



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of Financial Secretary's remarks at airport

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The following is the transcript of the remarks made by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, before his departure for Kuala Lumpur to embark on a visit to Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand this (Tuesday) afternoon:

Question: Are you going to strike any deals for business?

Financial Secretary: No. I think the intention is not to do business as such but rather to explore business opportunity and to strengthen the spirit of partnership between members of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation. This is the whole purpose of the visit. It is a visit for the purpose of developing friendship rather than doing deals. That is not the purpose of my visit.

Question: It has been reported that seven property companies are acting as a cartel when they come to selling property in Hong Kong. Do you agree that it is happening and would the Government look into this?

Financial Secretary: I would be very amazed in an enormous market of Hong Kong and a free market spirit, it is impossible to form any cartel at all. Anyone forming any such a cartel is likely to lose a lot of money, in my view. But if there is any substance in that sort of movements, certainly we will look into it.

End

Sino-British Land Commission

* * * * *

The 32nd meeting of the Sino-British Land Commission was held on May 14, 1996. The two sides agreed that the Land Disposal Programme for the 1996/97 financial year should amount to 153.01 hectares.

The programme comprises 46.54 hectares for commercial, residential and industrial development; 42.64 hectares for Home Ownership Scheme, Sandwich Class Housing Scheme, Private Sector Participation Scheme, Hong Kong Housing Society development and Village Housing; 16.31 hectares for public utilities, educational, welfare, religious, recreational and other uses; and 47.52 hectares as special requirements.

The two sides also agreed to set aside five hectares of land in a Supplementary Land Disposal Programme.

End

Views invited on UN treaty

* * * * *

The Government has invited the views of the Legislative Council, non-government organisations and other interested parties on the 14th periodic report on Hong Kong under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

In March this year, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the 13th periodic report on Hong Kong under the ICERD. In its concluding observations, the committee recommended that the 14th periodic report, due this year, be submitted as an updating report. The United Kingdom Government aims to submit the report to the United Nations by August. The Hong Kong Government's contribution will form part of that report.

In 1994, the Government undertook that - before submitting to the UK Government its contributions to the latter's reports under the various human rights treaties - it would give the Legislative Council, non-government organisations and other interested parties a formal opportunity to express their views on the state of implementation of each particular treaty in Hong Kong.

Accordingly, letters were issued to the Legislative Council Secretariat today (Tuesday), inviting views in respect of the 14th report, a government spokesman said.

"To enable the Government to take into account views expressed during the drafting of its contribution to the UK Government's report and to meet the deadline for submission to the United Nations for the hearing in March 1997, comments will need to reach the Home Affairs Branch by June 14.

"To facilitate comments, the Government has prepared an outline of topics which it intends to include in the draft report. The outline also includes an annex containing the committee's recommendations in respect of Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

Non-government organisations or individuals who would like to express their views can write to the Secretary for Home Affairs before June 14.

Copies of the outline of the draft report can be obtained from the Home Affairs Branch, 31st floor, Southorn Centre, Wan Chai on request and are also available at the Marketing Office of the Information Services Department, 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 176-192 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai.

End

Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance to be amended

* * * * *

The Governor-in-Council has approved a bill to amend the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance with a view to eliminating several deficiencies in the ordinance, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, said today (Tuesday).

Addressing a luncheon of the Lions Club of South Kowloon, Hong Kong, Mr Suen said the bill would be introduced into the Legislative Council later this month.

The Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance, which was enacted in May 1991 and came into effect in September the same year, provides for a licensing scheme to regulate hotels, guesthouses and similar accommodations to ensure that they comply with the requirements on fire and building safety, health and hygiene.

In the process of implementing the licensing scheme by the Licensing Authority (LA) of the Home Affairs Department, several deficiencies in the ordinance have been identified.

"A major weakness relates to the definition of 'hotel' and 'guesthouse', which has unintentionally allowed establishments offering accommodation only to certain categories of persons, such as those of a particular nationality or clients of one tourist agency, to operate outside the ambit of the ordinance," Mr Suen said.

