



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

Monday, January 16, 1995

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Land Registry releases statistics for December and 1994

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The Land Registry received for registration a total of 114,892 sale and purchase agreements of building units, which include both residential and non-residential properties, last year.

The figure represents a decrease of 13.65 per cent and of 15.06 per cent compared with 1993 and 1992 respectively.

The total amount of the considerations involved in these agreements was \$423.95 billion, which was up by 21.49 per cent and 31.46 per cent compared with 1993 and 1992 respectively.

During 1994, 137,876 assignments of building units were lodged for registration, compared with 151,501 and 157,920 respectively recorded during 1993 and 1992, showing a decrease of 8.99 per cent and of 12.69 per cent respectively.

However, the total amount of the considerations involved, amounting to \$397.91 billion, indicates increases of 21.80 per cent and 34.40 per cent respectively when compared with the two preceding years.

The total amount secured under mortgages (other than building mortgages) was \$102.07 billion, showing a decrease of 1.88 per cent and an increase of 15.28 per cent compared with 1993 and 1992 respectively.

The Land Registry today (Monday) released a table summarising the above figures and other related statistics for the year of 1994, together with the corresponding statistics recorded in 1993 and 1992.

Searches of land records made by members of the public during 1994 totalled 3,480,033, up by 4.56 per cent and 8.50 per cent compared with 1993 and 1992 respectively.

The total number of property owners rose by 5.04 per cent from 1,505,003 in December 1992 to 1,580,877 in December 1993 and again by 5.48 per cent to 1,667,563 in December 1994.

Meanwhile, the Land Registry last month (December) received for registration 7,260 sale and purchase agreements for building units, which include both residential and non-residential properties.

The figure represents a decrease of 12.46 per cent and of 33.5 per cent when compared with November 1994 and December 1993 respectively.

The consideration of these agreements in December 1994 totalled \$24.22 billion, down 18.6 per cent and 24.2 per cent compared with the amounts of November 1994 and December 1993 respectively.

The figures are contained in the monthly statistics released today by the Land Registry on deeds relating to property transactions received for registration in the Urban and New Territories Land Registries in December 1994.

Relevant statistics for November 1994 and December 1993 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.

These 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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Labour Advisory Board holds first meeting of current session

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The Labour Advisory Board (LAB) held the first meeting of its current session at the Labour Department Headquarters this (Monday) afternoon.

During the meeting chaired by the Commissioner for Labour, Mr Stephen Ip, members agreed on the composition and terms of reference of the board's five committees on employees' compensation, employment services, implementation of international labour standards, industrial safety and health, and labour relations.

It was agreed at the meeting that a delegation comprising LAB members would attend the 82nd session of the International Labour Conference to be held in early June this year in Geneva, Switzerland.

Members noted two progress reports, one on labour legislation and the other on the Ad hoc Committee on General Duties. Members were also briefed on the proposed new legislation on builder's lifts and tower working platforms and the proposed increase in the rate of levy under the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance.

Mr Ip told members that the Labour Department had completed a review of the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Scheme, details of which would be presented for discussion at the board's special meeting next month.

Board members also discussed a proposal to increase the level of fines under the Labour Relations Ordinance, Protection of Wages on Insolvency Ordinance, the Trade Unions Ordinance and its subsidiary Trade Union Registration Regulations.

Board members were told that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Ordinance 1994 was enacted in July last year. This ordinance places all maximum fines in the laws of Hong Kong not exceeding \$100,000 upon a standard scale of six levels with fines ranging from \$2,000 to \$100,000.

They agreed that the level of fines under the three ordinances should be reviewed and amended. Detailed proposals will be discussed at the board's next regular meeting.

Board members were glad to learn that the revised package under the Employment (Amendment) Bill as agreed by the LAB was expected to be passed into law in the Legislative Council on Wednesday (January 18).

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Positive concern for heritage called for

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The community must be positively involved to show concern, to appreciate and to learn from the relics of our past, the Secretary for Recreation and Culture, Mr James So, said this (Monday) afternoon.

Hong Kong has a long history and the first inhabitants came to live on the island some 6,000 years ago, "a time well before the first Kingdom of China was recorded in written history", Mr So added.

Speaking at a luncheon meeting of the Po Leung Kuk Directors, Mr So said the fact that Hong Kong was as old as other ancient civilisations was borne out by its recent archaeological findings throughout the territory.

