



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of remarks by acting Governor

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Following is the transcript of the remarks (English) made to reporters by the acting Governor, Mrs Anson Chan, after visiting the Junior Police Call Camp in Sai Kung this (Thursday) afternoon:

Question: Mrs Chan, what do you think of Lo Tak-shing's article saying the Governor had damaged Hong Kong and set up obstacles for the SAR Government?

Acting Governor: I think Hong Kong people are well labelled to distinguish between facts and myths and distortions and propaganda. We're at a critical stage of our transition and I think what we most need at this stage is for Hong Kong people to stand united, to defend our autonomy and to co-operate and work together to achieve a smooth transition. The facts are that we have an economy that continues to grow; we have a civil service that is highly regarded and supported by the community and recognised world-wide as an extremely efficient civil service. Despite all the challenges and uncertainties that civil servants face, morale is remarkably high and we will continue to do our best to respond to community needs and to work towards faithful implementation of the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. That is not only the wish of the Governor; it is my wish and it is the wish of all senior officials and other members of the civil service. The facts also are that we have very strong reserves, so there is no question that we are recklessly spending our reserves. Our financial management principles and operations are well-known and very prudent and we intend to continue to adhere to these principles. So all told, I think things are coming along remarkably well even though from time to time there are difficulties. But provided all parties concerned work together for the common cause and good of Hong Kong, I'm sure we will all succeed.

End

Refinements to New Territories land resumption system

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The Government has completed a review of the ex-gratia zonal compensation system for land resumption in the New Territories and recommends some refinements to the system, which in general has been working satisfactorily.

One of the recommendations put forward by a Lands Department working group set up to review the system is that the definition of Zone A in the system should be refined to cover areas affected by essential projects with territory-wide significance.

"At present, Zone A covers New Town Development areas only," a government spokesman said today (Thursday).

"It is considered justified to treat areas affected by essential projects with territory-wide significance the same as New Town Development areas in the system, in view of the scale of the development and importance of the projects to Hong Kong.

"It is not practicable to lay down guidelines on what constitutes an essential project in this category. Each case has to be considered on its individual merits, with reference to precedent cases."

The working group also recommends some refinements to the Government's internal procedures for reviewing zonal boundaries and re-affirms the current practice of applying a uniform rate across different compensation zones in land resumption for a single project.

The recommendations in the review have been endorsed by the Governor-in-Council. Approval will be sought from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for adopting a new definition of Zone A and continuing the practice of applying a uniform rate across different compensation zones in land resumption for a single project.

The system currently consists of four compensation zones, namely A to D, with ex-gratia compensation rates in descending order. The zonal compensation rates and boundaries are subject to regular review by the Government.

End

New cargo working area to be opened on Saturday

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The public cargo working area (PCWA) in Area 16 of Tuen Mun will be opened on Saturday (August 10) as fast working berths to ensure every cargo operator to have a fair chance to use the facilities funded by the public, a Marine Department spokesman said today (Thursday).

Some operators have objected to the new PCWA to be operated as such and demand a first-come-first-served system.

Studies conducted by the department and a consultant it commissioned, however, showed that first-come-first-served system in PCWAs has led to undesirable practices. Among them is the monopolisation of the berths by a handful of cargo operators.

"The findings are echoed in studies by the Director of Audit, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Police," the spokesman said.

"Under the first-come-first-served system anyone can monopolise a berth as long as they are able to deploy sufficient barges to occupy the berth. By rotating their barges at the berth, they can circumvent the law to prevent monopolisation.

"But the genuine cargo operators stand a better chance to use the facilities if they are operated as fast working berths because hiring a fast working berth is limited to one day.

"We are aware that some genuine cargo operators may need more than a day to work their cargo and so we will continue to discuss with the operators to allow some flexibility to the one-day rule."

The Marine Department intends to bring in new management reform for the nine existing PCWAs to eliminate undesirable practices associated with the first-come-first-served system and to improve the productivity at these facilities.

In essence, the new reform is to lease out the berths at PCWAs by restricted tender under which only the existing operators are eligible to submit their bids.

To enable new comers to join the business, a very small percentage of berths will be leased out by open tender.

End

Seafarers must be re-registered under new law

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All Hong Kong seafarers must be re-registered under the new Merchant Shipping (Seafarers) Ordinance if they want to continue serving in the seafaring profession, a Marine Department spokesman said today (Thursday).