Furthermore, he added, a potential legal loophole in the definition concerning the term "any person presenting himself" had arisen following an earlier High Court judgement which ruled that hotels which accepted guests with prior reservations were not within the purview of the ordinance.

To prevent the loopholes from undermining the integrity of the licensing scheme, Mr Suen said, amendments to the definition of "hotel" and "guesthouse" had been proposed so that the definition would include establishments which offered accommodation to limited categories of persons, and that a person might present himself in person or through an agent or a representative, with or without prior booking.

"There are also inconsistencies in the ordinance relating to closure order and cessation of use of the premises as a hotel or guesthouse," Mr Suen added.

Under the ordinance, premises closed by order may not be re-entered by a contractor to carry out remedial works.

"This is quite unsatisfactory in that if remedial works cannot be carried out following closure, there will be no way to improve and reopen the premises for use as a hotel or guesthouse," he noted.

In this connection, it is proposed that a person authorised in writing by the Secretary for Home Affairs may enter into a hotel or guesthouse to execute remedial works while a closure order is in force.

"To streamline the operation of the licensing scheme by LA, a new provision will also be included to specify the time limit for prosecution of offences. Under the Magistrates Ordinance, LA is barred from initiating prosecution if an offence has been committed more than six months before the authority issues the summons.

"The new provision specifies that the time bar for prosecution of offences shall be either six months of the commission of the offence or six months of the offence being discovered by or coming to the notice of LA, whichever is the later," Mr Suen said.

On the issue of notices for remedial works and in relation to closure order, Mr Suen said the Government had proposed that they could be served by posting them in a conspicuous part of the premises.

This would assist operationally as serving of these notices to the responsible persons by registered post or in person under the ordinance would be difficult when the whereabouts or identity of the persons were not known.

In respect of licensing, the Administration also recommended that LA be empowered to issue and renew hotel and guesthouse licences valid for up to three years in order to obviate the need for annual licence renewal.

"The LA's approval of three-year licences will be considered on a case by case basis. In principle, such approval will be granted only to establishments that have consistently adhered to the fire and building safety standards and would not abuse the licensing control," Mr Suen added.

End

Bill to help tackle problem of illegal employment

* * * * *

The Government will propose amendment to the Immigration Ordinance in order to strengthen its hands to take enforcement actions against illegal employment, a government spokesman said today (Tuesday).

The Immigration (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 1996, to be gazetted on Friday (May 17), will remove an obstacle which has been hindering the successful prosecution of employers under section 17I of the Immigration Ordinance for employing non-permanent identity card holders who are forbidden to take up unapproved employment.

The bill proposes to require employers to check the travel documents of job seekers who do not hold a Hong Kong permanent identity card before entering into any contract of employment.

"If employers are not careful and employ non-permanent identity card holders on employment status for any unapproved full-time or part-time employment, they will commit the offence of employing a person not lawfully employable, which carries a fine of \$350,000 and three years' imprisonment," the spokesman explained.

"The proposed amendments should create a greater deterrent effect on employers in employing illegal workers and will help control the illegal employment problem at source," he said.

At present, one of the prime sources of abuse is contract workers such as foreign domestic helpers and imported workers under the Importation of Labour Schemes.

To help employers identify them, the Immigration Department will soon introduce a bilingual and easy-to-read immigration stamp on travel documents of these contract workers.

"The new stamp will, in addition to English, state in Chinese that the holder of the travel document is only allowed to work for a specific employer, under a specific contract, and that change of employer is not permitted," the spokesman said.

Employers can also watch out for W-prefixed identity cards when determining whether job seekers are contract workers.

"These identity cards are issued to foreign domestic helpers and imported workers," the spokesman said.

"If employers have doubts on whether a person is lawfully employable or not, they should make enquiries through the Immigration Department investigation telephone hotline 2824 1551 or fax 2824 1166."

