



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Govt attaches importance to views of human rights committee

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The Hong Kong Government has always taken the views of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) seriously and observations and suggestions made by the Committee are conveyed to the Governor, the Executive Council and the relevant policy secretaries for their consideration in the formulation of policy, the Solicitor General, Mr Daniel Fung, QC, told the Committee in Geneva on Wednesday (Geneva time).

Mr Fung was leading a five-strong Hong Kong Government team, forming part of the United Kingdom delegation, to attend the hearing of a Supplementary Report on Hong Kong specially requested by the UNHRC when it examined the territory's fourth report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in October last year.

Responding to members' queries as to the relevance of the Committee's views in the implementation of ICCPR provisions in Hong Kong, Mr Fung said that the Hong Kong judiciary also gives due weight to comments and decisions made by the UNHRC in the course of delivering judgements in litigation under Hong Kong's Bill of Rights Ordinance (BORO).

He also added that, in the past, policies and laws had been introduced or amended to give effect to the views of the Committee and the Government would continue to do so in the future.

At the one-day hearing, various other issues were canvassed including the need for reports to continue to be submitted on Hong Kong after the transfer of sovereignty, China's proposal to establish the Provisional Legislature, the Emergency Regulations Ordinance, the continuing operation of Hong Kong's BORO.

Mr Fung also gave details on Britain and China's recent agreement on future reporting modalities under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The UNHRC reaffirmed China's obligation to continue to apply the ICCPR to Hong Kong after 1997 and to submit periodic reports on Hong Kong to the Committee.

In response to members' concerns, the head of the UK delegation, Mr Henry Steel said that the UK Government would continue to press the Chinese Government at all levels to accede to the covenant and its any case to agree a mechanism for reporting after the handover.

The Committee is expected to release their concluding observations in a fortnight.

End

Join hands to promote a "smokefree" culture, SHW urges

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The rising trend of smoking among young men and women in Hong Kong is worrying, the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, said today (Thursday).

She said while the smoking rate for people aged 15 and above had dropped from 23.3 per cent in 1982 to 14.8 per cent today, this was not the case for the other age groups.

For boys aged 15 to 19, the smoking rate has hardly declined from 7.5 per cent in 1982 to 5.5 per cent in 1988, and has risen to 5.9 per cent today. For girls of the same age group, the rising trend is even more obvious with their smoking rate rising from only 0.4 per cent in 1982 to 1.3 per cent in 1988, then dropping to 0.9 per cent in 1993, and again rising to stand at 1.3 per cent.

"Although the percentage of teenage smokers in the overall population is low, the trend is nonetheless worrying," Mrs Fok said, warning that once young smokers were hooked on nicotine, few were able to quit.

Mrs Fok was speaking at the opening of the 1996 Conference on Smoking and Health organised by the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health.

She told the conference, the first of its kind in Hong Kong, that the Government took the problem of smoking, especially among young people very seriously.

In 1982, the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance was enacted to provide a regulatory framework to restrict the sale and promotion of tobacco products and set up statutory no-smoking areas to protect the public from passive smoking.

In 1987, the government-funded Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health was established to inform the community about the health risks of smoking and to take the message into schools to prevent children from ever starting to smoke.

To set an exemplary role, the Government signed the Council's Smokefree Workplace Charter in 1995, and the smokefree workplace policy has been implemented in all Government offices since April.

Today, smoking is prohibited in all forms of public transport. Tobacco advertising is also prohibited on television, radio and in cinemas; and in media where it is still allowed, tobacco advertisements are required to carry a Government health warning.

"Despite past achievements, tobacco control is an area where there is no room for complacency. There is still a lot that needs to be done," said Mrs Fok.

She appealed to everyone, including sociologists, psychologists, medical researchers, educationists and legislators, to join hands to promote a "smokefree" culture in the society.

End

More Chinese proprietary medicine recalled

* * * * *

The Department of Health today (Thursday) urged members of the public to exercise special caution when purchasing or using Chinese proprietary medicine - Niu Huang Chieh Tu Pien - as four more brands of the product were found to contain arsenic at levels known to cause toxic effects.

The four brands which had to be recalled by the importers were:

- * Ding Lu Brand Refined and Powerful Niu Huang Jiedupian manufactured by the Traditional Chinese Medicine Factory Xiamen, China;
- * Great Bridge Brand Superior Quality Peking Niu Huang Chien Tu Pien, Peking Manufactory Hong Kong Mill Chuen Tong Produced;
- * King Dao Brand Refined Niu Huang Chieh Tu Pien produced by Peking Medicine Manufactory;

- * Superior Niu Huang Jiedu Pian manufactured by Shanghai Chinese Medicine Works, Shanghai, China.

These were in addition to the three brands of Niu Huang Chieh Tu Pien found last week to have also contained high levels of arsenic and had to be recalled. They were:

- * Extra - Niu Huang Chieh Tu Wan, manufactured by Ji Sheng Pharmaceutical Fty, Sichuan;
- * Great Wall Brand Niu Huan Chieh Tu Pien, manufactured by Tian Jin Drug Manufactory, Tian Jin;
- * Chuan Jiang Pai Refined Niu Huang Superantidote Pharmaceutical Lab, Sichuan.

