



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

Tuesday, May 16, 1995

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Governor voices concern over unemployment figures

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, today (Tuesday) expressed concern over the rate of unemployment in Hong Kong.

Mr Patten was commenting on unemployment figures released today when he spoke to the media after a visit to the Hong Kong Technical College (Chai Wan).

He said the figures were undoubtedly disturbing. However, he did not think that anybody had to be alarmed at the trend in unemployment.

The Governor noted that unemployment in Hong Kong is much lower than in most other communities.

"Nevertheless, we have enjoyed very low unemployment figures for many years, and all of us want to see it staying like that.

"In order to ensure that we have the best possible labour market and the best possible employment figures and prospect in the future, it is extremely important to do everything we can to go on improving training, re-training and job placement.

"And I want to see us give particular priority to these areas of policy in coming months and years," he said.

The Governor said he knew that there were concerns on the part of unions and the workforce about the trend in unemployment over the past few months.

"So I have invited leaders of our unions and their representatives in the Legislative Council to come and meet me this week on Thursday to discuss their concerns," he said.

Replying to a question on the importation of labour, the Governor said this was an issue which the Government would like to discuss with representatives of the workforce.

He noted that during a recent debate on the subject in the Legislative Council, the Government had made it clear that it intended to review the general labour importation scheme and that for the time being there would be no new quota allocated.

"The first point I'll make is that the number actually coming in under the general importation scheme is of course a great deal lower than the number of unemployed. It's about a third of the number of unemployed.

"Secondly, under the importation scheme, we do have provision to ensure that people aren't coming to jobs which could be taken by locals," he said.

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Transcript of the Governor's media session

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Following is a transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after visiting the Hong Kong Technical College (Chai Wan) today (Tuesday):

Governor: As I am sure you know, the Vocational Training Council has established two excellent technical colleges to take over the Higher Diploma and Higher Certificate courses that were formerly conducted by the polytechnics. I've visited the other of our new technical colleges, Tsing Yi, on a couple of occasions. I was very keen to come to Chai Wan and see the work that's being done here. I think anybody who comes to our technical colleges can be very proud of our young people and of the colleges themselves. I think it is a good reason for having confidence in the future when you see what is being accomplished here. One reason why I think it is particularly relevant is brought home to us all by this afternoon's undoubtedly disturbing unemployment figures. I don't think that anybody has to be alarmed the trend in unemployment, but I think there is room for concern. Of course, it is true to say that unemployment in Hong Kong is much lower than in most other communities. But, nevertheless, we've enjoyed very low unemployment figures over the years. And all of us want to see it staying like that. In order to ensure that we have the best possible labour market and the best possible employment figures and prospect in the future, it is extremely important to do everything we can to go on improving training, re-training and job placement. And I want to see us give particular priority to these areas of policy in the coming months and years. I know that there is concern on the part unions and the work force about the trend in unemployment over the last few months. So I have invited leaders of our unions and their representatives in the Legislative Council to come and meet me this week on Thursday to discuss their concerns and it won't of course be the first time that I've met them and it won't be the first time that I've been involved in union activities in Hong Kong. But I do think it is extremely important that we try to avoid politicising this issue and try to ensure that we have the best possible dialogue in the community about employment and about continuing to ensure that Hong Kong, unlike a lot of other communities, has the best possible employment prospects.

Question: Some legislators criticised that the high unemployment rate is due to the importation of foreign labour. What will the Government do to curb the increasing of the rate? Will the Government stop to import foreign labour?

Governor: We have a good debate about that in the Legislative Council a few weeks ago. During that debate we made clear first of all that we intended to review the general labour importation scheme and secondly that for the time being there'll be no new quota allocated. I just want to make a couple of obvious points about the importation scheme which is not to see that we don't recognise that this is an issue which we want to discuss with representatives of the work force. The first point I'll make is that the number actually coming in under the general importation scheme is of course a great deal lower than the number unemployed. It's about a third the number of unemployed. And, it is a great deal lower than the number of job vacancies in the community which is just below the number of unemployed. Secondly, under the importation scheme, we do have provision to ensure that people aren't coming to jobs which could be taken by locals. Now, one of the points I want to discuss with union representatives is their concern which they articulated, which some of our Legislative Councillors articulated, that there is occasionally abuse of the scheme and that sometimes it is used in ways which weren't intended. So, that's one of the reasons why we are reviewing it. And, I hope that we can be entirely open about ways in which the scheme can be improved if that's necessary.

Question: Governor, many Hong Kong people would like to see Anson Chan change her diary to facilitate a meeting with Director Lu Ping. Why is this impossible to do?

