DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Thursday, August 17, 1995

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CS refutes special privileges in flat purchase

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, stressed today (Thursday) that she had obtained no special privileges in the purchase of a flat at Villa Monte Rosa.

Mrs Chan refuted suggestions that she had abused her position to obtain a 100 per cent mortgage and set up a company with the intention to avoid tax.

"My husband and I bought the property at a fair market price of $7.8 million in mid-1993. We secured a $7.8 million loan for the purchase from Hang Seng Bank Limited by offering as security this property and another property which we owned. The total valuation of these two properties according to the Bank was $14.6 million. There is no question of the Bank granting a 100 per cent mortgage to me based on the value of the flat at Villa Monte Rosa alone," she said.

"The property was originally owned by a limited company and the previous owner was only willing to sell it on the condition that we bought the company. After seeking professional advice, we accepted this condition," she further explained.

Mrs Chan stressed that she and her husband have at all times acted in accordance with the law. They have met and will continue to meet all their taxation obligations.

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Unemployment and underemployment statistics of April to June

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period April - June 1995 was 3.1%, and the underemployment rate was 2.1%, according to the latest labour force statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The provisional seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period May - July 1995 was 3.2%, while the provisional underemployment rate was 2.3%.

Commenting on the latest figures, a government spokesman said the increased unemployment was mostly from the retail, restaurant, hotel and transport sectors. In the construction sector, there was a decrease in the unemployment rate but an increase in the underemployment rate.

The spokesman pointed out that the easing of the labour market in recent months should be seen against a distinctly faster increase in overall labour supply, by 4.1% in the second quarter of 1995 over a year earlier. The corresponding growth in total employment was relatively slower than this, hence giving a higher unemployment rate. But the increase in total employment, at 2.7% in the second quarter over a year earlier, was still notable and signified that there was quite clearly an on-going demand for labour within the local economy.

During the period April - June 1995, the number of unemployed persons was estimated at 90,600. Of this, 6,500 were first-time job-seekers. The number of underemployed persons was estimated at 65,200.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous General Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department. The survey for April - June 1995 covered a quarterly sample of some 12,700 households or 43,600 persons, selected scientifically to represent the land-based civilian non-institutional population in Hong Kong. Relevant data were obtained from the survey by interviewing each individual member aged 15 or over in the households sampled. In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the report on the General Household Survey which is published four times a year. The next report covering the quarter ending June 1995 will be available at the Government Publications Centre by the end of September at $32 a copy.

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Proactive approach adopted to help the unemployed

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The Government is monitoring the employment situation in Hong Kong closely and will continue to adopt a proactive approach to help the unemployed to find jobs.

This was said today (Thursday) by the Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Leo Kwan, when he gave an update on the work being carried out by the Government to tackle the issue.

Mr Kwan noted that mismatch between job vacancies and unemployed workers continued to exist.

However, he said: "Active steps are being taken to enhance retraining and job placement."

Since the launching of the Job Matching Programme in April, some 2,000 job seekers have registered with the Programme which offers personal service of in-depth interview, vocational counselling and job matching.

"The programme has successfully placed 693 registrants into employment. Together with 197 registrants who have declined job offers, they represent a success rate of 45 per cent," said Mr Kwan.

Mr Kwan pointed out that a wide range of promotional programmes, including recruitment seminars and briefings for employers' bodies and trade unions, had been and would be conducted to make the Job Matching Scheme better known and used.

The Labour Department has set up a special task force to offer outreaching placement service to workers affected by major retrenchment, he added..

At the same time, the Employees Retraining Board has taken measures to further enhance the placement rate of its graduates which include tailor-made retraining courses and extended on-the-job training schemes.

Mr Kwan said besides strengthening the employment services and retraining schemes, efforts were made to clamp down on illegal employment.

Between January and July, the Immigration Department had carried out a total of 1,076 raids, and 2,620 illegal workers and 580 employers were prosecuted. On conviction, the sentence will carry a criminal record.

Mr Kwan also pointed out that the review on the Importation of Labour General Scheme was going on and would be completed in October.

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Domestic export statistics

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In the second quarter of 1995, the four major industries of textiles; machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components; wearing apparel; and consumer electrical and electronic products together accounted for 68% of Hong Kong's total domestic exports of manufactured goods, according to statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

In the second quarter of 1995, domestic exports of machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components increased significantly, by 21% over a year earlier to $10.0 billion. Those of wearing apparel and textiles increased by 5% and 3% to $9.8 billion and $11.3 billion respectively. On the other hand, domestic exports of consumer electrical and electronic products decreased by 7% to 7.6 billion.

