



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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MPF Bill to be introduced to LegCo

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In response to press enquiries, a Government spokesman confirmed today (Tuesday) that the Executive Council had given approval for the introduction of mandatory provident fund schemes legislation into the Legislative Council.

"There are some technical details of the bill to be finalised. The bill will be gazetted as soon as we are ready to do so. It remains our intention to enact the primary legislation before the end of the current legislative session in July this year," the spokesman said.

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First deck section lifted for Kap Shui Mun Bridge

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Construction of the Kap Shui Mun Bridge has moved to a significant new phase with the start of the erection of the main span deck.

The first deck section which will form the main span of the Kap Shui Mun Bridge was successfully lifted into position today (Tuesday).

"We are very pleased that the commencement of the deck erection work for the bridge's main span has been a very smooth operation," the Project Director of the Lantau Fixed Crossing Project Management Office of the Highways Department, Mr K C Yeung.

The bridge's main span will be formed by 39 prefabricated sections and will rise 45 metres above the water.

The lifting operation started at 7.00 am today. The section, a 500 tonne composite steel and concrete structure, was lowered onto a barge in a wet dock at Lantau.

At about 8.30 am, the barge was towed to the Kap Shui Mun Channel between Ma Wan and Lantau by two tug boats and then anchored to the seabed at about 10.00 am.

"At 12.30 pm, the first deck section was successfully lifted into position using a specially made crane," said Mr Yeung.

The main span will be erected section by section. Each section will be bolted to the next and held in position by a pair of cables connected to the upper section of the bridge tower. The section will be balanced by fixing a second pair of cables to the side span on the other side of the tower.

Mr Yeung said the construction of the main span will take about 11 months. During this period the Kap Shui Mun Channel will be closed for one day a week to facilitate the works. Marine traffic will be diverted to the Ma Wan Channel.

"The Highways Department is liaising closely with the contractor, the Marine Department and the Marine Police to minimise the effect on marine traffic," he said.

Over half of the construction work on the Kap Shui Mun Bridge has been completed and the bridge is on schedule for completion in May 1997, said Mr Yeung.

"When completed, the Kap Shui Mun Bridge will be 820 metres long with a cable-stayed main span stretching 430 metres across the channel between Lantau and Ma Wan.

"It will be Hong Kong's first cable-stayed road bridge as well as the world's longest span cable-stayed bridge carrying both road and rail traffic," he said.

The Kap Shui Mun Bridge and the viaduct on Ma Wan are being built by the Kumagai-Maeda-Yokogawa-Hitachi Joint Venture under a \$1.64 billion design and construct contract awarded by the Highways Department in November 1992.

Together with the 2.2 kilometre long Tsing Ma suspension bridge, it will form part of the Lantau Fixed Crossing on the 34 kilometre long highway network of the Airport Core Programme linking the new airport at Chek Lap Kok and Tung Chung new town to Kowloon and Hong Kong.

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Assessment of "sovereign risk"

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The Government can play a pivotal role in ensuring a proper understanding of issues that would affect the assessment of the "sovereign risk", Secretary for Financial Services, Mr Michael Cartland, said this (Tuesday) morning.

Speaking at the Conference on Credit Ratings and Risk Assessment in Asia's Emerging Markets, Mr Cartland said the first step was to provide the necessary primary information, such as trade and economic data, budgetary and fiscal position.

"As regards qualitative assessments, such as the assessment of political risk and economic outlook, we always ensure frank and open dialogue with the rating agencies, and explain as far as we can issues of concern to them," he said.

Mr Cartland said issues which might be of concern to the rating agencies would inevitably vary among different "sovereigns".

However, he said, the key to a fair and appropriate assessment must be transparency.

"In Hong Kong, for instance, our financial and economic strength is seldom in question.

"But we have always found it useful to explain to the rating agencies matters such as our philosophy of fiscal prudence, the importance we attach to maintaining exchange rate stability as our monetary policy objective, transitional issues, such as the provisions of the Joint Declaration, an international agreement binding on both the UK and Chinese governments, and the Basic Law, enacted by China to give effect to the 'one country, two systems' concept and the high degree of autonomy that the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will enjoy in its commercial, financial, economic and fiscal affairs," he said.

He added that it was not just a question of pointing out what the formal, agreed arrangements would be for 1997.

"Rather it's what lies behind the formalities that is usually missed - that there will in fact be continuity - continuity of the way of life, continuity in the Government, continuity in the principles, practices and systems under which Hong Kong has lived and prospered.