"It is therefore extremely important that no effort is spared in preserving and conserving Hong Kong's heritage for the benefits of the community," he said.

The year of 1994 was particularly eventful and fruitful for heritage preservation, with monuments having been declared under the law, adding the total number of declared monuments to 51.

In addition, three historical structures were also deemed as monuments by the Governor, bringing the total number of deemed monuments to 10.

Also, 83 buildings were evaluated. Of them 54 were graded, bringing the number of graded buildings to 384.

The Government's protection of historical buildings and structures did not end upon their being declared as monuments, Mr So said.

"To preserve them for the enjoyment and appreciation of the community, proper maintenance and restoration of these items are of equal importance," he said.

In archaeology, port and airport development and other construction programmes prompted major excavations which helped "to increase significantly our knowledge of prehistoric activities in the Hong Kong region", Mr So said.

He said: "It has been heartening to see that funding of many of these excavation projects came from the developers of the sites in question, signifying that heritage preservation is gaining more recognition and more support from the private sector."

All these efforts, however, would have been in vain if heritage preservation remained an academic pursuit or was only of interest to a handful of scholars, Mr So said.

The Recreation and Culture Branch organised a series of programmes last year to promote awareness of the local heritage among the public, and in particular among young people.

Seminars, workshops, field studies, lectures and voluntary services such as maintenance of historic sites and processing of archaeological finds were frequently held for youth groups and students.

In addition, a 13-episode weekly television programme on Hong Kong's heritage has begun showing on TVB's Jade Channel, a learning package on local history for junior secondary students prepared by the Curriculum Studies Department of the University of Hong Kong and booklets and exhibitions on local heritage were produced.

The Ping Shan Heritage Trail, opened in December 1993 and the first of its kind in Hong Kong, has attracted more than 320,000 visitors.

Mr So also disclosed that a major international conference on the archaeological heritage was being organised by the University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong to be held between March 9 and 13 this year involving archaeologists from Southeast Asia, China, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, Mr So said, also welcomed applications from interested parties for funding of projects that would promote heritage through education and research as well as through preservation and conservation work.

The trust was set up in late 1992 and has since given support to schools and youth groups for organising heritage-related activities in addition to organising and sponsoring a number of large-scale promotional projects.

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Sedimentation study for tidal channels

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The Drainage Services Department has appointed a consultant company to undertake a sedimentation study for all tidal channels in Hong Kong.

The consultancy agreement was signed between the Assistant Director of Drainage Services (Operations and Maintenance), Mr Victor Bradley, and a representative of the Acer Consultants (Far East) Limited at a ceremony this (Monday) afternoon.

The study is scheduled to be completed by October next year.

Mr Bradley pointed out that the study was the first assignment under the Phase III of the Territorial Land Drainage and Flood Control Strategy Study for the department.

"The consultancy study covers 13 major tidal drainage channels, including tributaries.

"The study will recommend the appropriate methodology for optimum maintenance dredging to meet local flood protection standards.

"The selection of appropriate dredging plant and methods of disposal of dredged sediments, some of which will be contaminated, will be key issues," he explained.

In addition, the study would recommend appropriate long-term measures to reduce sediment yield in the tidal channels and to facilitate future maintenance dredging requirements.

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Index of industrial production for third quarter 1994

The index of industrial production for the third quarter of this year increased slightly by 0.5% over the same quarter last year, according to the results of a survey released today (Monday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The production of the food, beverages and tobacco industry group registered a moderate increase of 4.9%.

A moderate increase of 4.1% was also recorded in the industry group of electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods.

Within this group, the production of consumer electrical and electronic products increased by 4.3% while the production of machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components increased slightly by 1.8%.

Small increases were recorded in the textiles (including knitting) industry (1.5%); basic metals and fabricated metal products industry (1.1%); and wearing apparel (except footwear) industry (0.7%).

On the other hand, a decrease of 7.5% was recorded in the industry group of chemical, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products. Within this group, the production of plastic products recorded a notable decrease of 19.0%.

The production of the paper products and printing industry group decreased marginally by 0.2%.

Compared with the second quarter of 1994, the index of industrial production showed a notable increase of 13.7%.

This increase was, however, partly seasonal as manufacturing activities usually entered into peak season in the third quarter.

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, 3rd 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.

Note to Editors:

As from the first quarter of 1992, the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) is used to form the industry groups and component industries.