As for other industries, significant absolute increases in the value of domestic exports were also recorded for basic metals and fabricated metal products (+$294 million or +13%); chemicals and chemical products (+$263 million or +13%); paper and paper products (+$244 million or +13%); professional and optical equipment (+$237 million or +6%). For the industry of transport equipment and that of products of petroleum and coal, although the changes in absolute value were not as large, marked percentage increases of 410% and 82% were recorded respectively.

On the other hand, more notable absolute decreases in the value of domestic exports were recorded for non-metallic mineral products (-$50 million or -28%); and footwear industry (-$22 million or -51%).

The above statistics of domestic exports classified by industrial origin are derived by re-grouping the merchandise export items originally grouped under the external trade classification system according to the industries in which these merchandise items are normally produced. Transactions in gold and specie are excluded.

The industrial classification used is the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC). The HSIC is to be distinguished from the United Nations Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) used in the regular trade statistics reports. In comparison, the HSIC is more related to production processes whereas the SITC is more geared to end uses of products.

Caution should be taken when referring to these domestic export statistics classified by industrial origin. There may be several intermediate processing stages in the production of certain merchandise export items. In compiling the above statistics, the total value of such an item has however been wholly related to the industry in which the item is finally produced. The above domestic export statistics of a particular industry may include products which are secondary products by establishments of other industries.

Further details of merchandise domestic export statistics classified by industrial origin may be found in the attached table which is obtainable from the General Economic Surveys Section of the Census and Statistics Department (Tel 2805 6642). A table showing more detailed breakdowns of similar statistics for major manufacturing industries is also included in the report "Hong Kong External Trade, June 1995".

Domestic exports of manufactured goods classified by industrial origin for the second quarter of 1995

(Value in HK$ Million)

Industrial origin of the commodities exported	Merchandise domestic exports			
	1995 2nd qtr.	1994 2nd qtr.	Value change	% change
Food	686.4	613.7	+72.8	+11.9
Beverages	205.2	164.9	+40.3	+24.4
Tobacco manufactures	587.8	598.1	-10.4	-1.7
Textiles (including knitting)	11,305.1	10,933.1	+372.0	+3.4
Wearing apparel, except footwear	9,750.0	9,279.4	+470.6	+5.1
Leather and leather products, except footwear and wearing apparel	424.8	366.9	+57.8	+15.8
Footwear, except rubber, plastic and wooden footwear	21.8	44.2	-22.4	-50.8
Wood and cork products, furniture and fixtures	89.4	85.7	+3.7	+4.3
Paper and paper products, printing and publishing	2,157.5	1,914.1	+243.5	+12.7
Chemicals and chemical products	2,232.4	1,969.5	+262.9	+13.3
Products of petroleum and coal	6.6	3.6	+3.0	+81.8
Rubber products	22.3	27.2	-4.9	-18.1
Plastic products	1,281.9	1,255.4	+26.5	+2.1
Non-metallic mineral products, except products of petroleum and coal	128.3	178.3	-49.9	-28.0
Basic metals and fabricated metal products	2,606.0	2,312.3	+293.8	+12.7
Machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components	9,974.9	8,254.7	+1,720.2	+20.8
Consumer electrical and electronic products	7,577.9	8,144.2	-566.3	-7.0
Transport equipment	23.6	4.6	+19.0	+410.1
Professional and optical equipment	4,068.1	3,831.6	+236.5	+6.2
Other manufacturing industries	3,413.9	3,517.4	-103.5	-2.9
Total	56,563.8	53,499.0	+3,064.9	+5.7

Notes : 1. Individual entries of a column may not add up exactly to the corresponding total due to rounding. All percentage changes are calculated from unrounded figures.

2. The statistics presented in the above table are derived by re-grouping the merchandise export items (except gold and specie) under the external trade classification system according to the industries in which these items are normally produced. As from 1992, the Standard International Trade Classification Revision 3 (SITC R3) has been adopted in place of the Revision 2 (SITC R2) for the classification of trade statistics. The above statistics may not be strictly comparable with those published for earlier years due to the change in trade classification.

General Economic Surveys Section,
Census & Statistics Department,
Hong Kong.

Tel. : 2805 6642

August 1995

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Events for public on anniversary of Liberation of HK

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The following list of events to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of Hong Kong are opened to the general public:

August 22 - 10.15 am

Fleet Veterans' Parade
City Hall, Edinburgh Place

August 27 - 6.30 pm

Service of Thanksgiving
St John's Cathedral, Central

August 28 - 10.15 am

Liberation Parade
Cenotaph, Central

August 29 - 3.30 pm

Service of Remembrance
Stanley Cemetery

August 31 - 10 am

Service of Remembrance
Sai Wan Cemetery, Chai Wan

September 1 - 10.50 am

Service of Remembrance
Sham Shui Po Prisoner of War Memorial

September 2 - 3.30 pm

Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) March Past at Convention Centre, Wan Chai

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Second year of Use Less Plastic Bags Campaign

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The year-long Use Less Plastic Bags Campaign has attained a satisfactory result with majority of the participating retail outlets achieving a noticeable level of reduction in their use of plastic bags during 1994-95.