The bill is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council on May 29.

End

Governor presents insignia and commendations to 114

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, presented insignia and commendations to 114 people at a ceremony at Government House this (Tuesday) evening.

Following is the list of recipients:

CBE

Mr Michael Sze Cho-cheung

Professor Rosie Margaret Young

OBE

Mr Victor Lo Chung-wing

Mr Ng Yee-yum

Mr Pang Chun-hoi

Professor Yeung Yue-man

MBE

Mr Cham Yick-kai

Mr Chan Pui-tin

Mr Chiu Chung-man

Mrs Choi Chen Po-sum

Mr Vincent Chow Wing-shing

Mr Foo Kam-chan

Mr Hsu Show-hoo

Mr Lam Yick-man

Mr Lee Chun-wan

Dr Lee Kin-hung

Mr Stephen Lee Siu-hoe

Mr Leung Wah-fong

Mr Leung Wai-ming

Mr Lim Yew-guan

Mr Lui Yau-lok

Mr Alexander Ng Wai-tak

The Reverend Sik Chi-wai

Mrs Tang Wat Yin-ping, Diana

Mr Wan Yiu-sing

Mrs Ophelia Wong Chow Kwun-wai

Mr Yu Hon-ping

QPM

Mr Matthew Vincent Walsh

Mr Yip Kwok-keung

QFSM

Mr Tang Siu

ISM

Mr Chung Kau

Mr Lee Fook-lam

Mr Luk Long-suen

Mr Wong Tong

CPM

Mr David Pitt

Mr Richard Ian Tyzzer

Mr Lau Wai-ming

Mr Lee Kam-chung

Mr Stephen Gowan Chandler

Mr Yeung Ying-wai

Mr Blaine Stewart Hoggard

Mr Anthony Ku Kin-wa

Mr James Hogg Bruce

Mr David William Holloway

Mr Humayun Abdul Razack

Mr James Wong Ka-sing

Mr Lo Ping-chuen

Mr Kan Wai-hung

Mr Ho Wing-huen

Mr Leung Kwok-keung

Mr Leung Chun-keung

Mr Lau King

Mr Chu Chung-ming

Mr Chan Siu-fat

Mr Chu Yu-pang

Mr Chung Kin-hong

Mr Chu Kut-chuen

The Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Mr Cham Wui-wai

Mr Chan Chi-man

Badge of Honour

Miss Bow Sui-may

Ms Chai Po-wa

Mr Chan Joe-chak

Brother Joseph Cheung Koon-wing

Mrs Lai Wei Kit-lin

Miss Robyn Claire Lamsam

Mr Law Kam-fai

Mr Lee Kam-chung

Mr Lee Po-kee

Miss Li Cho-wah

Mr Li Hak-bun

Miss Liu Sin-ling

Mrs Luk Chiu Kwan-hung

Mr Luk Wai-kong

Miss Siu Yuen-sheung

Miss So Yan-lap

Mr Johnny Wan Yee-chong

Mr Wong Kam-chi

Governor's Commendations

Mr Ian Robert Mackness

Mr Chu Ling-ming

Mr Ng Chi-sing

Mr Lam Chak-fung

Mr Tong Koon-ngai

Mr Wong Chi-kong

Mr Poon For-sen

Governor's Commendations for Community Service

Mr Chan Chun-kwan

Mr Chan Kit-chu

Ms Chan Lai-kuen

Mr Chan Ngai

Mr Cheng Chun-wo

Mr Cheng Kin-hung

Mr Ching Man-tai

Ms Fung Chou-ming

Mr Hong Chi-keung

Mr Hui Chung-yin

Mr Kan Yuk-chiu

Mr Lam Man-fai

Ms Lam Miu-yee

Ms Lam Pui-tak

Mr Leung Ka-wai

Mr Lo Wai-keung

Mr Mok Hay-man

The Honourable Mok Ying-fan

Ms Ng Wai-fun

Mr Shun Lok-nin

Mr Tang Sai-choi

Mr Wong Ching-chi

Mrs Wong Lau Kam-yin

Mr Wong Wing-piu

Mr Wu Siu-wai

Ms Yau Pik-mui

Mr Yeung Hoi-keung

Mr Yip Chung-ling

Mrs Yuen Chan Po-hing

Mrs Yuen Lai Lai-bing

End

Management reform in public cargo working areas

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The Marine Department plans to introduce reform in the management of public cargo working areas (PCWAs) to improve productivity at these facilities and to remove the undesirable practices associated with the existing mode of operation.