Governor: I think many people in Hong Kong, indeed the majority of people in Hong Kong don't want to see this week entirely dominated by discussion about why it is Director Lu during his week with us and during the 20-odd meals that he is eating in Hong Kong, isn't able to see the Governor or the Chief Secretary. I don't want to say any more about that. I think that is an issue which we should try to put behind us and look to the future. The Chief Secretary has made a statement this morning, looking to the future she said and there's a point that I share with her, that we both hope that now that she's been invited to meet Director Lu in China and I think that is a welcome advance, he will be able to suggest some dates which she would find available and convenient. And she's pointed out she would welcome that, for example, during the whole of July which has even more than one week in it. So I hope that proves possible and I think that to repeat myself, everybody in Hong Kong would very much welcome it if we could sort out a date during the course of this week, bearing in mind that it's said that Director Lu's diary seems to be so full. But that's all I think I want to say on the subject, I want us to get with the job of getting on top of our problems, resolving our difficulties, and I hope we can do that in co-operation with Chinese officials. I think it is a pity that opportunities have been lost this week.

Question: Do you think that

Governor: I don't want to add to what I've said . I think that's a question which you should put to the Director during one of his press conferences this week. I am sure he will be very happy to answer. Any others? I think the community would like us to meet, judging by a poll which I think has been conducted and announced this afternoon.

Question: What do you think about the facilities of this College?

Governor: What do I think about the facilities of this College? I think that they are extremely good. I think they will be even better when you've got the new sports facilities, the swimming pool built, which will be make next summer more bearable. I was very impressed by the equipment in the College, as you know the expenditure on the equipment is about half the cost of the total expenditure on the College. It is a very, very well-equipped College and I am sure all the students here will take the maximum advantage of the opportunities available to them. I am looking forward to coming back and eating at the College in the dining room. I don't want you to think I am obsessed with food. But I am very much looking forward to coming back and having an evening meal either in the Chinese or in the international restaurant. Very, very good, many of you who can manage to get in them will know that there are also excellent karaoke singers. Thank you very much indeed.

Question: Governor, will you approve the former Police Commissioner employed by the Cheung Kong Holdings?

Governor: Former Commissioner Li Kwan-ha. I am pleased that Mr Li had a meeting with the Secretary for Civil Service yesterday. I think that was useful. I think it's helpful that while the issue is sorted out, Mr Li has decided not to continue with his work. And I hope that the problems with the questions which Michael Sze has asked can be answered as soon as possible. There is no question that this is an issue in which there is a very great deal of public interest. It's important for the integrity of the public service, it's important for other civil servants, it's important for other serving police officers, it's important for the community's confidence in the civil service and in our discipline services that we make sure it is sorted out and that people have the maximum faith in the existing rules which govern employment opportunities for retired public servants.

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Unemployment and underemployment figures for Jan - Mar 1995

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January - March 1995 was 2.8%, and the underemployment rate was 1.4%, 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 February - April 1995 was 3.0%, while the provisional underemployment rate was 1.5%.

"The latest unemployment figures show that the labour market has eased somewhat from the latter part of last year," a Government spokesman said.

"This is in part due to more lay-offs, but is also the result of more workers quitting because they were not satisfied with their jobs. Nevertheless, for those in employment, the underemployment rate has remained at a low level."

During the period of January - March 1995, the number of unemployed persons was estimated at 78,800. Of this, 6,300 were first-time job-seekers. The number of underemployed persons was estimated at 42,800.

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

The survey for January - March 1995 covered a quarterly sample of some 12,600 households or 42,800 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, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong by the end of next month at \$32 a copy.

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Launching of Hong Kong Internet Home Page

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In keeping with its position as one of the world's most advanced economies, Hong Kong today (Tuesday) launched a government-backed Internet Home Page for economic and business development.

Developed by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (ETO) in San Francisco, the Home Page contains extensive information on the territory, its business climate and economy, ongoing business developments and guidance for doing business there.

"Hong Kong is the hub of the world's most exciting and vibrant market. It just made sense to those of us entrusted with continuing its economic growth that we use the most exciting and vibrant technology - the Internet - to help us do our job," said the Director of the Hong Kong ETO in San Francisco, Thomas Chun-yuen Chan.

According to the Internet Society in America, the network consists of 1.5 million computers linked together by 30,000 different networks, and spanning some 200 countries world-wide. The number of users of the Internet is estimated to be between 20 and 30 million, with a projected growth rate of 10 per cent monthly.

He said no wonder the Governor of Hong Kong, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, described the Internet as "one of the most exciting developments in the world of personal communications" in his welcome message on the Hong Kong Home Page.