"The nearer we get to 1997 the more apparent it becomes that the foundations for the future of Hong Kong are in place, that the economy continues to perform well and that the markets are not going into terminal decline.

"In short, that 'one country, two systems' can and should mean: one country, two ratings, separate ratings to reflect the different strengths and characteristics of the two separate economies of Hong Kong and China," he said.

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Reservoir of fully trained marine rescue co-ordinators

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Keeping a reservoir of maritime search and rescue mission co-ordinators (SMC) available for the Marine Department's Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) is a proactive approach to keep up the standards of co-ordinating search and rescue operations in Hong Kong waters and the 500,000 square miles of the South China Sea over which Hong Kong has SAR responsibility.

This was stated by the Director of Marine, Mr Ian Dale, today (Tuesday) when he presented certificates to Marine Department, Royal Hong Kong Police Force and Government Flying Service officers who have successfully completed the Maritime Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinator Course run by the Marine Department.

Noting that Hong Kong has a well established search and rescue system, Mr Dale said: " We have done exceptionally well in search and rescue operations over the past few years. We are considered as one of the best in the world."

"More importantly, the people who are handling search and rescue operations are regarded as among the best world-wide. We want to keep this up."

Mr Dale said to maintain a reserve of maritime search and rescue mission co-ordinators for the MRCC through training courses could ensure the high standards of search and rescue operations.

The 10 certificate recipients on the Maritime Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinator Course including four Marine Officers, four officers of the Marine Police, and a fixed wing aircraft pilot and a helicopter pilot of the Government Flying Service, attended the two-week course.

The course is based upon the United States Coast Guard Search and Rescue System adapted to the environment in Hong Kong.

The programme includes Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre procedures, and search and rescue facilities with special emphasis on search planning techniques.

Besides keeping a pool of trained marine officers for the MRCC, officers of the Marine Department, Marine Police, Government Flying Service and Government departments on the course will find the course useful as an additional tool in their professional activities.

The Marine Department's MRCC is responsible for search and rescue co-ordination for the area of the South China Sea north of latitude 10 degrees north and west of longitude 120 degrees east, excluding the immediate coastal waters of neighbouring states.

The MRCC has reached its current level of efficiency following its establishment, as a result of the Osprey disaster in 1983.

The MRCC had full communications capability for the co-ordination of search and rescue missions for ships in difficulties within about 1,300 kilometres of Hong Kong and in handling of vessel emergencies within Hong Kong waters.

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Appointment of Director of Civil Engineering

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The Government announced today (Tuesday) that Mr Lam Moon-tim, Bernard, Project Manager in the New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office (NAPCO) has been selected to succeed Dr Edward Brand as Director of Civil Engineering.

Making the announcement, the Secretary for Works, Mr James Blake, explained that Dr Brand's overseas agreement was due to expire and that his position had therefore been opened up to competition among senior officers in the Lands and Works Groups of departments under new arrangements introduced for agreement officers in December 1994. Mr Lam was selected.

"Dr Brand has made a tremendous contribution during his 17 years in the civil service," Mr Blake said, commenting on the results.

"He has done a great deal to develop Government's expertise in geotechnical and slope safety matters. We shall be sorry to see him go.

"Bernard Lam during his 27 years career with the Hong Kong Government has gained wide experience of professional and community related affairs.

"Furthermore, his current project manager role in NAPCO dealing with the airport and related infrastructure works has given Mr Lam valuable exposure to managing a complex programme with a difficult political dimension.

"We believe he is the right man to lead the Civil Engineering Department through the transition."

Dr Brand will proceed on end-of-agreement leave in early 1996, and Mr Lam will take over the post of Director of Civil Engineering.

Following are biographical notes of the two officers:

Dr E W Brand, JP

Aged 56. Dr Brand joined the Hong Kong Civil Service as a Government Geotechnical Engineer in May 1978. He was promoted to Principal Government Geotechnical Engineer in September 1979 and to Director of Civil Engineering in March 1990. On completion of his current agreement, Dr Brand will have completed 18 years of service with the Hong Kong Government.

Mr Lam Moon-tim, Bernard, JP

Aged 56. Mr Lam joined the Hong Kong Civil Service as an Assistant Engineer in November 1968. He was promoted to Government Geotechnical Engineer in September 1984 and to Principal Government Geotechnical Engineer in January 1992 when he was serving as a Project Manager in the Territory Development Department. He has served as Project Manager of the New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office since February 1994.

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Career opportunities for social work graduates

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University graduates with the requisite skills in social work and the aspiration to serve the community are urged to consider joining the Social Welfare Department (SWD) or the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as Assistant Social Work Officers (ASWOs).