A spokesman for the department said further to tests conducted on seven brands of the product last week when three of them were found to have excessive high level of arsenic, another 48 brands were collected for testing during follow-up investigation.

Results available today showed that the levels of arsenic in four brands in the second batch had exceeded the level known to cause toxic effects.

Hence, the total number of brands in question was now seven. Actions were being taken to advise the importers to recall the products.

Importers and retailers of Chinese proprietary medicine were urged to suspend selling the seven brands of Niu Huang Chieh Tu Pien mentioned above and to return them to the importers or to surrender them to the Department of Health for destruction.

Advisory letters on the recall were being sent out to known importers and retailers seeking their co-operation.

The spokesman said arsenic at toxic level could cause abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, muscular cramps and shock. In serious case, it could be fatal.

Members of the public were asked not to purchase or use the seven brands of Niu Huang Chieh Tu Pien mentioned above as they were considered not fit for consumption.

Enquiries could be made to the Department of Health on 2961 8767.

Meanwhile, the department would step up inspections of retail outlets and continue to monitor the process of recall.

End

Hong Kong remains attractive to manufacturing activities

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Hong Kong remains an attractive location for off-shore manufacturing activities and will have a dominant role to play in future as a manufacturing centre, the Director-General of Industry, Mr Francis Ho, said today (Thursday) in Australia.

"Using Southern China's more economical land and labour, Hong Kong manufacturers are locating their low end, high volume and labour intensive operations in China," said Mr Ho in addressing an investment promotion seminar in Melbourne in which he outlines the current industrial scene of Hong Kong.

"On a smaller scale, they also diversify their low cost operations to other Southeast Asian countries, and indeed to other parts of the world.

"To date, Hong Kong's manufacturers employ, directly or indirectly, at least four million workers in Southern China alone."

The figure was many times the size of Hong Kong's own industrial labour force, said Mr Ho, emphasising that the territory remained the nerve centre controlling the relocated labour intensive operations and providing front-end and back-end support to them.

Commenting on the suggestion that the economy of Hong Kong had a problem of "hollowing out", Mr Ho said: "The essential and high value added activities are still conducted in Hong Kong, building on its comparative advantage in its excellent infrastructure, its efficiency and business exposure.

"Indeed, the expansion of Hong Kong's manufacturing activities has generated much of the demand on the provision of the supporting services, such as trade financing, insurance, freight and cargo handling services, etc.

"And needless to say such demand reinforces the development of Hong Kong's service industries."

Looking forward, Mr Ho said given the vast pool of applied R&D expertise in China, and Hong Kong's happy knack for commercialisation and product development, there was plenty of room for collaboration between the Mainland and Hong Kong in undertaking applied R&D, developing new products and producing, marketing and distributing them.

"By leveraging on the availability of a huge and resourceful hinterland in China," Mr Ho said: "the manufacturing base of Hong Kong and its capability have expanded enormously."

He urged Australian manufacturers wishing to manufacture in China to form strategic partnership with Hong Kong entrepreneurs in their venture in China or use the territory as the place to control and support their production in China.

Concluding his address, Mr Ho said the Government would be holding a Technology Week in Hong Kong in January 1997 to showcase the strength of the territory's capability in technology in technology-based manufacturing.

In an investment promotion seminar held in Adelaide the previous day, Mr Ho had promoted investment opportunities in Hong Kong's services sector.

End

Registration of physiotherapists due to start

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Following the Governor-in-Council's approval of the Physiotherapists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation made under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance, registration of members of the physiotherapy profession will begin on April 1, 1997.

The Regulation, which also prescribes the form of the register, specifies the registration criteria, and provides for proceedings relating to the discipline of physiotherapists, will be published in the Gazette tomorrow (Friday).

A spokesman for the Health and Welfare Branch said the Regulation had been drawn up after extensive consultation with the Physiotherapists Board and the Supplementary Medical Professions Council.

"It will provide better protection for the public by ensuring adequate standards in the practice of physiotherapists," he said.

Under the Regulation, the register for physiotherapists is divided into two parts: Part I, which is further divided into Part I(a) and Part I(b), for full registration; and Part II for provisional registration.

Any person who has at least one year experience in the practice of physiotherapy other than private practice on one's own account and has obtained either one of the following qualifications will be registered in Part I(a) of the register:

- * a Bachelor of Science Degree in physiotherapy awarded by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (or the then Hong Kong Polytechnic)
- * a Professional Diploma in physiotherapy issued by the Hong Kong Polytechnic on or before January 1, 1995
- * a certificate issued by the Hong Kong Government School of Physiotherapy of the Medical and Health Department on or before January 1, 1981
- * a certificate from the Physiotherapists Board that he has passed an examination relating to physiotherapy

Those who have the above qualifications but do not have the required experience will be registered in Part I(b).

Part II of the register is for persons issued with a Certificate of Provisional Registration under section 15 of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance.

Persons currently practising in the physiotherapy profession but have no recognised qualifications or formal training may be considered by the Council for registration in an appropriate part of the register.

For those who are holding overseas qualifications in physiotherapy, they may apply to the Board for registration. The Council, in consultation with the Board, will then decide whether or not a particular overseas qualification is registrable and if so, into which part of the register the name of the holder should be entered.

