop Street, South Lane, all even number premises at 4-72 Hill Road and Cheung Kan Lane.

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	1,906	0930	+93
Closing balance in the account	2,551	1000	+93
Change attributable to :		1100	+93
Money market activity	+95	1200	+98
LAF today	+550	1500	+98
		1600	+95

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 123.6 *-0.1* 18.1.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Terms	EF bills		EF notes			
	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.43	2 years	2711	5.60	100.68	5.27
1 month	5.40	3 years	3810	6.15	102.01	5.43
3 months	5.35	5 years	5012	6.38	102.53	5.86
6 months	5.30	7 years	7211	6.82	104.28	6.14
12 months	5.18	5 years	M502	7.30	105.10	6.15

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$20,146 million

Closed January 18, 1996

End