



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, February 14, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food commodities

Release time: 7.45 p.m.

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LETTER OF INTENT FOR MASS TRANSIT CONTRACT

To Be Signed Tomorrow

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A Letter of Intent to negotiate a contract for the construction and equipment of the first four stages of the Mass Transit Railway will be signed by Mr. Philip Haddon-Cave, Financial Secretary and Chairman of the Mass Transit Steering Group, and issued to the Japanese Consortium tomorrow (Friday) morning.

Announcing this today, a government spokesman explained that, since the decision made by the government on December 11, 1973 to seek negotiations with the Japanese Consortium for the conclusion of a contract, the Mass Transit Steering Group had held five formal meetings with representatives of the Consortium to discuss matters pertaining to the Letter of Intent.

"Although these meetings have been spread over a period of two months," he said, "the discussions, which were held in a cordial atmosphere, had proceeded steadily and in a businesslike manner, with both sides demonstrating good faith and affirming their intention to successfully conclude a contract".

He added that "the Letter of Intent, which enshrines the government's stated requirements and establishes the term within which the formal contract will be negotiated, is a key stage in progress towards the building of the mass transit railway and marks the penultimate step in the long sequence of events towards selecting a contractor for the scheme and concluding a contract."

/The Japanese .....

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The Japanese Consortium is led by the Mitsubishi Corporation, with Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Company Limited as their local representatives. Mr. H. Sakamaki, Managing Director of Mitsubishi Corporation, will be coming from Tokyo to receive the Letter of Intent from the Financial Secretary.

The press are invited to attend the signing ceremony which will be held tomorrow in the Reception Lounge, 1st Floor, East Wing, Colonial Secretariat at 12:30 p.m.

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#### PRISONS OFFICERS ON PARADE

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A passing out parade for about 100 prisons officers and cadets will be held at the Prisons Department Staff Training Institute at Tung Tau Wan Road, Stanley, at 11 a.m. on Saturday (February 23).

Mr. David Hampton, Inspector of Prisons, will inspect the parade.

Also in attendance will be the band of the Cape Collinson Training Centre.

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Note to Editors: Your representatives are welcome to cover the occasion and to attend a reception following the parade.

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### SERIOUS RISE IN INCIDENCE OF MEASLES

11 Deaths, 367 Notifications In January Cause Concern

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Eleven children aged between six months and two years died from measles in January this year -- the highest monthly total since 1967, when 201 deaths from the disease were recorded.

In addition, 367 cases were notified -- the highest monthly total since January 1967, when 951 notifications were received.

Dr. K.L. Thong, Deputy Director of Medical and Health Services (Health), said today these figures -- seen against the 21 deaths and 1,034 notifications for the whole of 1973 -- were causing serious concern.

He regretted that despite annual immunisation campaigns, and widespread publicity, public co-operation had been poor. There were two campaigns last year, the latest being in December, yet there had been no significant response.

As a result, the department had advanced the date of the annual measles immunisation campaign for 1974 from May to February 18. For a month from that date, there would be intensive publicity to urge parents of susceptible children up to five years to have them immunised.

Free vaccine would be available at all the 37 maternal and child health centres throughout Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories run by the Medical and Health Department.

Mobile teams would visit housing estates and other areas, and as an added service, would call on any institution on request to inoculate children in groups of 20 or more. The request could be made by a telephone call to the department's regional health offices -- Hong Kong Island 5-435581; Kowloon 3-010111 ext. 347; New Territories 3-866825.

/Dr. Thong .....

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Dr. Thong urged parents to take advantage of this service to help the department in its attempt to arrest the rising incidence of the disease, and to prevent a possible outbreak of a full-blown measles epidemic in Hong Kong during the remainder of this cold season.

He recalled that in 1973, of the 80,147 live births registered, only 25,028 children under one year were inoculated, or 31.2 per cent. Taking account of other susceptible children who were also inoculated last year, the total reached 48,285.

"This is clearly unsatisfactory," Dr. Thong said. "Parents must be much better than that, and the time is now."

He made a special appeal to parents in housing estates, because of the 11 deaths recorded in January, six were from families living in estates. Measles being a highly infectious disease, he explained that only inoculation could prevent it from spreading among children in large concentrations of population.

Dr. Thong recalled that the last epidemic of the disease occurred in the winter-spring of 1966-67. Free anti-measles vaccine became available on a year-round basis from December 1967.

Since then, the incidence of, and deaths from, measles had remained low "due in part to the immunisation facilities."

Dr. Thong repeated the warning that although measles was regarded by many people as a common childhood disease and perhaps not a very serious one by itself, danger reposed in the complications that could arise from it -- such as bronchitis, pneumonia, middle ear infection, and encephalitis.

He strongly advised parents not to persist in the wrong belief that "every child should be made to go through an attack of measles instead of being prevented from getting it, or having it suppressed."