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

Industry group / Selected component industry	Index	% change over	
	for 3rd Qtr. 1994	3rd Qtr. 1993	2nd Qtr. 1994
1. Food, beverages and tobacco	163	+4.9	+6.7
2. Wearing apparel (except footwear)	125	+0.7	+22.1
3. Textiles (including knitting)	135	+1.5	+27.9
4. Paper products and printing	316	-0.2	+12.7
5. Chemical, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products	71	-7.5	+2.4
-- Plastic products	(49)	(-19.0)	(+6.6)
6. Basic metals and fabricated metal products *	104	+1.1	+8.8
-- Fabricated metal products (except machinery and equipment)	(104)	(+2.8)	(+9.7)
7. Electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods	171	+4.1	+8.4
-- Consumer electrical and electronic products	(127)	(+4.3)	(+4.1)
-- Machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components	(242)	(+1.8)	(+8.1)
8. Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	88	-7.4	+7.2
ALL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES	136	+0.5	+13.7

- 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) has been 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 'Quarterly Index of Industrial Production, 3rd 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.

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Air quality report for December

The Environmental Protection Department today (Monday) released air quality information for last month.

A spokesman for the department said the purpose of the announcement was to keep the public informed of the air quality levels in the territory and to explain the measurements. The announcement contains monitoring results from Mong Kok, Central/Western and Kwai Chung, which represent three important land use types in the territory:

- * locations close to road traffic in built-up urban areas;
- * combined commercial and residential districts; and
- * districts close to industrial areas.

The department currently monitors air quality continuously at eight stations, including the three mentioned. Short-term measurement exercises are also undertaken as and where the need arises.

The reported air pollutants include sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), total suspended particulates (TSP) which comprise all sizes of dust particles, and the respirable fraction of the dust (RSP). All these pollutants can affect respiratory health in sufficient concentration.

In December there were no exceedances of the Air Quality Objectives at any of the three stations, but the highest concentrations of air pollutants were recorded at Mong Kok.

Continued road works at Mong Kok Road have increased pollutant levels at the monitoring station. Traffic management changes near the station also contributed to the increase of measured pollutants.

Low wind speeds and sunny conditions on December 23 allowed NO₂ levels to build up in the urban areas, while significant rainfall on the following two days kept dust levels low.

The gases and particles described originated from various sources. SO₂ is mostly produced when fuels that contain sulphur are burned. NO₂ is formed during combustion by the combination of nitrogen and oxygen, and by the atmospheric oxidation of nitric oxide (NO), also a product of combustion.

Vehicle exhaust is an important source of NO and NO2 in terms of impact on local air quality. It is also a major source of airborne particulate matter, especially the smaller respirable particles.

Diesel-engined vehicles such as taxis, public light buses, passenger coaches, franchised buses and light and heavy goods vehicles are the greatest contributor of particulate matter. Other sources include industry, furnaces and boilers, construction activities, the sea and the soil.

It is worth noting that while the weather and climate always affect the concentrations of pollutants in the air, the only sure way of reducing the levels is to reduce emissions from the man-made sources. Note to Editors:

Illustrations showing the levels of all pollutants at the three stations during December will be boxed.

For further information on this air quality report, please contact Mr Raymond Leung at 2594 6401.

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One nomination received for district board by-election

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One nomination was received today (Monday) for the district board by-election in respect of Yau Tsim Mong District's Yau Ma Tei constituency on March 5.

The candidate is Ms Ng Po-shan, Austen, aged 37. Her occupation is community organiser.

The nomination period will last until January 23.

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11 more candidates nominated for Municipal Council elections

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A total of 11 nominations of candidates were received today (Monday) for the Municipal Council elections on March 5.

This brings the total number of nominations received to 98.

The nomination period will last until January 23.

The breakdown of nominations by district is as follows:

Central & Western	3
Wan Chai	4
Eastern	10
Southern	4
Yau Tsim Mong	5
Sham Shui Po	3
Kowloon City	7
Wong Tai Sin	9
Kung Tong	12
Tsuen Wan	1
Tuen Mun	7
Yuen Long	5
North	5
Tai Po	5
Sai kung	2
Sha Tin	13
Kwai Tsing	3
Islands	0

Total:	98

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Weather of 1994

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1994 was a very warm year. The annual mean minimum temperature of 21.7 degrees and annual mean temperature of 23.6 degrees were the highest and the second highest respectively since records began in 1884.