The spokesman said the regulation also provided for the formation of a Preliminary Investigation Committee under the Physiotherapists Board to decide whether any case of complaint should be referred to the Board for inquiry.

Other provisions in the Regulation and the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance prohibiting the practice of physiotherapy by unregistered persons or governing the discipline of registered physiotherapists in the case of unprofessional conduct, will come into effect at a later stage so as to allow adequate time for members of the physiotherapy profession to obtain their registration.

The Physiotherapists Board will receive applications for registration as from April 1 next year. Detailed procedures for registration will be announced by the Board later.

End

Hill fire fighting and rescue capability improves

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The Government's hill fire fighting and rescue capability has been significantly enhanced since the Pat Sin Leng fire occurred on February 10, a government spokesman said today (Thursday).

"Almost all of the 29 recommendations made by the inter-departmental investigation team looking into the fire have already been or will soon be fully implemented," he said.

"Some of the recommendations are on-going efforts which the Government will ensure are kept up," he said.

For example, while the Government Flying Service (GFS) has reviewed its communication links with the emergency services in accordance with the recommendations, Security Branch will, in addition, continue to work with the emergency services to identify further improvements to communication systems among all these services.

On training efforts, the Civil Aid Services (CAS) and the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) have been organising training courses either for Government staff or for organised groups of teachers and hiking group leaders. These courses range from basic mountain rescue and mountain emergency handling procedures to mountain and hiking safety.

As part of the efforts to enhance communication, co-ordination, command and control capabilities in mountain rescues and major hill fires, a joint exercise was mounted by seven government departments this morning at High Junk Peak, Clearwater Bay Country Park.

The departments are: Fire Services (FSD), Police, AFD, GFS, CAS, the Auxiliary Medical Services and the Hospital Authority.

On the acquisition of additional equipment, GFS has bought two helibaskets, ordered fire resistant flight clothing and will be buying rescue helmets with hands-free radio and public address systems for helicopters. FSD is finalising plans to purchase boots, stretchers, rescue lines and ancillary equipment.

"In the country parks, 51 emergency telephones will be installed in strategic points this year and another 115 in the future.

"The Education Department (ED) will make arrangements for the reimbursement of phone charges to teachers who use their personal mobile phones during school excursions," the spokesman said.

As for progress made on other recommendations, ED had issued a revised school circular on visits organised for school children, covering safety precautions and a set of new guidelines on outdoor activities.

"Another set of guidelines, on extra-curricular activities in schools, will be issued some time this month," the spokesman said.

"Seminars for teachers will be held next month in connection with the two sets of guidelines."

On publicity, the spokesman said the Enjoy Safe Hiking campaign, organised by AFD, had been launched on October 13 and would last until February next year.

Some 95,000 copies of a leaflet has been printed by the department for distribution to members of the public to provide safety hints on hiking safety, including how to escape from a hill fire.

They can be obtained from district offices and country park visitors centres.

End

Prescribed qualifications for medical lab technologists

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The Governor-in-Council has approved amendments to the Medical Laboratory Technologists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations and the Occupational Therapists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations.

The part-time Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree course in biomedical science awarded by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the then Hong Kong Polytechnic, will be included in the Medical Laboratory Technologists (Registration and Disciplinary) Regulations as one of the prescribed qualifications registrable under section 12(1)(a) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance.

Any person who holds this qualification, with not less than three-year recognised experience, will be registered in Part I of the register while those who have the qualification but not the required experience will be registered in Part II.

A spokesman for the Health and Welfare Branch said today (Thursday) the Medical Laboratory Technologists Board considered that the course, run by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University since September 1992, was a relevant and appropriate qualification for registration and should be prescribed in the Regulations.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom qualifications currently prescribed in the Medical Laboratory Technologists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations and the Occupational Therapists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations as registrable under section 12(1)(a) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance will be removed.

Any person who is an associate/fellow of the UK Institute of Medical Laboratory Sciences (renamed as Institute of Biomedical Science) or holds a Diploma issued by the British Association of Occupational Therapists shall apply for registration under section 12(1)(b) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance, similar to holders of other overseas qualifications.

The spokesman said Hong Kong, being a member of the World Trade Organisation, was obliged to meet the requirement of the General Agreement on Trade in Services.

"The removal of the UK qualifications from the Regulations is to avoid possible accusations that the preferential recognition of UK qualifications under the Regulations are inconsistent with the requirement," he said.

He explained that there was no difference in the registration status for a person registered under section 12(1)(a) or 12(1)(b) of the Ordinance.

Applications for registration under section 12(1)(b) need to be considered by both the Supplementary Medical Professions Council and the respective board, hence processing time will be a bit longer.

The amendments will come into effect at the end of this year.

End

Consumer price indices for September

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Consumer price inflation remained moderate. As measured by the Consumer Price Index (A), the year-on-year rate of increase was 5.2% in September 1996. This was slightly higher than the 4.9% increase recorded in August.

The year-on-year rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index (B) was 5.9% in September, compared with 5.5% in August. The corresponding rate of increase in the Hang Seng CPI, at 5.6% in September, was however slower than the 5.9% increase in August.