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## 75 ESTATE WELFARE ORGANISATIONS WIN ONE YEAR RESPITE FROM RENT INCREASES

Rent Of 89 Others To Go Up

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The Housing Authority announced today it has decided to defer until April 1, 1975 the rent increases on 75 lettings to voluntary organisations operating social welfare activities, clinics, schools and religious activities in its various estates.

These 75 lettings are those not presently receiving subventions from the Social Welfare Department. Planned rental increases for another 89 lettings will however go ahead.

The Housing Authority will shortly be writing to inform them of the decision.

The deferment of rent for one year will enable the Social Welfare and other government departments to assess these agencies' eligibility for future subventions relating to rentals.

However, if any of them should find it difficult to meet the new rents after one year, they can apply to the Housing Authority for reconsideration of their cases on an individual basis.

"It is not the intention of the Authority to deprive estate tenants of the various social services offered by these agencies," a Housing Authority spokesman emphasised.

He explained that as the Authority is bound by law to be self-supporting financially, it was inappropriate for the Authority to undertake the government function of subsidising welfare agencies operating in the various estates, most of which were previously charged by the government at a nominal monthly rental of \$1.

/Meanwhile, .....

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Meanwhile, the Social Welfare Department assured tenants of the 89 other lettings, who are already in receipt of financial assistance from the department, that the bill for their increased rents would be met in full on April 1, 1974.

"The department has made provision for the sum of \$2.5 million for the financial year 1974/75 for this purpose," a SWD spokesman said.

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#### ONE-WAY TRAFFIC ONLY ALONG TUNG LO WAN ROAD

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The section of Tung Lo Wan Road between Causeway Road and Moreton Terrace on Hong Kong Island will remain a permanent one-way road for westbound traffic.

The road was first routed one-way westbound in April last year to facilitate drainage works.

A spokesman for the Transport Department said: "The one-way routing has eliminated congestion caused by motorists on Tung Lo Wan Road cutting across two lanes of traffic to turn right at the junction of Causeway Road and Hing Fat Street."

Another improvement resulting from the re-routing was the reduction in the amount of traffic turning right from Tai Hang Road into Tung Lo Wan Road.

The section of Tung Lo Wan Road between Moreton Terrace and Tai Hang Road will remain open to two-way traffic, while Moreton Terrace is to remain one-way northbound.

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EXPORT QUOTA CONTROLS ON PLASTICS EXTENDED

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The Commerce and Industry Department announced today that export quota controls are to be imposed on a fifth category of plastic raw materials.

The item concerned, polymerisation and copolymerisation resins, moulding and extrusion compounds, appears under category 581298 in the Hong Kong Imports and Exports Classification List.

It has been decided to impose export quota controls on this category because the quantities licensed for export since January 1 are substantially above the monthly average for 1973.

The issue of export licences has been suspended until quotas have been allocated and notified to the trade.

An export licensing scheme to cover 55 different categories of plastic raw materials was introduced at the beginning of the year.

The four items on which controls are already in force are polypropylene, low density and high density polyethylene and P.V.C. resins.

Mr. Jimmy McGregor, Deputy Director of Commerce and Industry, said it was already clear that the application of a licensing system at the beginning of the year had helped to stabilise the supply position of essential raw materials to the plastics industry.

"We are only applying export quota controls when it becomes apparent that re-exports of specific categories have reached a level which could disturb the traditional pattern of supplies available for local consumption," he added.

/"Trade and .....

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"Trade and industrial sources have agreed that the licensing and quota controls have also helped to reduce price fluctuations."

In the meantime, the department is pressing ahead on detailed administrative planning for a share-out of two basic plastic raw materials -- polystyrene and polyethylene -- among the smaller firms.

At least five million pounds of these materials will be made available for distribution during March by importers and the larger manufacturing concerns.

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#### LRS HELPS SETTLE 314 LABOUR DISPUTES

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The Labour Relations Service of the Labour Department handled 479 industrial disputes last month, and helped settle 314 of them.

As a result of agreements reached, employees received a total of \$249,503 in settlement of outstanding wages, payment in lieu of notice, statutory holiday pay, bonuses, severance pay and other ex-gratia payments.

During the month, 115 cases were referred to the Labour Tribunal, eight to the Legal Aid Department and two to District Courts. The remaining 40 cases were either withdrawn by the applicants or settled by direct negotiation.

In addition to conciliation work, officers of the Service also handled 2,947 consultations and enquiries about labour laws, industrial relations and personnel management.

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### WANG TAU HOM HAWKERS GET NEW SITES

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More than 140 hawkers in Wang Tau Hom Estate were today offered new sites near Block 14 to continue their trade.

These hawkers, whose stalls were originally at areas around Blocks 12 and 13, had to leave the place temporarily to enable Housing Department staff to carry out a tidy-up operation.

Work will start immediately to resurface the entire area and add in a proper drainage system. The site will be marked out properly and the hawkers will be able to move back in several weeks.

Today's tidy-up operation is part of a continuing environmental improvement exercise aimed at improving the living condition of the tenants of the older public housing estates.

