



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Unemployment and underemployment statistics

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period May to July 1996 was 2.9%, and the underemployment rate was 1.6%, according to the latest labour force statistics released today (Monday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

For the period June to August 1996, the provisional seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged further lower to 2.8%, while the provisional underemployment rate also fell, to 1.4%.

Commenting on the latest figures, a government spokesman said labour market conditions continued to improve in recent months. In particular, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has edged lower for four consecutive months in a row.

For the latest period June to August 1996, decreases in the unemployment rate were mainly observed in the manufacturing, wholesale and retail trades, and restaurants and hotels sectors.

As to the underemployment rate, decreases continued to occur in the manufacturing and construction sectors. The unemployment and underemployment rates in the other major sectors remained generally stable.

In the three months ending July 1996, total labour supply grew by 2.6% over a year earlier, while total employment rose relatively faster, by 3%. With the growth in total labour supply coming down further, while the growth in total employment remaining robust, this has helped to lower the overall unemployment rate in recent months.

During the period May to July 1996, the number of unemployed persons with previous jobs was estimated at 80,100. Another 9,400 unemployed persons were first-time job-seekers. The number of underemployed persons was estimated at 51,600.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous General Household Survey. The survey for May to July 1996 covered a quarterly sample of some 23,200 households or 79,200 persons, selected scientifically to represent the land-based civilian non-institutional population in Hong Kong. Data were obtained from the survey by interviewing each 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.

'Seasonally adjusted' refers to adjustment for seasonal variations in the proportion of first-time job-seekers in the labour force.

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 June 1996 will be on sale at by the end of September at the Government Publications Centre at ground floor, Low Block, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

End

Gas Safety Advisory Committee to meet tomorrow

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The Gas Safety Advisory Committee (GSAC) will hold its eighth meeting tomorrow (Tuesday) to consider a number of items concerning gas safety including safety controls regarding the procurement and use of liquefied petroleum gas cylinder regulators.

GSAC was formed in 1991 to advise the Gas Authority on any matter relevant to the importation, manufacture, storage, transport, supply or use of gas as defined under the Gas Safety Ordinance.

The committee also conveys to the Gas Authority any views pertaining to the interests of the gas industry and those of consumers of fuel gases in general.

It advises the Gas Authority on matters relating to the gas safety legislation.

The first meeting was held in 1992 and subsequently conducted meetings about twice a year.

Chaired by the Gas Authority, Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services, Mr Hugh Phillipson, the committee comprises 10 unofficial members.

Unofficial members are Ms Jennifer Chow, Director of Wah Hing Group; Mr Alan Lee, Materials Management Manager of Dow Chemical Pacific Ltd; Mr Albert Ma, Managing Director of Hong Kong LP Gas (Holdings) Ltd; Mr Malcolm J Matthews, Managing Director of The Hong Kong and China Gas Co Ltd; Mr Pang Yiu-kai, Director of Jardine Pacific Ltd; Mr Edward Pong, Executive Director of Shiu Wing Steel Ltd; Mr So Bo-ming, Vice General Manager of Crown Gas Stoves Co Ltd; Mr Charley Song Lin, Vice President of China Resources Petrochems (Group) Co Ltd; Mr Clement Tao, Managing Director of Associated Advisers Ltd and Dr Samuel Wong, Managing Partner of Associated Consulting Engineers.

End

Reception for Australian promotion supporters held

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, hosted a reception at Victoria House today (Monday) for about 70 people taking part and supporting the Hong Kong-Australia, Partners in Asia Pacific promotion, which will take place between September 23 and 27.

Mrs Chan will be leading a delegation to strengthen economic links and trade partnership between Australia and Hong Kong.

The promotion, covering three cities - Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne - is co-organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), the Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) and the Hong Kong Government.

Programmes for the visit include business seminars and luncheons in Sydney and Melbourne, roundtable discussions with business leaders, opening of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Sydney, a pop concert featuring Hong Kong Television Broadcasts Ltd (TVB) singers and artistes at the Sydney Town Hall.

Mrs Chan will also be going on her own round of political calls and media interviews.

Dignitaries attending the reception today included the Australian Consul-General, Mr Geoff Walsh; HKTDC Executive Director, Mr Michael Sze; HKTA Executive Director, Mrs Amy Chan; Vice Chairman of the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, Mr Matthew Cheng; and the Chairman of Sing Tao Group, Miss Sally Aw.

At the reception, Mrs Chan presented certificates of appreciation to supporting organisations, sponsors and TVB artistes.