The Composite CPI, which is compiled based on the combined expenditure pattern of all households, showed an increase of 5.6% in September 1996, against 5.4% in August.

The Census and Statistics Department today (Thursday) released the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for September 1996.

A Government spokesman said that the slightly faster increase in the CPI(A) and CPI(B) in September than in August was mainly due to higher prices of fresh vegetables and outerclothing.

As to the Hang Seng CPI, the rate of increase decelerated further in September, mainly due to continued easing in private housing rentals and a decrease in the prices of men's outerclothing.

Analysed by component, faster year-on-year increases than the overall average in September were recorded for clothing and footwear (10.9% in CPI(A) and 8.1% in Composite CPI); housing (8.5% in CPI(A) and 9.1% in Composite CPI); miscellaneous services (7.3% in CPI(A) and 6.5% in Composite CPI) and transport (6.1% in CPI(A) and 5.9% in Composite CPI).

Meanwhile, those components with slower year-on-year increases in prices than the overall average were food (excluding meals bought away from home) (0.4% in CPI(A) and 0.8% in Composite CPI); durable goods (1.6% in both CPI(A) and Composite CPI); meals bought away from home (3.6% in CPI(A) and 3.4% in Composite CPI); miscellaneous goods (4.2% in CPI(A) and 3.6% in Composite CPI) and fuel and light (4.8% in CPI(A) and 5.1% in Composite CPI).

Comparing September 1996 with August 1996, the CPI(A) and CPI(B) increased by 1.3% and 1.1% respectively. The corresponding increases for the Hang Seng CPI and Composite CPI were 0.7% and 1.1% respectively.

Taking the first nine months of 1996 together, the increases in the CPI(A) and CPI(B) averaged at 6.0% and 6.5% over a year earlier. The corresponding increases in the Hang Seng CPI and Composite CPI were 6.7% and 6.4% respectively.

For the three months ended September 1996, the CPI(A) and CPI(B) were, on average, higher by 5.4% and 5.9% respectively over a year earlier. The corresponding increases for the Hang Seng CPI and Composite CPI were 5.9% and 5.7% respectively.

For the 12 months ended September 1996, the CPI(A) and CPI(B) were, on average, higher by 6.3% and 6.8% respectively than the preceding 12-month period. The corresponding increases for the Hang Seng CPI and Composite CPI were 7.0% and 6.7% respectively.

The seasonally adjusted monthly rates of increase in the CPI(A) and CPI(B) averaged at 0.3% and 0.4% respectively during the three months ended September 1996. The corresponding increases for both the Hang Seng CPI and Composite CPI were 0.3%.

Further details are shown in Tables 1-2 and Charts 1-4.

More details are given in the "Consumer Price Index Report" for September 1996, which is available at \$37 per copy from the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong; or from the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

For local and overseas mailings, contact should be made with the Information Services Department, 28th floor, Siu On Centre, 188 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

For enquiries about the indices, please telephone the Consumer Price Index Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6403.

Table 1 Consumer Price Indices and Rates of Increase for September 1996
(Oct. 94 - Sep. 95 = 100)

Component	CPI(A)		CPI(B)		Hang Seng CPI		Composite CPI	
	Index for Sep. 96	% change over Sep. 95	Index for Sep. 96	% change over Sep. 95	Index for Sep. 96	% change over Sep. 95	Index for Sep. 96	% change over Sep. 95
Food	106.6	+2.1	106.4	+2.5	105.7	+2.7	106.4	+2.4
Meals bought away from home	106.6	+3.6	106.2	+3.2	105.1	+3.3	106.2	+3.4
Food, excluding meals bought away from home	106.6	+0.4	106.8	+1.1	107.0	+1.6	106.7	+0.8
Housing	114.3	+8.5	114.7	+8.8	117.0	+9.8	115.3	+9.1
Fuel and light	106.7	+4.8	106.6	+4.9	107.5	+6.3	106.8	+5.1
Alcoholic drinks and tobacco	108.5	+5.4	108.6	+5.3	107.7	+4.3	108.4	+5.2
Clothing and footwear	111.3	+10.9	112.3	+11.9	101.6	+0.7	108.6	+8.1
Durable goods	103.7	+1.6	103.9	+2.1	103.7	+1.1	103.8	+1.6
Miscellaneous goods	107.6	+4.2	106.6	+3.9	104.8	+2.5	106.5	+3.6
Transport	109.7	+6.1	109.3	+5.9	108.4	+5.6	109.2	+5.9
Miscellaneous services	112.6	+7.3	111.2	+6.8	108.6	+5.4	110.7	+6.5
All items	109.6	+5.2	109.9	+5.9	109.7	+5.6	109.7	+5.6

Monthly consumer price indices are compiled on the basis of (a) expenditure patterns of relevant households and (b) prices collected currently in the month. The expenditure patterns underlying the 1994/95-based consumer price indices are based on those patterns derived from the 1994/95 Household Expenditure Survey. The CPI(A) is based on the expenditure pattern of about 50% of households in Hong Kong, which had an average monthly expenditure of \$4,000-\$15,999 in 1994/95. The CPI(B) is based on the expenditure pattern of the next 30% of households, which had an average monthly expenditure of \$16,000-\$29,999 in 1994/95. The Hang Seng CPI is based on the expenditure pattern of the next 10% of households, which had an average monthly expenditure of \$30,000-\$59,999 in 1994/95.