Announcing the reform proposals, the Assistant Director of Marine (Planning and Local Services), Mr Raymond Tang, said today (Tuesday) the main feature of the management reform centred around a tender system.

"Under the new system, berthing spaces will be leased to operators by tender instead of the current practice of allocating the berthing spaces on a first-come-first-served basis," Mr Tang said.

"All berthing spaces except those currently designated as 'fast working berths' will be leased to existing operators through a restricted tender system. The 'fast working berths' which is about seven per cent of the total number of all the berthing spaces will be leased by open tender to allow new comers to make use of these facilities.

"Only existing operators are allowed to bid in the restricted tender to ensure that none of them will be driven out of business because of the new measures," Mr Tang stressed.

Another built-in feature to protect the interests of current operators is that eligible bidders in the restricted tender are allowed to bid the same number of berths as they are currently occupying.

"This additional safeguard will give all existing operators a fair chance to take part in the allocation exercise through tender and also ensure that no single operator will be able to dominate a large number of berthing spaces," Mr Tang said.

A third distinguishing feature is to allow small operators to group together to bid for one berthing space.

"This will enable small operators who do not have sufficient cargo volume to justify leasing a berth on their own to merge with other small operators to fully utilise a berth," Mr Tang said.

Mr Tang said the new proposals would meet the operational needs of the operators and provide them with a security of tenure of berths and they can continue their business under a fair, open and economically viable environment.

He pointed out that the Marine Department's proposals were drawn in line with the recommendations of the Director of Audit and the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislative Council in their studies into the management of the PCWAs.

The new system will remove the known unfair practices associated with the current system. These unfair practices are:

- monopolisation of berths by habitual users, thus preventing a fair access to other operators;
- subletting of berths by unlawful means at the expense of government revenue;
- low productivity, and
- poor financial return and heavy public subsidy to commercial operators in the PCWAs.

Mr Tang noted that the Marine Department, the Police, the ICAC and the Director of Audit as well as the consultants commissioned by the Marine Department identified the first-come-first-served system together with the low berthing fee structure were the roots to all these problems.

The current charges at \$60 per day for an eight-metre unit of seafrontage is grossly below the market value which may be 40 times more than the government charges in some cases.

"This low rate leads to high profit margins which obviously the operators will always try to maintain," Mr Tang said.

A common practice to secure a space is to use an idle barge to occupy a berth. Under the first-come-first-served principle, such a practice is acceptable but this common practice effectively reduces the availability of berthing spaces for genuine users and cuts down productivity of the PCWAs.

"As a result it leads to a significant loss of cargo throughput capacity in the PCWAs," he said, adding that average cargo throughput in the PCWAs is less than one-third of that in similar private terminals.

The annual cargo throughput in the seafront of the PCWAs in 1994 was 1,570 tonnes each metre; the corresponding figures in short-term tenancy sites and mid-stream sites in 1994 was 5,000 and 7,500 respectively.

"According to police reports the existing system is easily subject to triad influence and in some cases the operators may resort to strong arm tactics to monopolise the berthing spaces," Mr Tang said.

"Those operators who are now monopolising the popular berthing spaces at a fraction of the market price will object strongly to the our proposals.

"The change will likely generate strong and active opposition from existing operators who will try every possible means to reject the new measures.

"Operators at the PCWAs are not different from their counterparts using the cargo handling facilities at container terminals, mid-stream and short-term tenancy sites."