To commend the participants for their outstanding achievements in reducing plastic bag consumption and to launch the second year campaign, a prize-presentation cum launching ceremony will be held on Saturday (August 19) at the Dragon Centre.

Four awards will be presented to the participants at the ceremony, i.e. the 'best reduction' award, the 'distinctive retail outlet' award, the 'action plan' award as well as the 'best reduction idea' award.

To launch the second year campaign, publicity tapes featuring local celebrities' appeal to use fewer plastic bags will be produced for broadcast in the participating retail outlets.

A double decker bus carrying a catchy campaign slogan will also be used to attract more attention on the roads.

Attending the ceremony will be the acting Director of Environmental Protection, Mr Rob Law; the Vice-Chairman of Retail Management Association, Mr Philip Ma; and the Chief Executive of Consumer Council, Mrs Pamela Chan.

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Attention News Editors:

You are invited to cover the prize-presentation cum launching ceremony of the Use Less Plastic Bags Campaign 95-96 which will be held at 12.30 pm on Saturday (August 19) on Level One of Dragon Centre, 37K Yen Chow Street, Sham Shui Po.

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Release of S6 central allocation results

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Current school year Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) students who applied for S6 central allocation are reminded to check their application results at the five registration centres tomorrow (Friday).

The results will be displayed from 9 am tomorrow at the same centre where students have applied for central allocation.

A total of 2,704 S5 students with minimum S6 entry requirements have applied for the 237 places left over under the central allocation after the first four stages in the S6 admission procedure.

The spokesman said successful candidates should take their allocation slips to their chosen schools for registration before 3.30 pm tomorrow.

He reiterated that a place was allocated on the basis of the applicants' HKCEE results, choice of school, match of streams and subjects, and requirements set by the schools.

The spokesman said if students were still unable to secure a place after the completion of Stage V, they might be able to get one at the beginning of the new school year in September because some successful students might decide not to take up their places by that time.

A list of schools with S6 places will be displayed and updated weekly at all district education offices throughout September.

Students should apply to these schools directly but will be admitted at the schools' discretion.

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Attention News Editors:

Principal Education Officer, Mr Ng Kwok-chuen, will brief the media on the results of the S6 central allocation tomorrow (Friday).

Media representatives covering the briefing are requested to assemble at 3 pm tomorrow at the Information and Public Relations Section of Education Department, Room 1645 Wu Chung House, Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

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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.

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 will be announced biweekly during the bathing season to coincide with the frequency at which beach waters are usually sampled.

The grading is based on the most recent data obtained by EPD in its routine monitoring programme.

It gives an estimate on the risk of contracting some minor skin or gastrointestinal illnesses resulted from swimming at a beach with some degree of pollution.

The estimate is based on a large scale epidemiological study carried out in Hong Kong in the past bathing seasons.

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

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

Principal Environmental Protection Officer, Dr Daniel Lau, said: "Bathers should avoid swimming at such beaches for two to three days after a storm, or even longer if the weather remains overcast, shorter if there is strong sunshine."

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

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 four gazetted beaches, namely Anglers', Castle Peak, Old Cafeteria, and Rocky Bay, are closed to swimmers. The decision to close the beaches has been made by the Regional and Urban Councils on the basis of beach water quality monitoring data for 1994. The public are advised not to swim at these beaches. They are identified by an "X" in the following list.

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

Beach	Previous Grading (as at 3.8.95)	Present Grading (as at 17.8.95)
<u>Hong Kong South</u>		
Big Wave Bay	3	3
Chung Hom Kok	2	2
Deep Water Bay	3	3
Hairpin	2	3
Middle Bay	2	3
Repulse Bay	2	2
Shek O	2	3
South Bay	1	2
St Stephen's	2	2
Turtle Cove	2	3
Stanley Main	2	3
Rocky Bay	X	X
To Tei Wan*	2	2

Tuen Mun District

Golden Beach	3	3
Old Cafeteria	X	X
New Cafeteria	4	4
Castle Peak	X	X
Kadoorie	4	4
Butterfly	3	3

Sai Kung District

Campers	1	1
Clear Water Bay 1st Beach	2	3
Clear Water Bay 2nd Beach	2	2
Hap Mun Bay	1	1
Kiu Tsui	1	1
Pak Sha Chau	1	1
Silverstrand	3	3
Trio (Hebe Haven)	1	1

Islands District

Cheung Sha Upper	1	1
Cheung Sha Lower	3	4
Discovery Bay*	2	2
Hung Shing Yeh	1	2
Kwun Yam Wan	2	2
Tong Fuk	1	2
Lo So Shing	1	2
Pui O	2	3
Silvermine Bay	4	4
Tung Wan, Cheung Chau	2	1
Tung O*	2	2

Tsuen Wan District

Anglers'	X	X
Approach	4	4
Casam	4	4
Gemini	3	4
Hoi Mei Wan	4	3
Lido	4	4
Ting Kau	4	4
Tung Wan, Ma Wan	3	3

Note: "X" The beach has been closed for swimming purposes.
* Ungazetted beaches.