The appeal was made by the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Ian Strachan, when he delivered a talk on career opportunities for university graduates in the social welfare fields at the Appointments Board Meeting of the Chinese University of Hong Kong today (Tuesday).

Three years ago, the SWD recruited 96 university graduates as ASWOs. Last year the figure doubled to 190.

Mr Strachan said about 80 per cent of the new recruits would take part in front-line activities such as out-reaching to the needy, or providing counselling to families with problems and the other 20 per cent would take on supervisory or administrative duties, like supervising people under probation orders.

"A social worker's responsibilities are indeed multi-faceted. Areas of service include youth, family welfare, rehabilitation, offenders/drug abuse, elderly, community development, central administration, medical social work service and social work training.

"For NGOs, a majority of social work personnel work in areas of youth, family welfare and rehabilitation. For the SWD, family welfare accounts for the largest share, followed by offenders/drug abusers and medical social service.

"As the department is committed to expanding family welfare services and to reducing our caseloads, a significant number of graduates recruited recently have been posted to our Family Service Centres as caseworkers," he said.

The day-to-day duties of a Family Services Centre caseworker include providing counselling service to families and individuals with relationship or behavioural problems; providing casework service to those the SWD has statutory responsibilities, such as abandoned children and wards of the Director of Social Welfare; conducting social investigation on complicated cases and working with socially and physically handicapped clients with personality or social problems.

Turning to a graduate posting as a Probation Officer for the Magistracies and Juvenile Court, Mr Strachan said one of his major responsibilities was to conduct social enquiries on an offender's character and background as directed by court.

"This includes interviewing the offender, the family, relatives, teachers, employers and other persons, making home visits and visiting the offender's place of work to learn about the offender; diagnosing the social and psychological causes of crime and making recommendations to help the court decide on the sentences.

"For offenders placed on probation, the probation officers would supervise the cases, offer guidance, advice and assistance to help them become responsible citizens," he said.

Mr Strachan said an ASWO posted as a Medical Social Worker would investigate the patient's social situation; identify, in consultation with others involved, the extent to which social and environmental pressures had contributed to the observed behaviour; use professional skills to help resolve any social relationship or environmental difficulties which would adversely affect the patient's mental health; provide effective counselling and guidance; prepare case recordings and social reports and attend case conferences.

Noting that the social welfare field was expanding very rapidly, Mr Strachan said the total expenditure of the SWD in 1995/96 would amount to \$12 billion, doubling from \$6 billion in 1991-92.

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New postal fees effective on June 1

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The Postmaster General, Mr Mike Pagliari, reminded the public today (Tuesday) that new postal fees and charges would come into effect on Thursday (June 1).

The basic rate for local letters will be increased from \$1.00 to \$1.20.

For local printed papers, the postage will be revised from 90 cents to \$1.10 for items which can be processed by the Mechanised Letter Sorting System and to \$1.20 for items which cannot.

The basic surface letter and printed paper rates to China, Taiwan and Macau will be \$1.50 and \$1.30 respectively, while those to other countries will be \$2.30 and \$2.10 respectively.

The minimum airmail rates for Zone 1 and Zone 2 will be \$2.10 and \$2.60 respectively. Aerogrammes will cost \$2.10 each.

Registration fee will be \$13.00. Details of other revised postal charges can be obtained at branch post offices or by telephoning the Post Office Enquiry Bureau on tel 2921 2222.

Mr Pagliari said the revision aimed to restore the real value of postage charges which had not been increased since the last postage rate adjustment in November 1993.

The overall weighted average increase for the postage rates was 14.7 per cent which was in line with the inflation for the past one-and-a-half years.

The postage rates revision would have minimal effect on inflation given that postage constituted only a small proportion of overall consumer expenditure.

Mr Pagliari further announced that to tie in with the postage revision, three new types of stamp booklets would be available on sale at all 7-Eleven Convenience Stores throughout the territory as from Thursday (June 1).

The stamp booklets, each containing 10 pieces of \$1.2, \$2.1 or \$2.6 definitive stamps, are sold at \$12, \$21 and \$26 respectively.

The stamps represent the most widely used denominations for the posting of local and airmail letters at the initial weight steps of 30 grammes and 10 grammes respectively when the revised postage rates come into effect on Thursday.

The arrangement for selling stamp booklets at 7-Eleven Convenience Stores has been introduced since December 1993 and is part of the service improvement initiatives taken by the Post Office.

It provides much greater convenience to the public as there are about 300 additional outlets for them to purchase stamps at any hour of the day.