The ordinance, which is to replace the Merchant Shipping (Recruiting of Seamen) Ordinance, will come into operation on September 2.

Under the ordinance, all Hong Kong seafarers currently registered under the Merchant Shipping (Recruiting of Seamen) Ordinance and those unregistered seafarers now being employed on coastal-going ships must be re-registered if they intend to continue serving in the seafaring profession.

They should apply to the Superintendent, Mercantile Marine Office, Marine Department, for registration between September 2, 1996, and September 1, 1997. If they are employed on foreign-going ships, they should apply within one month after being discharged from a ship returning to Hong Kong.

The spokesman stressed that the re-registration was a must to keep the seafarers in the profession.

He said: "Employers and families of Hong Kong seafarers are advised to inform Hong Kong seafarers of the changes if they are now serving on board foreign-going ships."

Further details concerning the re-registration are available at the Mercantile Marine Office of the Marine Department on 2852 3061 during office hours.

End

50,000th VM to return home voluntarily

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The 50,000th Vietnamese voluntary returnee from Hong Kong will be departing for Hanoi tomorrow (Friday).

The Government is pleased to note that by then, over 50,000 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) from Hong Kong will have returned to Vietnam under the UNHCR's Voluntary Repatriation Programme since the programme started in March 1989.

A government spokesman today (Thursday) thanked UNHCR for successfully operating the Voluntary Repatriation Programme over the last seven years.

"The programme is a key element in the resolution of the VM problem," he said.

The plane carrying the 50,000th voluntary returnee will be seen off tomorrow at the Hong Kong International Airport by the acting Chief of Mission of the UNHCR, Mr Nikola Mihajlovic, and Head of UNHCR's Durable Solution Section, Ms Preeta Law.

The acting Refugee Co-ordinator, Mr Gordon Leung, and the Assistant Director of Immigration (Vietnamese Refugees), Mr Choy Ping-tai, will also be present.

The spokesman stressed that all VMs in Hong Kong had no other option but to return to Vietnam. He urged the VMs still in the territory to join the Voluntary Repatriation Programme and return home with the financial assistance provided as soon as possible.

End

New Director of Drainage Services appointed

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The Government announced today (Thursday) the appointment of Mr J Collier to succeed Mr Ng Yee-yum as the Director of Drainage Services with effect from August 19.

Mr Ng will proceed on pre-retirement leave on August 10.

Commenting on the appointment, the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr W K Lam, said: "I am confident that Mr Collier will lead the department to face the challenges ahead."

Mr Lam also thanked Mr Ng for his dedicated and valuable service to the civil service in the past 36 years.

Followings are biographical notes of Mr Collier and Mr Ng:

Mr J Collier, JP

Aged 54. Mr Collier joined the Hong Kong civil service as an Electrical and Mechanical Engineer in July 1974.

He was promoted to Government Electrical and Mechanical Engineer in October 1989 and to Deputy Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services in February 1993. He has served as the Deputy Secretary for Works since September 1994.

Mr Ng Yee-yum, OBE, JP

Aged 60. Mr Ng joined the Hong Kong civil service as an Apprentice Engineer in September 1960. He was promoted to Principal Government Engineer in September 1989 and to Director of Drainage Services in May 1994.

On his retirement, Mr Ng will have completed 36 years of service with the Hong Kong Government.

End

Volume and price movements of external trade in May

* * * * *

In the first five months of 1996, the volume of re-exports increased by 8.8% over the same period last year, while the volume of domestic exports decreased by 6.9%, according to the statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Taking re-exports and domestic exports together, the volume of total exports increased by 6.1%. Meanwhile, imports increased by 4.9% in volume.

The growth in the volume of trade is derived from the growth in trade values with the effect of price changes being discounted.

As regards price changes over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 0.6% and 1.4% respectively. Import prices increased by 0.3%.

Price changes are reflected by changes in unit value indices, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, based on specific price data.

The terms of trade index, defined as the ratio of total export price index to import price index, recorded an increase of 0.5% in the first five months of 1996 over the same period last year.

Comparing May 1996 with May 1995, the volume of re-exports increased by 4.7%, while that of domestic exports decreased by 12%. Taken together, the volume of total exports increased by 1.8%. Meanwhile, the volume of imports decreased by 1.3%.

Over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports decreased by 0.5%, while domestic exports increased by 0.2%. Import prices decreased by 1.2%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of re-exports by end-use category are shown in Table 1.

