

- Taiwan's parliament passed a record NT\$1.063 trillion (US\$43 billion) central government budget for the fiscal year beginning July, an 8.4% increase from last year. The main opposition party voted against the budget, demanding closer scrutiny of defence spending. The biggest outlay of spending was defence, which accounted for 24% of the total budget.

- Due to the recent revision in article 100 of the criminal code, the Taiwan High Court Prosecutor's offices recently closed 16 sedition cases, ending probes of more than 200 political dissidents allegedly involved in pro-independence activities.

HONG KONG

- British and Chinese Prime Ministers John Major and Li Peng held talks this week at the Rio Summit to break the deadlock over Britain's plan to finance the Chek Lap Kok airport project.

- HSBC Holdings raised its bid for Midland Bank by 18% to US\$8.4 billion. The final offer is aimed at killing a challenge from Lloyds Bank.

- Airlines are revolting over government plans to raise airport landing and parking charges by up to 500% over the next 5 years. Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific, which accounts for 40% of air traffic into Kai Tak would be hardest hit. Revenues obtained would help finance Chek Lap Kok.

VIETNAM

- The Foreign Ministry reportedly announced recently that the last inmates from the 1975 era "re-education" camps were released April 30.

- Hanoi has replaced longtime Finance Minister Hoang Quy with his deputy, Ho Tu. Dissatisfaction with Hoang had apparently been building for the last three years.

- At the end of May, Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam made an official visit to Poland. Discussions were held on economic cooperation and on Vietnam's debt to Warsaw.

ONGOING AND UPCOMING/ A VENIR

- IBEX 92 Building Show (Hong Kong) - June 11-13.

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