More than 200 structures and hawker stalls and about 120 illegal shop extensions were demolished in the operation. Most of the structures were voluntarily pulled down by their owners.

Mr. Chan Harh-chung, District Estate Manager, Central, said the operation could only have been carried out so smoothly with the full co-operation of the tenants and hawkers.

"This was due to the fact that they knew quite well that the exercise was carried out for the good of the estate tenants," he said.

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### CAREERS SEMINAR FOR STUDENTS

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A two-day careers seminar for some 800 senior secondary school students is to be held at the Kwan Tong Government Technical School on February 23 and 24.

The seminar will be organised jointly by the Youth Employment Advisory Service of the Labour Department and the Kwan Tong Secondary School Careers Guidance Committee, comprising careers teachers from seven major schools in Kwan Tong.

The seminar aims to provide the students, many of whom are in their final year of schooling, with a wide range of information to enable them to make a wise choice of career.

The programme will include talks, panel discussions and the distribution of careers literature prepared by the Labour Department.

Experts from commerce, the government and industry will deliver talks on work with computers, social work, nursing, apprentice training, government jobs for secondary school leavers, and employment and further studies.

A panel discussion on jobs connected with the tourist industry will be posted by representatives from airlines, hotels and travel agencies, and experts from the textile, printing and building industries will lead a discussion on work in industry.

The seminar will be the first of its kind in Kwan Tong. Senior form students in the Kwan Tong area may apply through their schools, and other interested students should contact Mr. Chan Shui-jun of Ngan Tin Kok Caritas Centre at 3-418546, extension 6, for enrolment.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUNDAY'S CHARITY WALK

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Special traffic arrangements are being introduced in conjunction with the Community Chest's annual "Walk for a Million" in Kowloon on Sunday (February 17).

The walk will begin at 9 a.m. from the Kwun Tong Recreation Ground and will finish at the same place at about 6 p.m. The route will take walkers into the foothills around the Kwun Tong area.

Because of the large numbers of people expected to participate the following traffic arrangements will be implemented between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday.

The link road connecting Junk Bay Road and Anderson Road will be closed to all vehicular traffic, including vehicles connected with the walk. In addition, vehicular traffic using Anderson Road from the link road to Rennie's Mill will be restricted to franchised buses and emergency vehicles only.

Motorists in the area are advised to drive with extreme caution. Traffic police and other police units will be on hand along the route to assist those taking part in the Walk and to ease traffic congestion.

Appropriate traffic signs will also be posted to guide motorists.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

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The following prices were realised today (Thursday) at sales under the Rice Control Scheme and at the Vegetable Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market and the Fish Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market at Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon:

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Rice

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>
		<u>Average</u>
<u>China Rice</u>		
See Mow -- old crop	-	-
-- new crop	-	-
S.C.Jion -- old crop	-	-
Po Hgai	-	-
Chu Cho	-	-
	Good	1.74
<u>Thai Rice</u>		
100% Whole		
10-15% Broken	Good	1.69
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.52
A1 Super	Good	1.42
Whole Glutinous	Good	-
<u>U.S. Rice</u>	Good	1.74
<u>Australian Rice</u>	Good	1.72
<u>Pakistan Rice</u>	Good	1.42
<u>Taiwan Rice</u>	-	-

/Supplies and .....

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Marine Fish

<u>Species</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Golden Thread	Good	5.3	3.5	4.3
Big-Eyes	Good	2.7	0.8	2.1
Squid	Limited	6.5	3.2	5.0
Hair-Tails	Normal	3.0	1.2	1.7
Lizard Fishes	Normal	2.9	1.2	2.0
Croakers	Good	2.4	0.7	1.5
Conger-Pike-Eels	Good	3.3	2.2	2.8
Melon Coat	Good	2.4	1.5	1.8
Breams	Limited	5.0	3.8	4.8
Yellow Belly	Good	2.2	0.8	1.3
Mackerels	Normal	5.0	3.5	4.5
Red Goat Fish	Good	2.6	0.8	2.0
Fork-Tail	Normal	1.7	0.8	1.3
Horse-Head	Limited	6.5	3.5	4.8
Melon Seed	Normal	3.2	2.2	2.7
Poufrets	Scarce	12.0	8.0	9.5
Garoupas	Normal	8.0	5.0	6.0
Yellow Croaker	-	-	-	-

/Supplies and .....

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of

Locally Produced Vegetables

<u>Type</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Flowering cabbage	Limited	2.0	1.0	1.5
White cabbage	Limited	1.4	0.5	1.0
Chinese Lettuce	Limited	1.0	0.3	0.7
Chinese Kale	Scarce	1.8	0.8	1.4
Spring onion	Good	0.6	0.3	0.5
Spinach	Normal	1.0	0.3	0.7
Water cress	Normal	1.0	0.25	0.6
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	0.8	0.3	0.5
Tomato	Limited	2.0	0.8	1.4

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/picul)</u>
		(Average)
Pork	Good	300

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