The year on the whole was also humid with a mean dew-point temperature of 19.6 degrees, the highest on record.

On rainfall, the first half of the year was particularly dry with total rainfall amounting to only 556.9 millimetres, 44 per cent below normal.

However, record-breaking rainfall in July contributed to an overall annual total of 2,725.6 millimetres, 23 per cent above the annual mean of 2,214.3 millimetres.

Only four tropical cyclones necessitated the hoisting of local Tropical Cyclone Warning signals as compared to the annual average figure of about six.

With relatively few outbreaks of cold continental air towards the South China coastal areas, January 1994 was unusually warm and humid in Hong Kong.

Despite the high humidity, only traces of rainfall were recorded at the Royal Observatory. This made the month one of the six second-driest months of January on record.

February continued mild with high humidity. The monthly mean minimum temperature of 15.7 degrees and monthly mean dew-point temperature of 14.4 degrees were respectively the seventh and the sixth highest for February. The first thunderstorm of the year occurred during the month.

Frequent late-season monsoon surges made March cooler and cloudier than normal. The monthly mean pressure of 1,018.5 hectopascals was the fifth highest on record. It was also relatively dry both in terms of humidity and precipitation.

With a monthly rainfall of only 6.0 millimetres, April 1994 was the driest April since records began in 1884. It was also the warmest April on record. The mean air temperature of 24.7 degrees, the mean daily maximum temperature of 27.5 degrees and the mean daily minimum temperature of 22.8 degrees were all the highest values for April.

May was on the whole hot and dry. With more sunshine than normal, the monthly mean temperature of 27.4 degrees ranked the fourth highest for May. Monsoon troughs affected the territory occasionally, bringing 183.7 millimetres of rainfall, about 58 percent of the monthly normal.

Under the influence of warm southwest monsoon, June was cloudier and warmer than normal.

The total bright sunshine amounted to 107.8 hours which was the seventh lowest on record. Severe Tropical Storm Russ became the first tropical cyclone in the year which necessitated the hoisting of local warning signals.

It was unsettled and extremely wet in July. The total rainfall of 1,147.2 millimetres was the highest for the month of July and the second highest for any month on record. During the heavy rain episode from July 22 to 24, a total of 611.2 millimetres was recorded at the Royal Observatory, the highest for any three consecutive days in July.

The Rainstorm Black Warning was issued on July 23. Among many reported incidents, the most disastrous one was the collapse of a retaining wall at the Kwun Lung Lau Estate building in Kennedy Town.

The wet conditions continued into August. However, Harry was the only tropical cyclone in the month that necessitated the hoisting of local Tropical Cyclone Warning signals.

September was more humid and cloudier than normal. The total bright sunshine amounted to only 124.8 hours, the second lowest on record for September. The total rainfall of 298.9 millimetres was near the September average of 299.7 millimetres.

Under the influence of persistent northeast monsoon, October was a fine and dry month. The mean cloud amount was only 36 per cent, 20 per cent below the October normal.

In the absence of significant surges of the winter monsoon, November was much warmer than usual.

The mean minimum temperature of 21.1 degrees and the mean temperature of 22.9 degrees were the highest and the second highest values respectively on record for November. The month was also relatively humid but the weather was generally fine with little rain.

December was mild and humid. The mean temperature of 19.8 degrees and the mean dew-point temperature of 16.4 degrees were both the second highest on record for December.

It was also very cloudy with total bright sunshine amounting to only 70.2 hours, the lowest December record. Heavy rain fell on December 8 and necessitated the issuance of the flood warning for the first time in December, a normally dry month.

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Water storage figure

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Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Monday) stood at 71.2 per cent of capacity or 417.325 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 388.613 million cubic metres of water, representing 66.3 per cent of capacity.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,086	0930	-3,466
Closing balance in the account	1,128	1000	-2,466
Change attributable to :		1100	-2,466
Money market activity	-1,689	1200	-2,286
LAF today	+731	1500	-2,225
		1600	-1,689

LAF rate 3.75% bid/5.75% offer TWI 120.9 *+0.1* 16.1.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	6.83	17 months	2605	6.35	98.53	7.66
1 month	6.68	23 months	2611	6.90	98.49	7.94
3 months	6.66	28 months	3704	6.15	96.15	8.18
6 months	6.68	34 months	3710	7.25	97.65	8.37
12 months	7.46	60 months	5912	8.15	98.27	8.77

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$13,809 million

Closed January 16, 1995

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