Whereas the CPI(A), CPI(B) and Hang Seng CPI are based on the expenditure patterns of groups of households with different magnitudes of household expenditure, the Composite CPI is compiled based on the expenditure pattern of all these households taken together. Thus, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and Hang Seng CPI show the impact of consumer price changes on different groups of households, the Composite CPI shows the impact of consumer price changes on the household sector generally.

Table 2 Consumer Price Indices and Year-on-year Rates of Change for
October 1995 - September 1996
(Oct. 94 - Sep. 95 = 100)

<u>Year/month</u>		<u>CPI(A)</u>		<u>CPI(B)</u>		<u>Hang Seng CPI</u>		<u>Composite CPI</u>	
		<u>Index</u>	<u>Year-on-year rate of change (%)</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Year-on-year rate of change (%)</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Year-on-year rate of change (%)</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Year-on-year rate of change (%)</u>
1995	October	104.3	8.0	104.5	8.4	104.7	8.7	104.5	8.4
	November	104.3	7.8	104.7	8.1	105.4	8.2	104.7	8.1
	December	103.9	6.4	104.6	7.2	104.9	7.2	104.5	7.0
1996	January	104.1	5.8	104.8	6.6	105.1	7.3	104.7	6.5
	February	105.4	6.4	105.9	7.0	105.7	7.5	105.7	6.9
	March	106.1	6.5	106.4	7.0	106.3	7.5	106.3	7.0
	April	107.3	6.8	107.8	7.0	107.5	7.1	107.6	7.0
	May	107.1	6.1	107.9	6.6	108.5	6.9	107.8	6.5
	June	107.8	6.1	108.3	6.4	109.1	6.6	108.4	6.4
	July	108.0	6.1	108.5	6.4	108.6	6.2	108.4	6.2
	August	108.2	4.9	108.7	5.5	108.9	5.9	108.6	5.4
	September	109.6	5.2	109.9	5.9	109.7	5.6	109.7	5.6

Chart 1 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in CPI(A)

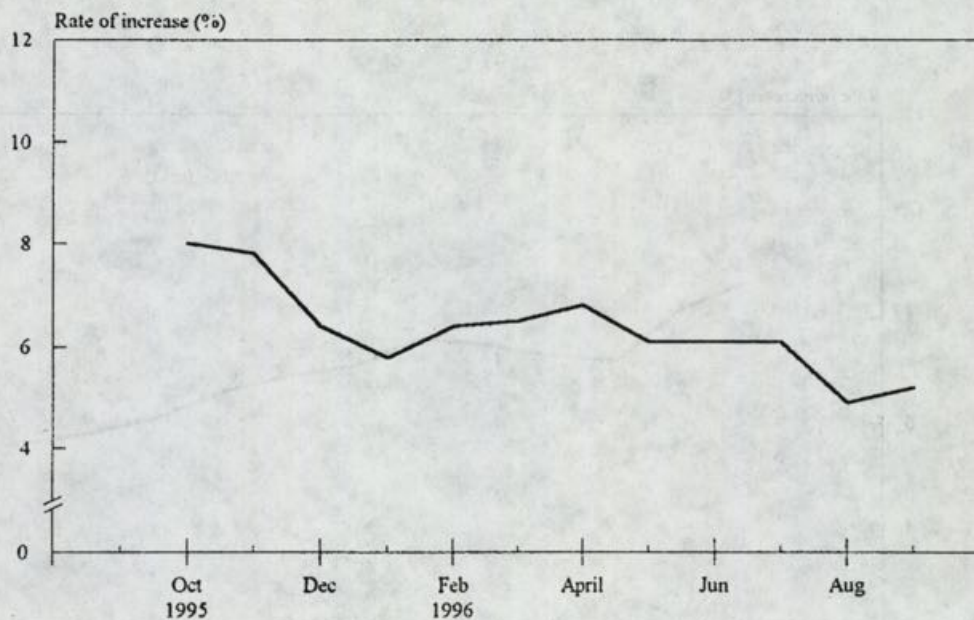


Chart 2 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in CPI(B)