Comparing May 1996 with May 1995, increases in volume were recorded for all the end-use categories of re-exports: fuels (+30%); foodstuffs (+22%); capital goods (+14%); raw materials and semi-manufactures (+2.8%); and consumer goods (+1.4%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases in the prices of re-exports were noted of fuels (+14%) and consumer goods (+0.8%).

On the other hand, the re-export price of raw materials and semi-manufactures decreased by 3.0%, while those of foodstuffs and capital goods both decreased by 0.6%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of domestic exports by principal commodity group are shown in Table 2.

Comparing May 1996 with May 1995, commodity groups which recorded significant increases in volume of domestic exports included domestic electrical appliances (+49%) and textile yarn and thread (+27%).

On the other hand, the volume of domestic exports of footwear and radios of all kinds decreased by 60% and 56% respectively.

Commodity groups which recorded increases in domestic export prices included metal ores and scrap (+13%); and radios of all kinds (+9.7%).

On the other hand, the domestic export price of domestic electrical appliances and footwear decreased by 4% and 3.5% respectively.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of imports by end-use category are shown in Table 3.

The import volume of foodstuffs increased by 7.2% in May 1996 compared with May 1995.

Significant increases in the import volume were noted of meat and meat preparations; and milk, butter, cheese and eggs. However, decreases were recorded in the import volume of animals of the bovine species, live; and soya bean oil, peanut oil, vegetable oil and lard.

Over the same period of comparison, the import volume of consumer goods decreased by 4%.

Decreases in import volume were recorded in passenger motor cars; and miscellaneous made-up articles of textile materials. However, increases in the import volume were noted of household-type electrical appliances; and alcoholic beverages.

The import volume of raw materials and semi-manufactures decreased by 5.9% in May 1996 compared with May 1995.

Decreases in import volume were recorded in most of the raw materials and semi-manufactures. Significant decreases in the import volume were noted of raw cotton and silk fabrics. However, increases were noted of iron and steel; and woven fabrics of wool and mixtures.

Imports of fuels increased by 36% in volume in May 1996 compared with May 1995.

As regards capital goods, the import volume increased by 8.6% in May 1996 over May 1995.

Notable increases were recorded in the import volume of office machinery; and textile machinery. The import volume of construction machinery; and electrical machinery however decreased.

Comparing May 1996 with May 1995, the import prices of fuels, consumer goods and foodstuffs increased by 5.1%, 2.4% and 0.2% respectively.

On the other hand, the import prices of capital goods; and raw materials and semi-manufactures decreased by 4.2% and 3.9% respectively.

Details of the above statistics are published in the May 1996 issue of the Hong Kong Trade Index Numbers.

The report will be on sale around August 10 at \$14 per copy at either the Government Publications Centre on the ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway; or the Publications Section of the Census and Statistics Department on the 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries regarding regular subscription to this report may be directed to the Publications (Sales) Office of the Information Services Department at 28th floor, Siu On Centre, 188 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, Tel 2598 8194, and enquiries on trade indices to the Census and Statistics Department on 2582 4918.

Table 1 : Changes in re-exports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing MAY 1996 with MAY 1995			Comparing JAN-MAY 1996 with JAN-MAY 1995		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	21.9	-0.6	21.9	10.0	-0.1	10.0
Consumer goods	2.9	0.8	1.4	5.6	1.5	3.7
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	-0.1	-3.0	2.8	8.9	-0.4	9.3
Fuels	43.0	13.6	29.6	36.5	13.7	22.1
Capital goods	9.7	-0.6	13.7	16.2	-0.7	20.2
ALL COMMODITIES	3.8	-0.5	4.7	8.9	0.6	8.8