The following beaches have changed grading on this occasion:

Tung Wan of Cheung Chau from "2" to "1"; Hoi Mei Wan from "4" to "3"; South Bay, Hung Shing Yeh, Tong Fuk and Lo So Shing from "1" to "2"; Hairpin, Middle Bay, Shek O, Turtle Cove, Stanley Main, Clear Water Bay 1st Beach and Pui O from "2" to "3"; Cheung Sha Lower and Gemini from "3" to "4".

The changes are within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of these beaches. The general deterioration of beach water quality is probably due to the recent heavy rainfall which would have caused the pollutants in the beach hinterland to be flushed into the sea water.

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Attention News Editors:

For further enquiries, please contact Dr Daniel Lau on 2755 2230 or 2755 1667.

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Hotline for information on first-aid

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Starting from August 19, the Auxiliary Medical Services (AMS) will introduce a new service to celebrate its 45th anniversary. It will operate a 24-hour enquiry hotline to reinforce its pledge to "serve the community with humanitarian commitment."

The hotline - 2762 2033 - enables members of the public to obtain by phone the basic information about AMS including services provided, enrolment procedure, training and welfare.

More importantly, the service also provides the public with information about first-aid treatment for accident and emergency such as in cases of trauma and bleeding, asphyxia, unconsciousness, fracture, burns, scalds, head injuries, poisoning, shock and foreign bodies entering the human body.

Members of the public can choose to listen to the information in recorded verbal messages on the hotline or obtain the written information through a fax machine.

The enquiry hotline represents a major step taken by the AMS in serving the community as it provides a convenient channel for the public to learn about basic first aid and be prepared for times of emergency.

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Sham Shui Po Family Services Centre changes address

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The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (Thursday) announces that the Sham Shui Po Family Services Centre (FSC) will move to a new office as from Saturday (August 19).

The new office is located on the sixth floor of Sui Sing Building, 202-204 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Sham Shui Po.

Members of the public who have family-related problems may contact the Sham Shui Po FSC on telephone 2728 4228 or call the SWD's hotline 2343 2255, a spokesman for the Department said.

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600 students for English-speaking camp

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Six hundred Secondary One students will have undergone a five-day English immersion experience at the Chinese University of Hong Kong when the English-speaking Summer Camps close tomorrow (Friday).

The camps are the first of a three-year language fund project to improve English proficiency among local students.

They are jointly organised by the English Section of the Education Department's Advisory Inspectorate and the Department of English of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The Camps provide a relaxed atmosphere for students to communicate with each other and organise activities, including mini-drama and country-park visits, in English.

The organisers are hoping to run a similar camp next year.

End/Thursday, August 17, 1995

Post offices close on Liberation Day holidays

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The Postmaster General, Mr Mike Pagliari, announced today (Thursday) that all post offices will be closed during the forthcoming Liberation Day holidays from August 26 to 28.

A special mail delivery will be provided on August 26, but no delivery will be made on August 27 and 28.

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Fresh water cuts in Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po will be temporarily suspended from 9 pm on Sunday (August 20) to 9 am the following day to facilitate water mains connection.

The suspension will affect the area bounded by Cherry Street, Argyle Street, Nathan Road, Boundary Street, Lai Chi Kok Road, Tonkin Street and the seafront.

Meanwhile, fresh water supply to the area bounded by Tonkin Street, Lai Chi Kok Road, Boundary Street, Mong Kok Station of the Kowloon-Canton Railway, Cornwall Street, Nam Cheong Street, Lung Cheung Road, Ching Cheung Road, Lai Wan Road and the seafront will be weakened.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	1,394	0930	-78
Closing balance in the account	1,216	1000	-178
Change attributable to :		1100	-181
Money market activity	-178	1200	-178
LAF today	nil	1500	-178
		1600	-178

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 122.1 *+0.0* 17.8.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.78	2 years	2708	6.06	99.83	6.25
1 month	5.76	3 years	3807	6.16	98.95	6.66
3 months	5.76	5 years	5006	6.60	97.47	7.36
6 months	5.79	5 years	M501	7.90	100.98	7.79
12 months	5.87					

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - $16,147 million

Closed August 17, 1995

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