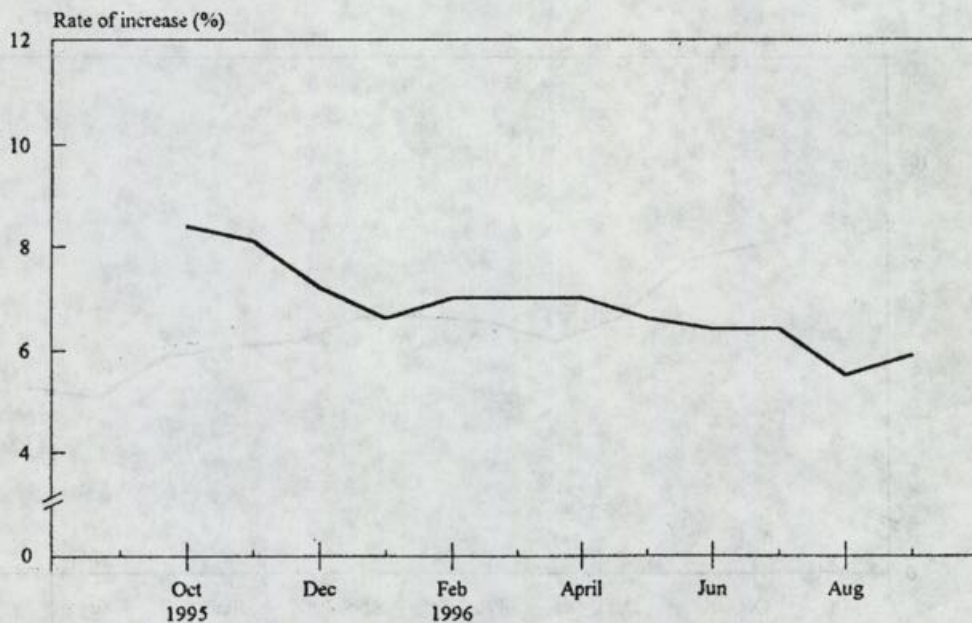


Chart 3 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in Hang Seng CPI

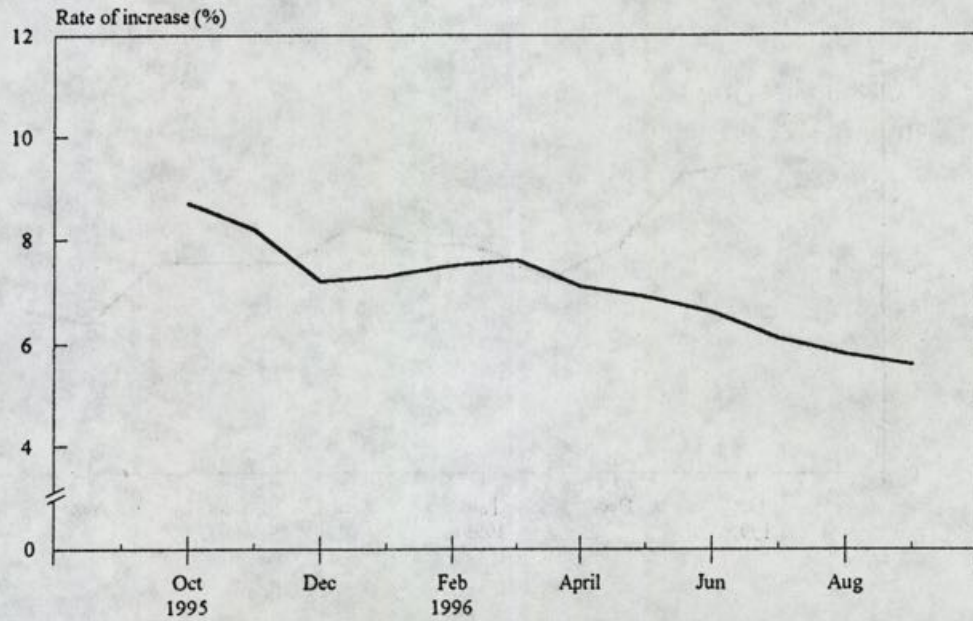
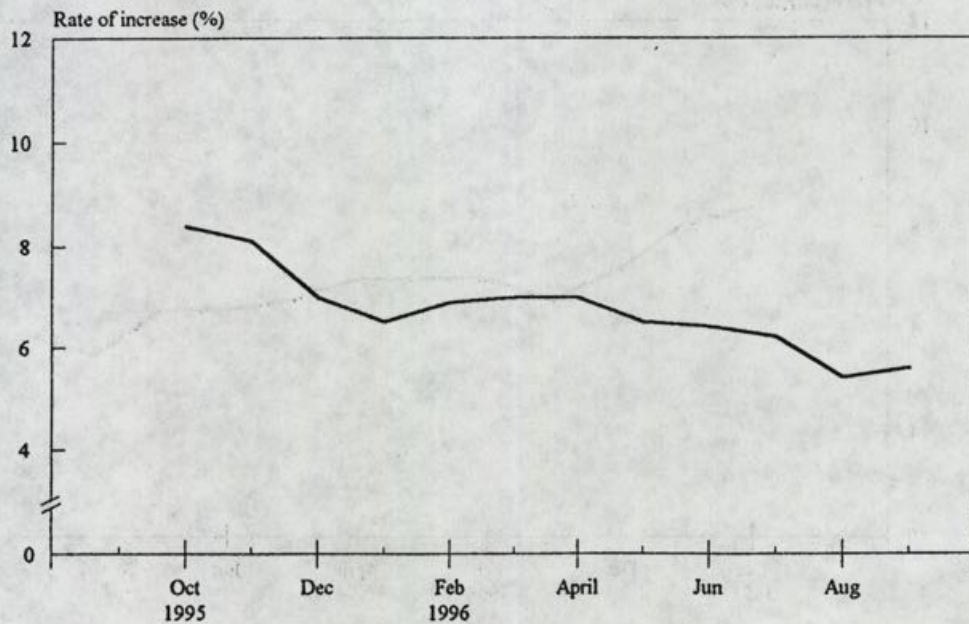


Chart 4 Year-on-year Rates of Increase
in Composite CPI



End

Month-long campaign to promote mental health

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The curtain for the Mental Health Month '96 will rise at the Metroplaza, Kwai Fong, on Saturday (October 26) with a simple ceremony and an exhibition on related themes and services.