Mr Patten compares the magic in the Web to the magic of Hong Kong's post-war development:

"A refugee community with no more natural resources than a fine harbour has built one of the greatest cities of the modern world. Six million lively and hardworking people packed into a few small islands and a mountainous peninsula have built the world's eighth largest trading economy, one of the world's leading financial centres and a breathtaking gateway between the heart of Asia and the rest of the world."

The Governor also said the magic of Hong Kong comes as no surprise: Hong Kong offers free markets, the rule of law and respect for individuals. It is a tolerant society that encourages economic development and provides free access to information. It is one of the world's most sophisticated telecommunications environments, and people there are becoming a rapidly growing part of the Internet community.

The Hong Kong Home Page provides users with an on-line access to of all major government information relating to business and trade. It uses graphics, illustrations and links to move users quickly and easily through its various sections.

Businesses interested in locating or investing in Hong Kong can get complete details on government regulations, personal and corporate taxes, banking and finance and projected economic growth.

The Home Page also contains practical details such as updated information on office rental and housing costs, expected expatriate and local compensation, hotel and shopping information.

It opens with a welcome message from Mr Patten and consists of the following sections:

- * Background on the territory: including a complete transcript of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the future of Hong Kong;
- * Doing business: a section containing information from business registration forms to taxes and projected office rental and housing costs;
- * Travel and Tourism: a section with complete hotel, shopping and sightseeing information;
- * News: a compendium of the ETO's monthly reports on the territory.

"We are very excited about using the Internet to reach thousands of prospective business partners and to move our messages quickly to the audience of entrepreneurs using the Internet," said Mr Chan.

"We want these leading-edge businesses to know that Hong Kong is their best platform for doing business in Asia."

As the gateway to China and the rest of Asia, Hong Kong is the regional headquarters for more than 700 international firms. Its strategic geographical location, advanced telecommunications and transportation infrastructure and established financial and legal systems have made it the free-est (according to the Heritage Foundation) and most business-friendly (ranked by Fortune Magazine) economy in the world.

The Hong Kong Government has set up offices to advance and safeguard Hong Kong's economic and commercial interests overseas. There are offices in Washington DC, New York, San Francisco, London, Geneva, Brussels, Toronto and Tokyo.

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Abuse of trade rules for protectionist purpose

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A Trade Department official today (Tuesday) hit out at the abuse of trade rules saying this would create restrictive, distorting or disrupting effects on international trade.

Addressing a luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong, Assistant Director-General of Trade, Miss Emma Lau, said it was important that trade rules were put to their proper use.

"In the playing field of international trade, rules can be extremely useful and valuable if they are used as tools to construct a free and open multilateral trading system and to build up liberal and open trade regimes," she said.

"Therefore, our playing field of international trade, which is currently centred on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), is governed by rules on tariffs and non-tariff barriers, on export subsidies, on anti-competitive trade practices and on dispute settlement."

Miss Lau cited anti-dumping as an area to illustrate that international trade rules could easily be misused for protectionist purposes.

"Anti-dumping is a contingent protection which aims at providing remedies against unfair trade practices involving injurious price discrimination," she said.

"Under the rules of anti-dumping, importing countries can impose anti-dumping duties on imported products if it can be established that dumping exists, material injury is done to the domestic industry, and a casual link exists between these two."

Miss Lau said "dumping" was determined by a mechanical comparison of the "normal value" of the product with its "export price" but such a simple formula approach failed to distinguish predatory pricing from legitimate price effects of normal competition.

"As regards 'injury', this remains a matter of subjective judgement. Although there are references to economic indicators such as output, market share, revenue, profits, capacity utilisation, there is no defined criteria for determining when injury is 'material'," she said.

"Needless to say, the determination of casual link between 'dumping' and 'injury' is always more a matter of subjective judgement than objective analysis."

Miss Lau said the results were that anti-dumping was applied inappropriately and ineffectively in the modern economy.

"The proliferation of anti-dumping cases create enormous disruption to trade. And, ironically from time to time, we are amused by, or saddened at, the absurd results arising from selected cases," she said.

"Theoretically, while it is difficult to see how small firms in open and highly competitive economies like Hong Kong can be a source of dumping, we in Hong Kong experienced a flood of nine cases within a short period of two years in 1988 and 1989.

"Although eight out of nine cases were subsequently terminated, Hong Kong was the loser as trade was stifled in the process."

Speaking of rules of origin, Miss Lau pointed out that in the modern globalised economy, as the processes of sourcing, manufacturing and marketing of products rarely took place in one single country, it was difficult to decide where a particular product was made.