"There is no reason that their commercial operation should entitle to public subsidy," Mr Tang stressed.

"Except those with vested interest, the sensible and rational members of the general public will agree and support the Government to maximise productivity at the PCWAs, yielding economic gains to the genuine operators and in turn to the society as a whole."

The tender system enables genuine operators to reduce the unnecessary costs such as paying subletting fees and leaving a barge idle for the purpose of occupying a berthing space.

The new reform offers an opportunity for the Government to redirect its resources to justified areas and at the same time to eliminate the unnecessary costs for the operators.

Nine PCWAs are under the management of the Marine Department and they are situated at Tsuen Wan, Rambler Channel, Kwun Tong, Yau Ma Tei, Cha Kwo Ling, Wan Chai, Western, Sheung Wan and Chai Wan.

The current timetable for the reform is that tenders will be invited this summer and the first tender is expected to be awarded before the end of the year.

End

118 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight

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A group of 118 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam today (Tuesday) on the 35th flight under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP).

All of the returnees, comprising 49 men, 27 women, 16 boys and 26 girls, are from North Vietnam.

The majority of them arrived in Hong Kong in 1988 and 1989 with the remaining in 1991 and 1995.

The group brought to 2,640 the total number repatriated on ORP flights since November 1991.

End

Monitors' report submitted to Chief Secretary

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The monitors appointed to observe the Orderly Repatriation Programme operation this (Tuesday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The monitors were Mr Jim Monan from Oxfam and Ms Harriet Sewell from Christian Action.

End

New AIDS education centre to be set up

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A series of exhibitions will be organised by the Department of Health in the coming weeks to introduce to the public a new education centre on AIDS scheduled to be opened later this year and to enhance the community's awareness of the disease.

The centre, called the Red Ribbon Centre, is a new project developed by the Department of Health under the sponsorship of the AIDS Trust Fund.

It will be located on the second floor of the Wang Tau Hom Jockey Club Clinic, 200 Junction Road, Kowloon and will become operational in the third quarter this year.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said: "'Red Ribbon' is the international symbol for concern about HIV/AIDS and people living with the disease."

"The main objectives of the centre are to promote community participation in AIDS education and research; and to facilitate the development of social, behavioural and epidemiological research on HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong and the region."

"It also aims to enhance the development of quality education programmes; and to provide an avenue for local and international collaboration in the fight against HIV/AIDS," the spokesman added.

The centre, which is not a treatment centre, will have an information centre, an exhibition area, a library and a resource unit which provides support to small non-governmental organisations working on AIDS.

Audio-visual and desktop publishing facilities will also be available.

The AIDS Unit of the Department of Health has organised three exhibitions to publicise the setting up of the centre. The exhibitions will be open to the public from 9 am to 6 pm and details of the venues and dates are as follows -

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>
May 17 - 19 (Friday to Sunday)	Second floor, Lok Fu Shopping Centre (Phase I), Wong Tai Sin
June 3 - 5 (Monday to Wednesday)	Second floor, Wong Tai Sin Shopping Centre, Wong Tai Sin
June 26 - 28 (Wednesday to Friday)	Wo Che Shopping Centre, Sha Tin

General information on AIDS, ways of transmission and other educational material will also be displayed.

Members of the public are welcome to visit the exhibitions. Admission is free.

End

Seminar on slope safety for schools

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Heads of schools which might be affected by dangerous slopes have been invited to participate in a seminar on slope safety for schools tomorrow (Wednesday).

A Senior Education Officer, Ms Ip Ling-bik, said: "This is the first of a series of seminars for management of the school to have background information and general technical advice on slope safety."

Participants will learn about the need for slope maintenance, current practice, the Government's Slope Maintenance Publicity Campaign, maintenance responsibility of slopes and legal liability. They will also be briefed on the Layman's Guide to Slope Maintenance.

Speakers from the Civil Engineering Department will answer questions raised by participants.