Representing the sponsors were the General Manager, Pacific and Southern Africa Routes of Cathay Pacific Airways, Mr Robert Atkinson; Vice Chairman and Chief Executive of Hang Seng Bank, Mr Alexander Au; Chairman of INFA Telecom Group and Chief Executive of New World Telephone Group, Mr Peter Tsang; and Executive Director of Sing Tao Group, L Y Tang.

The General Manager, Corporate Affairs of TVB, Mr Alex Ying; singers Ekin Cheng, Vivian Chow, Cass Phang, Hacken Lee, and compere for the pop concert, Mr Natalas Chan, were also present.

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Premises closed for residents' safety

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A total of 14 residential units on the mezzanine floor of No 1 Wang Fung Terrace, Tai Hang, have been evacuated and will be closed temporarily following the collapse of a portion of slope in the vicinity on Saturday evening, a spokesman for the Buildings Department said today (Monday).

Emergency slope stabilisation works are being carried out and expected to be completed in about two weeks' time.

A notice of intention was posted at the building this (Monday) afternoon informing the residents that a closure order would be applied from the Court on Wednesday morning.

The spokesman said as the slope was still in a unstable situation, the units had to be closed for the residents' safety.

Any enquiry on the closure order can be made to the Buildings Department on 2626 1368.

End

Trade Department customer group to recruit new members

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A recruitment exercise was launched by the Trade Department's Customer Liaison Group (CLG) to bring in new blood in an effort to further enhancing its services to traders.

Letters had been sent today (Monday) to companies registered with the department, encouraging their staff to join CLG for the year 1996-97.

The members the department has in mind to recruit are employees of these companies who are directly responsible for or involved in the process of import and export licenses and/or certificate of origin applications.

The Trade Department is committed to providing traders with efficient, courteous and high quality services.

CLG was set up in 1994 with a view to further enhancing the department's services. It is to serve as an additional channel of communication between the department and its customers and to provide a forum for them to exchange views on the services in a relaxed setting.

It aims at soliciting members' ideas on improvements of the department's services to facilitate planning and implementations. It also helps to build up a cordial customer relationship and to enhance customers' understanding of the department's operation and services.

Apart from meeting quarterly, CLG organises a variety of activities including workshops, small group discussions, surveys, field visits and tours of the department's licensing offices.

The Managing Director of Leighton Apparel Ltd, Mr Jay Leung, and the Deputy Managing Director of Texwood Ltd, Mr Norman Tam, both local prominent industrialists and members of the Textiles Advisory Board, were appointed as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively by the Director-General of Trade.

Users of the department's services aged 18 or above, with the endorsement of their employers, may apply by completing a reply form obtainable from the enquiry counter at the ground floor, Trade Department Tower, 700 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

Completed forms should be returned on or before October 5 either by hand or by post to Room 211, second floor, of the same address, or by fax 2380 8504. Enquiries about CLG can be directed to Miss Teresa Poon on 2398 5474 or Mr Alan Sze on 2398 5668.

End

Interactive computers installed to promote health education

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Members of the public can now learn about health education in an entertaining and lively way with the Department of Health's new interactive learning computer system.

The \$2.4 million system, which was set up with funds donated by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, was officially handed over to the department at a ceremony at the Central Health Education Centre today (Monday).

Speaking at the ceremony, acting Deputy Director of Health, Dr S P Mak said the main tasks of the department were to promote health education and to encourage people to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

The installation of the computer system would allow users to learn about health in a relaxed and interesting way, she added.

The system, which is comprised of five touch-screen computers, has been installed at the Central Health Education Unit's (CHEU) four health education centres.

There are a total of 19 health topics to choose from, including healthy lifestyles, family and child health, organ donation, chronic degenerative diseases and communicable diseases with emphasis on disease prevention.

The touch-screen is easy and interesting to operate, and the system's vivid pictures, animation and sound effects further increase the attractiveness of the programme.

The system is now accessible to the public free of charge. In addition, extra copies of the system's software will be made available to schools and other organisations for educational and non-profit-making purposes.

For further enquiries, please contact CHEU on 2835 1825.

End

Calling number display to be introduced

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Following his report on previous public consultation in July, the Telecommunications Authority, Mr Alexander Arena, formally announced today (Monday) that Calling Number Display (CND) could be introduced into Hong Kong.

The decision is based on the general support indicated by the community and the prospective service providers.

It is envisaged that interested service providers will submit their applications for providing CND shortly, and equipment suppliers will proceed to manufacture suitable telephone terminals in accordance with the standards approved by the Authority.