Organised jointly by the Health and Welfare Branch, various government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the event aims to increase public awareness of the importance of mental health, and to dispel prejudice and discrimination against the mentally ill.

It is also hoped that the campaign will enhance the understanding of and care for mental patients by the public through their participation in the some 80 programmes to be held until December 1.

The variety of activities will include talks, seminars, games, camps, exhibitions, quiz and essay competitions as well as visits to mental health institutions.

Officiating at the opening ceremony on Saturday will be Executive Council Member, Professor Felice Lieh-Mak; the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok; the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority, Dr E K Yeoh; and the Chairman of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, Dr Raymond Wu.

The Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau, and the Chairmen or representatives of the territory's 18 district boards will sign for the support of the Proclamation for the World Mental Health Day during the ceremony.

Details of the Mental Health Month can be obtained at District Offices, regional offices of the Social Welfare Department, the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department and participating NGOs.

End

Transfer of VMs from Whitehead Detention Centre today

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A group of about 790 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) will be transferred from Section 2 of Whitehead Detention Centre (WHDC) to its Security Unit and Victoria Prison (VP) today (Thursday) in preparation for their return to Vietnam under the Orderly Repatriation Programme.

They will join another group of about 360 VMs in VP and the Security Unit of WHDC, majority of whom have voluntarily presented themselves for transfer from WHDC yesterday (Wednesday), for pre-flight documentation and medical checks prior to their repatriation on October 28 and 31 and on November 5, 12 and 19.

The transfer will be observed by independent monitors.

End

VMs transferred pending repatriation

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An operation was carried out smoothly today (Thursday) at Whitehead Detention Centre (WHDC) to transfer 784 Vietnamese Migrants (VMS) pending return to Vietnam under the Orderly Repatriation Programme.

Some 642 VMs were transferred to Victoria Prison in two conveyes while 142 to the security unit at the detention centre awaiting for the scheduled flight later this month and early November.

They are all residents of section 2 in WHDC.

The operation went smoothly without display of violence from the VMs except a few needed persuasion to move by themselves. The three and a half hours exercise ended at about 12.30 pm without incident.

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the transfer of Vietnamese migrants (VMs) selected for the Orderly Repatriation Programme from Section 2 of the Whitehead Detention Centre today (Thursday) have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The VMs were transferred to Whitehead Section 8 and Victoria Prison.

The four monitors comprised two non-official Justices of the Peace, Mr Chan Kam-man and Mr Jackie Wong See-sum; and representatives from two non-government organisations, Ms Kinny Lee from Christian Action and Ms Mabel Au from Oxfam.

End

New signs for emergency vehicular access

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The Fire Services Department has recently introduced the design of a package of four new indication signs for emergency vehicular access (EVA).

The Chief Fire Officer of Fire Protection Bureau, Mr Lam Chun-man, said (today) the introduction of the new signs was aimed at arousing public awareness of the importance of keeping the EVA free of obstructions for the purpose of fire fighting operation.

The four signs will respectively give specific indications of the layout of an EVA, the emergency route as well as warning against car parking and obstruction to emergency vehicles in the event of a fire.

"The 'EVA Layout' signs are to be erected at the entrances of the designated EVA whereas 'EVA Indication' and 'No Parking' signs will also be required to be positioned along the EVA at 100 metres and 50 metres intervals respectively.

"For EVA not of driveway design, as an alternative for the 'EVA Indication' signs, 'Emergency Route' signs may be fixed to the kerb stones, planters, or other similar objects as appropriate to mark the EVA," Mr Lam said.

Mr Lam said: "We hope it would help to eliminate obstructions, particularly inadvertent ones, if the EVA is clearly marked with these easily observable signs.

"The 'No Parking' sign has legal binding and can help the building management to enforce their clearance in EVA whereas the other signs are of advisory nature," he said.

He said that with detailed specifications provided, it was hoped that by January 1 next year, the design of the new signs will be adopted by architects in new developments whereas for existing buildings involving private roads, the building managements concerned would be requested to provide such signs.

End

Board of Education members to visit prevocational school

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Six members of the Board of Education today (Thursday) visited Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Yow Kam Yuen Prevocational School in Sha Tin.

The members were Sister Bernadette Au Yee-ting, Mr Chan Tak-hang, Mrs Chu Tang Lai-kuen, Mr Michael Hong Man-hoi, Mr Ronald Lau Yiu-fai and Mr Isaac Tse Pak-hoi.

On arrival, they were greeted by the school head, Mr Chan Ying-tai, who, during the touring of classrooms and workshops, briefed the members on the daily operation of the school.

Founded in 1985, the school has operated secondary six since 1992. It offers a wide spectrum of subjects in the curriculum, with a technical content of 40 per cent for secondary one to three and 30 per cent for secondary four and five.

Members also learnt that the school had participated in the School-based Remedial Support Programme and the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme so that it will be provided with more resources to help the needy pupils.

End

Grading of beach water quality

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The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (Thursday) announced the latest gradings of Hong Kong's beaches, based on the bacteriological water quality, for the 1996 swimming season.