The seminar will be held at the seminar room, ground floor, Civil Engineering Building, 101 Princess Margaret Road, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon at 2.30 pm.

End

Hong Kong Property Review 1996 published

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The Rating and Valuation Department has now published the Hong Kong Property Review 1996.

This bilingual publication presents a comprehensive summary of the Hong Kong property market in 1995 in terms of stock, completions, take-up, vacancy, rents and prices for the main property sectors. Forecasts of completions in 1996 and 1997 are also included.

The Hong Kong Property Review 1996, priced at \$150 a copy, is available for sale from today (Tuesday) at the Government Publications Sales Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Soft copies, in Microsoft Word for Windows 6.0 and Chinese Word for Windows 6.0, are also available at the same price from the Rating and Valuation Department. Orders for soft copies should be made to Mrs Claudia Au-Yeung on 2805 7942 or Mr Leung Kuen-cheuk on 2805 7915.

Other enquiries concerning this publication should be directed to the department's Technical Secretary (Information), Miss Christina Yim, on 2805 7614.

End

Sha Tin students to pull helicopter for charity

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The following is issued on behalf of the Joint Service Public Relations Staff:

Students from Sha Tin College will work up a sweat tomorrow (Wednesday) afternoon when they attempt to pull a 10,000-pound Royal Air Force Wessex helicopter in aid of charity.

Lining up on the apron at 28 (AC) Squadron in the New Territories will be 25 students who have all been sponsored to pull the Wessex 200 metres to raise money for the Christina Noble Children's Foundation, a charity which cares for street children in Vietnam.

Adding some extra poundage to the "pull" will be Senior Royal Air Force Officer (Hong Kong), Wing Commander Barrie Simmonds, who will monitor the event from the comfort of the Wessex's cockpit.

Christina Noble established her foundation in 1991 and all proceeds raised from tomorrow's sponsored event will go towards providing food, shelter, medical care and education for Vietnam's destitute street children. Here in Hong Kong the foundation is run by students at Sha Tin College who work hard all year round to raise money for the main branch in Vietnam.

28(AC) Squadron, based at Sek Kong, is equipped with six Wessex helicopters (four operational plus two in reserve). All squadron aircraft were built in 1963/64 and their tasks in Hong Kong include trooping, fast roping, transporting underslung loads, air to ground firing and search and rescue operations. The Wessex is 65 feet 10 inches in length and 14 feet five inches in height and has a rotor diameter of 56 feet. Its maximum range without refuelling is 250 miles and it carries a maximum load of 16 troops or 3,000 pounds.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date	14 May 1996	14 May 1996
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q620	Y689
Issue date	15 May 1996	15 May 1996
Maturity date	14 Aug 1996	14 May 1997
Coupon	-	-
Amount applied	HK\$5,840 MN	HK\$2,100 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN	HK\$500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.10 PCT	5.54 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.11 PCT	5.55 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 43 PCT	About 20 PCT
Average tender yield	5.12 PCT	5.56 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 20 May 1996

Tender date	21 May 1996	21 May 1996
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q621	H665
Issue date	22 May 1996	22 May 1996
Maturity date	21 Aug 1996	20 Nov 1996
Tenor	91 days	182 days

Amount on offer HK\$1500+300 MN HK\$800+160 MN

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	2,302	0930	-306
Closing balance in the account	2,022	1000	-306
Change attributable to :		1100	-306
Money market activity	-305	1200	-305
LAF today	+25	1500	-305
		1600	-305

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.6 *-0.1* 14.5.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills			EF notes			
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.78	2 years	2805	6.30	100.42	6.17
1 month	4.91	3 years	3904	6.30	99.52	6.58
3 months	5.10	5 years	5103	6.75	98.47	7.25
6 months	5.23	7 years	7302	6.02	91.99	7.69
12 months	5.52	5 years	M502	7.30	99.88	7.47

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$16,348 million

Closed May 14, 1996

End