Table 2 : Changes in domestic exports by principal commodity group

Commodity group	Comparing MAY 1996 with MAY 1995			Comparing JAN-MAY 1996 with JAN-MAY 1995		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Clothing	-10.9	1.1	-11.3	-6.0	1.8	-7.4
Textile fabrics	-7.0	-0.9	-8.0	-3.2	0.5	-5.1
Textile yarn and thread	33.0	5.5	27.0	22.4	7.1	14.9
Textile made-ups and related articles	-12.1	0.2	-16.2	-19.4	0.2	-20.4
Radios of all kinds	-49.8	9.7	-56.4	26.5	6.9	8.5
Electronic components	-12.0	-0.3	-12.9	-3.7	*	-5.0
Footwear	-58.7	-3.5	-60.0	-63.6	-3.6	-63.3
Metal manufactures	-22.4	5.2	-26.4	-7.7	6.7	-13.8
Metal ores and scrap	1.9	13.5	-10.2	-1.6	8.2	-5.9
Watches and clocks	-14.8	-0.4	-14.5	-9.3	-0.2	-8.9
Travel goods, handbags and similar articles	3.2	0.4	0.2	-0.6	2.5	-3.8
Domestic electrical appliances	41.4	-4.0	49.3	46.2	-3.1	53.1
ALL COMMODITIES	-12.0	0.2	-12.0	-5.9	1.4	-6.9

* less than 0.05%

Table 3 : Changes in imports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing MAY 1996 with MAY 1995			Comparing JAN-MAY 1996 with JAN-MAY 1995		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	6.7	0.2	7.2	5.6	0.6	5.0
Consumer goods	-2.0	2.4	-4.0	2.3	2.2	0.2
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	-9.5	-3.9	-5.9	3.0	-0.9	4.4
Fuels	40.1	5.1	36.0	33.8	8.1	24.2
Capital goods	5.5	-4.2	8.6	10.2	-2.2	12.9
ALL COMMODITIES	-2.6	-1.2	-1.3	4.8	0.3	4.9

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the transfer of Vietnamese migrants (VMs) from the Whitehead Detention Centre yesterday (Wednesday) have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

Yesterday's operation covered the transfer of VMs selected for the Orderly Repatriation Programme from Whitehead to Victoria Prison and the transfer of the remaining VMs in section 6 of Whitehead to High Island Detention Centre.

The four monitors comprised two non-official Justices of the Peace, Mr Tang Kwai-nang and Professor Lee Pui-leung; and representatives from two non-government organisations, Mr Christopher Stokes from Medecins Sans Frontieres and Ms Dawn Li from Oxfam.

End

Monitors' report on transfer of VMs clarified

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In response to press enquiries concerning a Vietnamese migrant (VM) woman who claimed to have been granted legal aid and was transferred to Victoria Prison (para 4 of the monitors' observations), a government spokesman today (Thursday) clarifies the Government's position.

"It is always the Government's position that an application for legal aid or an approval of such an application does not constitute a reason for staying the return of the VM concerned," the spokesman said.

End

Over 6,800 S6 places still available after Stage II

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A total of 6,896 S6 places are still available for S5 students to apply at Stage III of the S6 admission procedure which begins tomorrow (Friday).

Up to present, about 17,000 students were successful in acquiring S6 places.

Day school students with results satisfying the minimum A-Level entry requirements may apply to their own or linked school which still has vacant places before 3.30 pm tomorrow. Successful applicants should register with the schools on the same day.

Private candidates and evening school students with results which satisfy the minimum A-Level entry requirements may apply to PLK Vicwood K T Chong Sixth Form College if there are still vacancies.

Prevocational school and past students, however, should not apply at this stage.

The Education Department has received nine complaints today about schools not following the admission procedure.

Meanwhile, the department's central hotline, 2782 7037-9 and 2782 7340 and the 19 district education offices handled about 225 and 614 enquiries respectively on the admission procedure today.

The hotline will continue to operate from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm on weekdays and 9 am to noon on Saturdays.

The department's Careers Education Centre had received 522 visitors and handled 377 telephone enquiries on matters relating to the release of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination results up to 5.30 pm today.

The centre at Room 206 of the Mong Kok Government Offices at 30 Luen Wan Street, Mong Kok, provides students with materials on opportunities for further studies and training and information on various professions.

Students are reminded that the centre will extend its opening hours without a break from 8.45 am to 5.30 pm until August 12 and that an educational counsellor can be reached on 2712 7958 during the period.

End

Immigration officers on overseas training

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Seven officers of the Immigration Department will receive training in Europe and USA starting this month.

Acting Assistant Principal Immigration Officer, Mr Leung Ping-kuen; Chief Immigration Officer, Messrs Chan Yiu-sang and Chan Kwok-hung; and acting Chief Immigration Officer, Mr Kwong Ki-shun, will leave for the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Germany on an eight-week study of the immigration procedures in those countries.