However, she said, rules of origin are still being applied in many aspects of trade activities and, in some instances, manipulated by individual players to protect their domestic industries.

"In reality, changes to rules of origin can be and are used as trade harassment tools and could create immense difficulties for businessmen in the conduct of trading activities on a daily basis," she said.

"We have bitter experiences in this respect. The textiles and clothing industry would have vivid memory of the disruption caused to our trade by the sudden change of US origin rules for certain restrained textiles and clothing products in 1984-85.

"More recently, the imposition of the new Mexican origin requirement last year created immense problems for our traders.

"And now, we are faced with another proposed change to origin rules for textiles and clothing products by the US which will take effect in July 1996."

Miss Lau said the best way to prevent abuse was to ensure the proper use of rules to achieve desirable objectives.

"To this end, we should continue to play our active and constructive part to promote free and open trade within a stable and effective multilateral trading system governed by fair and sound rules," she said.

"On top of this, it is also important that we work hard to ensure that improvements to existing systems of rules which are set out in the World Trade Organization Agreements are faithfully implemented.

"In the longer term, we should not lose sight of the need to explore how authorised rules could be further improved, enhanced or even replaced, in pursuit of free trade and competition."

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Survey starts on building, construction and real estate

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The Census and Statistics Department announced today (Tuesday) that the Survey of Building, Construction and Real Estate Sectors for 1994 has started. The annual survey is part of a continuous programme to compile statistics on the structure and performance of various economic activities in Hong Kong.

The survey aims to obtain up-to-date statistical data for evaluating the contribution of the building, construction and real estate activities to Hong Kong's gross domestic product and for ascertaining their cost structure, operating characteristics and output levels. The survey results are useful to both the government and the private sector in formulating policies and making decisions.

The Commissioner for Census and Statistics, Mr Frederick Ho, appealed to the managements of all sampled establishments to fulfil their legal and social responsibilities by returning promptly the completed questionnaires and co-operating with officers of the department in the course of the survey.

He stressed that information relating to individual establishments would be treated in strict confidence under the Census and Statistics Ordinance. Only aggregate information that does not reveal details of individual establishments will be released.

Mr Ho also pointed out that audited accounts are not essential for the supply of income and expenditure data required in the survey. The Census and Statistics Department accepts figures based on preliminary accounts or estimates which are correct to the best of the respondents' knowledge at the time of submission of the questionnaire, if audited accounts are not yet available.

About 5,000 establishments engaged in the following activities will be enumerated in the present round of the survey, including a full coverage of prominent establishments and a random sample of smaller establishments:

- * building and civil engineering construction;
- * real estate development;
- * architectural, surveying and project engineering; and
- * real estate leasing, brokerage and maintenance management.

The survey is conducted under the Census and Statistics (Annual Survey of Building, Construction and Real Estate Sectors) (Amendment) Order 1995, which was made under the Census and Statistics Ordinance (Chapter 316) and issued as Legal Notice No. 77 in the Hong Kong Government Gazette on February 17.

A different version of survey questionnaire is used for each of the four aforementioned categories of establishments. In general, information to be sought in the survey includes: type of ownership; number of direct employees; compensation of employees; consumption of materials and supplies; payments for sub-contract work; other operating expenses; value of construction work performed; value of properties under development and the associated project outlays (including land values); other forms of business receipts; capital expenditure; and other related information on the business operation of the establishments.

Survey questionnaires have been mailed to the sampled establishments. These establishments are required by law to complete and return the questionnaires to the Census and Statistics Department by July 31. If required, officers of the department will visit individual establishments and assist them in completing the questionnaires. These officers will each carry a Government Identity Card and a certificate for conducting the survey whilst on duty, which are available for inspection.

Any enquiries regarding the survey may be directed to the Building, Construction and Real Estate Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2839 3204.

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Relocation of ferry services in Central

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The Transport Department announces that starting from Thursday (May 18) the berthing points in Central for the Tuen Mun to Central, Tsuen Wan to Central via Tsing Yi ferry services and the Mui Wo to Central, Cheung Chau to Central and Peng Chau to Central hoverferry services will be relocated from the Central Harbour Services Ferry Pier and the government pier at Pier Road to new Pier No. 6 on the northern edge of the Central reclamation phase I.

Appropriate directional signs will be provided in the vicinity of the concerned piers to guide passengers.

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52 pollution cases in April

A total of 52 convictions were made in the courts last month for breaching anti-pollution legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department.

Among them, 10 were convictions made under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO), 13 under the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO), 15 under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO), 11 under the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and three under the Ozone Layer Protection Ordinance (OLPO).