However, a spokesman for the Office of the Telecommunication Authority emphasised that before launching their services, the service providers must demonstrate to the Authority's satisfaction that they would comply with stringent codes of practices to be issued by the Authority on the handling of CND information, and would fully inform their customers of their choice regarding the transmission or withholding the transmission of their telephone numbers.

"An effective publicity programme is a pre-requisite for introducing CND. The public must fully understand how the service works so as to make good use of it and benefit from it," the spokesman said.

Customers are advised to look out for further announcements from the various fixed and mobile service providers regarding the timing for launching CND on their networks and the application procedures.

End

New membership of BOE sub-committees

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Four educators and a businessman have been elected to head the five sub-committees of the Board of Education (BOE).

At a meeting today (Monday), the board endorsed new membership for the five sub-committees on educational aims, educational services liaison, pre-primary education, special education and review of school education respectively. The term of office of the sub-committees is two years.

Membership of the five BOE sub-committees are as follows:

Educational Aims Implementation

Chairman: Sr Bernadette Au Yee-ting
Members: Mr Chan Tak-hang
Mr Cheng Chi-leung
Mr Michael Hong Man-hoi

Educational Services Liaison

Chairman: Mr Clement Tao Kwok-lau
Members: Miss Elisa Chan Ching-har
Mr Tang Hing-lin

Pre-primary Education

Chairman: Mr Irving Koo Yee-yin
Members: Mrs Chu Tang Lai-kuen
Professor Leslis Lo Nai-kwai
Dr Pang King-chee
Mr Pun Tin-chi

Special Education

Chairman: Professor Leslie Lo Nai-kwai
Members: Mrs Chu Tang Lai-kuen
Dr Simon Leung Man-on
Mr Pun Tin-chi

Review of School Education

Chairman: Dr Pang King-chee
Members: Mr Chan Tak-hang
Mr Cheng Chi-leung
Mr Irving Koo Yee-yi
Mr Ronald Lau Yiu-fai
Mr Pun Tin-chi
Mr Tang Hing-lin
Mr Tik Chi-yuen
Mr Isaac Tse Pak-hoi

Mr Isaac Tse Pak-hoi has been appointed Chairman of the Task Group on Aims, Objectives, Targets and Enforcement of nine-year Compulsory Education.

End

Air quality report for August

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

The purpose of the announcement is to keep the public informed of the air quality levels in the territory and to explain the measurements.

The announcement contains monitoring results from Mong Kok, Central/Western and Kwai Chung, which represent three important land use types in the territory:

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

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

Air quality was poor on August 20. The Mong Kok Station recorded high NO₂ levels of 159 ug/m³ which was about six per cent higher than the daily air quality objective (AQO).

The ozone concentration was also very high for a few hours in the territory at late afternoon. The peak concentration of ozone of 314 ug/m³ or about 30% higher than the air quality objective was recorded at the Central/Western Station.

The ozone was formed by reactions between other air pollutant such as nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons, in the presence of strong sunlight.

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

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

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

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

End

Monitors' Report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Tai A Chau Detention Centre decantation operation this (Monday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The four monitors comprised two non-official Justices of the Peace, Mr Tang Pui-tat and Mr Raymond Choy Wai-shek; and representatives from two non-government organisations, Mr Peter Fung from Christian Action and Mr Yau Sun-kit from Caritas, Hong Kong.

End

Water storage figure

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Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Monday) stood at 97.4 per cent of capacity or 570.986 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 558.087 million cubic metres of water, representing 95.2 per cent of capacity.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date	16 Sept 1996
Paper on offer	EF notes
Issue number	5109
Issue date	17 Sept 1996
Maturity date	17 Sept 1996
Coupon	7.32 PCT
Amount applied	HK\$2,230
Amount allotted	HK\$500 MN
Average price accepted (yield)	100.89 (7.23 PCT)
Lowest price accepted (yield)	100.87 (7.24 PCT)
Pro rata ratio	About 62 PCT
Average tender price (yield)	100.78 (7.26 PCT)

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	1,877	0930	+281
Closing balance in the account	2,388	1000	+281
Change attributable to:		1100	+281
Money market activity	+281	1200	+281
LAF today	+230	1500	+284
		1600	+281

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.5 *+0.0* 16.9.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.84	2 years	2808	6.00	99.85	6.17
1 month	4.92	3 years	3907	6.80	100.84	6.57
3 months	5.12	5 years	5106	7.23	100.76	7.16
6 months	5.25	7 years	7308	7.24	99.04	7.56
12 months	5.59	5 years	M503	7.35	99.81	7.53

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$12,436 million

Closed September 16, 1996

End