Acting Assistant Principal Immigration Officer, Mr Leung Ka-ching, and Chief Immigration Officer, Mr Huen Shu-sum, will spend four months in the study of programme and project development at the University of California, Berkeley, USA. Senior Immigration Officer, Mr Chan Man-pok, will also spend four months at the same University in the study of administrative skills.

At a briefing before the officers' departure, acting Director of Immigration, Mr Christopher Lee Ka-keung, said he attached great importance to officers of the department receiving overseas training as well as establishing contacts with and learning from the experience of foreign immigration services.

He noted that the study trips would assist officers in self development and enable them to have a better understanding of the different social and cultural background of overseas visitors whom they would meet in the course of their duties.

Mr Lee emphasised that the department fully recognised the long-term benefits that could be achieved through these overseas trips and courses and that every effort would be made to provide officers with such opportunities.

He urged the officers to make the best use of the opportunity to widen their horizon and to achieve self enrichment.

End

Roving exhibition to celebrate Arch SD's 10th Anniversary

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Members of the public will have a chance to understand more about the services provided by the Architectural Services Department (Arch SD) and the many public projects they have developed in the last decade.

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Arch SD is launching a series of exhibitions throughout the territory introducing the important role played by the department in the development of Hong Kong and its close involvement with the daily livelihood of the general public.

The first of these exhibitions will be held tomorrow (Friday) at the covered piazza on the ground floor of Times Square in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

It will last for three days and will be open daily between 10 am and 8 pm until August 11 (Sunday). Admission is free.

Through photographic and model displays, the exhibition will show the many public projects designed and completed by Arch SD in the last 10 years.

These include hospitals, schools, office buildings, recreational facilities such as parks and swimming pools, facilities of the two municipal councils such as the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, market complex and town halls, as well as the latest Air Traffic Control Complex in the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

Architectural awards won by the department during the last 10 years will also be displayed.

The exhibition will be held later at the New World Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui between August 31 to September 2 and at the Metroplaza in Kwai Chung from September 13 to 15.

End

Best time to visit ACP Exhibition Centre

* * * * *

The New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office (NAPCO) today (Thursday) advised members of the public that weekdays and Saturdays are the best time to visit the Airport Core Programme Exhibition Centre.

A NAPCO spokesman said the exhibition centre attracts more visitors on Sundays.

"As many as 12,500 visitors have visited the centre on Sundays. As a result, many visitors have to queue up for almost an hour before they can enter the centre on Sundays. Inside they also have to wait for up to an hour before they can watch the audio-visual show on the ACP projects.

"If visitors want to avoid queuing up and to have more time to view the centre's exhibits, make use of its facilities and view the Tsing Ma Bridge - and to do all these at a leisurely pace, we advise them to visit the centre on weekdays or Saturdays," the spokesman said.

The spokesman also reminded visitors who might drive to the centre that the centre's car park was always full on Sundays.

"Besides queues of visitors, there were also long queues of cars waiting to enter the car park on Sundays. As the car park has limited parking spaces, car owners are advised to use public transport when they visit the centre," the spokesman said.

The exhibition centre has been well received by the public, drawing more than 180,000 visitors since its opening in January this year.

Located on Castle Peak Road where it faces the main span of the Tsing Ma Bridge, the centre provides the latest information on the physical progress of the 10 ACP projects through photographs, models, charts, write-ups and video presentations.

Telescopes have been installed on the rooftop and viewing platform for visitors to view the Tsing Ma and Kap Shui Mun bridges.

The centre opens from 10 am to 5 pm on weekdays, and from 10 am to 6.30 pm on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays. It closes on Mondays for maintenance purpose.

NAPCO organises guided tours of the centre for primary and secondary schools, as well as other organisations on weekdays and Saturdays. Enquiries about the tours can be made to NAPCO's Community Relations Division on 2829 6282 or fax 2827 8446.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,924	0930	+36
Closing balance in the account	1,956	1000	+36
Change attributable to :		1100	+36
Money market activity	+37	1200	+37
LAF today	- 5	1500	+37
		1600	+37

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.9 *+0.0* 8.8.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.99	2 years	2805	6.30	100.48	6.09
1 month	5.04	3 years	3907	6.80	101.02	6.52
3 months	5.16	5 years	5106	7.23	101.07	7.08
6 months	5.26	7 years	7305	7.60	101.72	7.40
12 months	5.63	5 years	M502	7.30	100.63	7.25

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$7,919 million

Closed August 8, 1996

End