The purpose of the grading system is to inform swimmers and the general public about the state of bacteriological pollution at various beaches.

The grading, based on the most recent E coli data obtained by EPD in its routine monitoring programme, is announced biweekly during the bathing season to coincide with the frequency at which beach waters are usually sampled.

As with last year, the grading also includes an estimate of the risk of suffering some minor skin or gastrointestinal complaints as a result of swimming at a beach which has some degree of pollution.

The estimate is based on a large body of statistical information gathered in Hong Kong in recent bathing seasons.

The grading of some beaches may vary during the summer. This represents a natural fluctuation in the bacteriological quality of bathing waters in most cases, as rain and tides bring more or less pollution to the beaches.

However, the grades give a good general picture of the water quality at bathing beaches at the time of reporting and form the best available forecast for the immediate future.

Beaches with highly developed hinterlands are likely to be more polluted than the grades suggested during and after heavy rain.

"Bathers should avoid such beaches for two or three days after a storm, longer if the weather remains overcast or less if there is strong sunshine," Principal Environmental Protection Officer, Mr Patrick Lei, said.

The system for grading beach water quality is as follows:

Grade "1" indicates that the water quality is good. The E coli count is no more than 24 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected risk of minor illness to swimmers is undetectable.

Grade "2" indicates that the water quality is fair. The E coli count is no more than 180 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is no more than 10 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

Grade "3" indicates that the water quality is poor. The E coli count is no more than 610 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is no more than 15 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

Grade "4" indicates that the water quality is very poor. The E coli count is more than 610 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is more than 15 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

The decision whether or not to close a beach to swimmers is based on a judgement of what degree of pollution is acceptable.

Normally, the closure of a beach would only be considered by the Urban or Regional Council if a grade "4" occurred repeatedly, so that the average health risk over the bathing season exceeded 15 cases per 1,000 swimmers.

At present five gazetted beaches, namely Anglers', Approach, Castle Peak, Rocky Bay and Ting Kau, are closed to swimmers, while Old Cafeteria is re-opened.

The decision to open or close the beaches has been made by the Regional and Urban Councils on the basis of beach water quality monitoring data for 1995. The public are advised not to swim at the closed beaches.

The grades of the bacteriological water quality of various beaches in Hong Kong today are listed below:

Beach	Previous Grading (as at 10.10.96)	Present Grading (as at 24.10.96)
<u>Hong Kong South</u>		
Big Wave Bay (S)	2	2
Chung Hom Kok (S)	2	1
Deep Water Bay (S)	2	2
Hairpin (S)	1	1
Middle Bay (S)	1	2
Repulse Bay (S)	2	1
Shek O (S)	2	2
South Bay (S)	1	1
St Stephen's (S)	1	1
Turtle Cove (S)	2	1
Stanley Main (S)	2	2
<u>Tuen Mun District</u>		
Golden Beach	4	3
Old Cafeteria	4	3
New Cafeteria	4	3
Kadoorie (S)	3	3
Butterfly (S)	3	3

Sai Kung District

Clear Water Bay 1st Beach (S)	2	1
Clear Water Bay 2nd Beach (S)	2	2
Hap Mun Bay (S)	1	1
Kiu Tsui (S)	1	1
Silverstrand (S)	3	2
Trio (Hebe Haven) (S)	2	2

Islands District

Cheung Sha Upper	1	1
Cheung Sha Lower	2	2
Discovery Bay*	1	2
Hung Shing Yeh	1	1
Kwun Yam Wan	2	1
Tong Fuk	2	1
Lo So Shing	1	1
Pui O	2	2
Silvermine Bay	3	2
Tung Wan, Cheung Chau (S)	1	1

Tsuen Wan District

Casam (S)	3	3
Gemini	3	3
Hoi Mei Wan	3	3
Lido (S)	3	3
Tung Wan, Ma Wan	2	2

Note: * Non-gazetted beaches.

(S) The beach has a shark-prevention net installed.

The following beaches have changed grading on this occasion:

Chung Hom Kok, Repulse Bay, Turtle Cove, Kwun Yam Wan, Tong Fuk and Clear Water Bay 1st Beach from "2" to "1"; Silvermine Bay and Silverstrand from "3" to "2"; Old Cafeteria, New Cafeteria and Golden Beach from "4" to "3"; Middle Bay and Discovery Bay from "1" to "2".

The changes are within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of these beaches.

This is the last report on beach water quality gradings in 1996, as the bathing season will come to an end by late October. An annual review on the water quality of various bathing beaches in the bathing season of 1996 will be prepared by EPD by the end of this years.

End

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	2,221	0930	+156
Closing balance in the account	2,189	1000	+156
Change attributable to:		1100	+168
Money market activity	+168	1200	+168
LAF today	-200	1500	+168
		1600	+168

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.8 *-0.1* 24.10.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.87	2 years	2808	6.00	100.35	5.87
1 month	4.86	3 years	3910	6.28	100.04	6.36
3 months	4.98	5 years	5109	7.32	102.06	6.93
6 months	5.06	7 years	7308	7.24	100.40	7.29
12 months	5.31	5 years	M503	7.35	100.85	7.26

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$8,993 million

Closed October 24, 1996

End