The fines ranged from \$800 to \$60,000. Sussex Development Limited was fined \$60,000 for discharging polluting matter in the Tolo Harbour and Channel Water Control Zone.

Attention News Editors:

Enquiries on specific cases can be directed to the following officers:

<u>Case</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Tel</u>
Cases 1-5	Betty Cheung	2402 5201
Cases 6-8	Franklin Chung	2417 6074
11		
24-25		
Cases 9, 12	Dick Rootham	2755 2200
Cases 13-20	Patrick Lei	2685 1133
26-30		
39-44		
Cases 21-23	Steven Ho	2516 1800
38		
Cases 31-37	Murray Luo	2411 9601
10		
45-49		
Cases 50-52	Raymond Leung	2594 6401

However, enquiries on general issues should be directed to the department's Media Relations Unit.

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Teachers require in government schools

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The Education Department is inviting applications for teaching posts of Assistant Education Officer (AEO) and Certificated Master/Mistress (CM) in government primary and secondary schools.

A spokesman for the department today (Tuesday) said applicants for the AEO post should be holders of a Hong Kong degree or equivalent.

Final year students taking their degree examination this summer may also apply for the post, the spokesman added.

For the post of CM, applicants should have a teachers' certificate from a Hong Kong college of education or the Hong Kong Technical Teachers' College two-year or three-year full-time training course with appropriate elective subject or equivalent.

Final year students of the Hong Kong Institute of Education or candidates who will be awarded a qualified teacher status after completion of the Non-Graduate Teacher Qualification Assessment Scheme may also apply, their appointments will be subject to their obtaining of a teacher's certificate or qualified teacher status this year.

Successful candidates for AEO will be required to teach English language/literature or Chinese language in government secondary schools.

Whereas successful candidates for CM will be responsible for teaching English, music, physical education, home economics and design and technology in government primary or secondary schools or the practical education centre.

The pay scale for the AEO post is between \$16,475 and \$34,690. Candidates without a Postgraduate Certificate in Education or equivalent, if appointed, will not be permitted to proceed beyond Point 27 of the Master Pay Scale, that is, \$26,335 per month, without acquiring the qualification subsequently.

The pay scale for the CM post ranges from \$14,220 to \$22,975. Successful applicants who have completed a two-year full-time teacher training course before 1982, or a one-year full-time teacher training course and have a certificate in the Advanced Course of Teacher Education will be appointed at \$13,535. Holders of Non-Graduate Teacher Qualifications Assessment Certificate, if selected, will be appointed at \$12,760.

Application forms are available at district offices of the Home Affairs Department and the Labour Department's local employment services.

Completed application forms should reach the Education Department's Appointment Registry, Appointments and Personal Sub-division, Room 1631, 16th floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, on or before May 27.

Applicants who have applied for the same posts in November 1994 need not re-apply.

For further enquiries about the post of AEO, please call 2892 6159, and for CM please call 2892 6102.

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Flushing water cut in Kwai Chung

Flushing water supply to some premises in Kwai Chung will be temporarily suspended from 9 am to 5 pm on Thursday (May 18) to facilitate maintenance work.

The suspension will affect all the premises in Lei Muk Shue Estate, Shek Lei Estate, Shek Yam Estate, On Yam Estate, Shek Wai Kok Estate, Cheung Shan Estate and those at Wo Yi Hop Road.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date	16 May 95	16 May 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q520	Y589
Amount applied	HK\$3,810 MN	HK\$3,340 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN	HK\$500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.71 PCT	5.97 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.73 PCT	5.98 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 40 PCT	About 80 PCT
Average tender yield	5.73 PCT	6.01 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 22 May, 1995

Tender date	23 May 95	23 May 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q521	H565
Issue date	24 May 95	24 May 95
Maturity date	23 Aug 95	22 Nov 95
Tenor	91 days	182 days
Amount on offer	HK\$1,500+300 MN	HK\$800+160 MN

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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	3,202	0930	-672
Closing balance in the account	2,738	1000	-672
Change attributable to :		1100	-679
Money market activity	-679	1200	-679
LAF today	+215	1500	-679
		1600	-679

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.9 *-0.1* 16.5.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills

EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds

Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.55	18 months	2611	6.90	101.17	6.16
1 month	5.60	24 months	2705	7.40	100.36	6.30
3 months	5.71	29 months	3710	7.25	101.98	6.46
6 months	5.78	35 months	3804	6.90	100.98	6.63
12 months	5.96	58 months	5003	7.75	103.00	7.13

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$ 13,870 million

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