A hand-back service will be provided at all post offices on June 1 to all official and privately made covers bearing the first day of issue indication.

Labour productivity of the manufacturing sector in HK 82-92

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A feature article entitled "Labour Productivity of the Manufacturing Sector in Hong Kong, 1982-92" is published in the May 1995 issue of the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics (HKMDS).

The labour productivity index (LPI) is compiled by relating an output index to an index of labour input.

The LPI for an industry in a year therefore reflects change in output of that industry over the base year, after discounting the effect of different amounts of labour input in the two periods. From another angle, it reflects the change in output per unit labour input.

A feature article addressing this subject was published in the July 1994 issue of the HKMDS. The present article presents a revised series of labour productivity index, expressed in the form of "three-year centred moving averages", from 1982 to 1992.

Further discussion of the relevant factors affecting the underlying trends of labour productivity is also included.

The May 1995 issue of the HKMDS is already on sale at \$50 a copy. Purchase can be made at the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong. The publication is also available for sale at the Publication Section of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Regular subscription can also be arranged with the Publication (Sales) Office of the Information Services Department on tel 2598 8194.

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Lantau taxi fares to go up

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The Governor-in-Council today (Tuesday) endorsed a proposal to increase fares for Lantau taxis by 11.1 per cent from July 14 this year.

The new fares will be \$10 at flagfall for the first two kilometres and \$1 for every subsequent 0.2 kilometre. Waiting time will be charged at \$1 for every one minute.

A telephone booking surcharge and a surcharge for every article of baggage, animal or bird will remain at \$5 and \$4 respectively.

A Government spokesman said the endorsed fare rise was lower than the 33.3 per cent applied for by the Lantau Taxi Association. Lantau taxi fares were last increased by 12.5 per cent in February last year.

The spokesman said the fare rise was approved having regard to the need to ensure the financial viability of the Lantau taxi operators, the need to maintain an acceptable level of taxi service measured in terms of taxi availability and feedback from passengers and the need to ensure that the proposed fares were acceptable to the public.

The 11.1 per cent fare increase is slightly below the inflation rate of 12.4 per cent forecast for the same period. It would restore the majority of the taxi operators' net earnings in real terms to the levels achieved at the time of the last fare increase.

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Closure of Yau Yat Tsuen illegal structures sought

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The Building Authority is seeking to close seven unauthorised structures in a building at 10 Cassia Road, Yau Yat Tsuen so that they can be demolished without endangering the occupants and the public.

One of the unauthorised structures is located on the first floor while the others have been built above the car parking spaces of the building.

Notices of applying for Closure Orders from the District Court under the Buildings Ordinance on July 26 have been posted on the premises.

Demolition works are expected to start as soon as the Closure Orders are issued.

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Central Dermatology Clinic moves to Sai Ying Pun

The Department of Health today (Tuesday) announced that with effect from Saturday (June 3), the Central Dermatology Clinic which is currently located in Kau U Fong, Central, will be reprovisioned to the sixth floor of Sai Ying Pun Jockey Club Polyclinic at 134 Queen's Road West.

The clinic will continue to provide part-time service to the public with skin diseases on Saturday mornings from 9 am to 1 pm.

The service provided by the Sai Ying Pun Dermatology Clinic will remain unchanged.

Members of the public who wish to seek medical treatment from the Central Dermatology Clinic and the Sai Ying Pun Dermatology Clinic can now book an appointment either in person at the general office of the clinics or through the booking hotlines 2517 1015 or 2517 1042.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date	30 May 95
Paper on offer	EF bills
Issue number	Q522
Amount applied	HK\$4,100 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.72 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.74 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 21 PCT
Average tender yield	5.74 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 5 June, 1995

Tender date	6 June 95	6 June 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q523	H566
Issue date	7 June 95	7 June 95
Maturity date	6 Sept 95	6 Dec 95
Tenor	91 days	182 days
Amount on offer	HK\$1,500+300 MN	HK\$800+160 MN

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,400	0930	+144
Closing balance in the account	2,369	1000	+144
Change attributable to :		1100	+114
Money market activity	+114	1200	+114
LAF today	-145	1500	+114
		1600	+114

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.1 $^{*+0.0}$ * 30.5.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills

EF notes

Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.63	2 years	2705	6.40	100.62	6.15
1 month	5.67	3 years	3804	6.90	101.32	6.49
3 months	5.71	5 years	5003	7.75	103.28	7.05
6 months	5.79	5 years	M501	7.90	101.43	7.69
12 months	5.87					

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$ 13,048 million

Closed May 30, 1995

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