



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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DEPARTMENT OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

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Consultation on interception of communications

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The Government released today (Friday) a consultation paper on the Interception of Communications Bill to seek public views on its proposals to provide better protection to privacy of communications by regulating the interception of communications.

The consultation paper, in the form of a White Bill, was gazetted today for one month's consultation, a Government spokesman said.

The Legislative Council's Security and Information Policy Panels, District Boards, the Fight Crime Committee and District Fight Crime Committees will receive copies of the White Bill as well as briefings by Government officials.

Members of the public can obtain copies of the consultation paper from District Offices.

The spokesman explained that the proposals in the White Bill were drawn up based on the recommendations in the Law Reform Commission (LRC) report entitled "Privacy : Regulating the Interception of Communications" published last December.

"We have accepted key recommendations in the LRC report. In view of the complexity of the issue and its wide-ranging implications, we believe that there is a need to consult interested parties of the community.

"The publication of a White Bill is the best means to gauge public opinion over this issue and to make it clear to all how we would like to proceed.

"A careful assessment of public opinion, obtained through consultation and analysis, should help us understand the likely reaction of the community to any proposed course of action or change in policy," he said.

A major proposal in the Bill is to introduce a judicial warrant system to regulate the interception of communications, replacing the current arrangements of executive warrants under section 33 of the Telecommunication Ordinance and section 13 of the Post Office Ordinance.

It will then become an offence, punishable by a maximum of two years' imprisonment and a fine of \$50,000, to intentionally intercept communications, unless the action is pursuant to a judicial warrant or exempted in the Bill.

The spokesman said that a judicial warrant would be required for the interception of communications in the course of its sending via the Post Office or by telecommunication, such as telephone calls, facsimile messages, telegrams and pagers.

Under the proposed system, an authorised public officer may apply to one of three designated High Court judges for the issue of a warrant authorising interception of communications where the information required cannot reasonably be obtained by other means.

"The information required must be either for preventing, investigating or detecting serious crime, or for the security of Hong Kong.

"A warrant would be issued for an initial period not exceeding six months, and may be renewed upon application for extension, if justified," the spokesman said.

The Governor will appoint a Justice of Appeal to act as a "Supervisory Authority" to review the issue of and compliance with warrants.

"He will also review the adequacy of safeguards devised by authorised public officers to limit the disclosure of intercepted material," the spokesman said.

"The 'Supervisory Authority' will be empowered to receive and examine complaints from persons regarding unlawful interception by law enforcement agencies and to award compensation to aggrieved individuals.

"To promote accountability, he will furnish annually a report to the Governor and the Legislative Council covering the number of warrants authorised and their average length and extensions," he added.

Members of the public and interested parties should send their views on the consultation paper to the Security Branch, sixth floor, Central Government Offices, Main Wing, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong on or before April 4 this year.

End

Campaign to fight against pornographic materials

* * * * *

In response to the concern raised by the Fight Crime Committee and the public at large, the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA), the Police and the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) will launch a three-month campaign, starting from tomorrow (1 March), against pornographic materials in public places.

Details were announced at a press conference today (Friday) by the Commissioner for TELA, Mr Eddy Chan; Police Senior Superintendent, Mr Steve Robins; and Senior Superintendent of Customs and Excise, Mr Ronny H.K. Tsang.

Mr Chan said that at present, the three departments were responsible for the enforcement of the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance (COIAO) which dealt with the sales and publications of indecent and obscene articles.

There is a good division of responsibility among them. TELA monitors articles on sale in the market, such as newspapers and magazines; issues summonses against publishers if their publications do not comply with statutory requirements; assists the Police in identifying blackspots; and takes part in regular joint operations with the other enforcement agencies.

The Police mainly deals with the sale of obscene and indecent articles at the wholesale/retail outlets, e.g. video and computer shops in the districts, while the Customs and Excise Department tackles obscene and indecent articles at the entry points and in the course of their copyright enforcement work.

Last year, they took out more than 890 prosecutions against those in breach of the Ordinance resulting in 930 people being arrested and 216,500 obscene and indecent articles, including 181,000 VCD/CD ROMs, forfeited. Some offences attracted penalties of fines and imprisonment.

Mr Chan said that to enhance public awareness of the problem, the campaign would focus on three main aspects - enforcement, publicity and education.

Stepped-up enforcement action

- Accord priorities in taking enforcement action against pornographic articles. At present, the Police and TELA conduct joint operations at least once a week. These will be increased during the campaign period.
- Where appropriate and in consultation with the Legal Department, apply to courts for higher penalties for COIAO offences.

Publicity

- Increase the frequency of TV and radio APIs on COIAO and advertise TELA's complaint hotline (2676 7676) in newspapers so as to facilitate the public to make complaints.
- Publicise measures against pornographic articles on special radio and TV programmes, including the Police Magazine.

Public Education

- Give talks on the COIAO to schools, concerned groups and youth centres.
- Promote the awareness of news vendors, bookshop operators and video/computer shop operators of the provisions in the COIAO. Advisory letters and leaflets will also be distributed.

"We hope that through our intensive efforts, there will be increased public awareness of the problem of access to pornographic materials by young people," Mr Chan said.

He also appealed to schools and parents to give more guidance to children in the choice of leisure readings.

End

High Commissioner's visit welcomed

* * * * *

The Government welcomes the visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mrs Sadako Ogata, to Hong Kong from March 9 to 11, a Government spokesman said today (Friday).

The visit was announced earlier today by the Office of the UNHCR Chief of Mission in Hong Kong.

"We are very pleased that Mrs Ogata will be coming to Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

"The UNHCR has for many years played an important role in resolving the problem of Vietnamese refugees and migrants in Hong Kong.

"It has found and is continuing to find durable solutions for the refugees, and has been organising the provision of various services in the refugee and migrant camps and the Voluntary Repatriation Programme," he said.

The spokesman said that it is very fitting that Mrs Ogata visits Hong Kong to review the very substantial progress made so far and to call on the international community to help find durable solutions for the remaining Vietnamese in the territory.

"We look forward to seeing Mrs Ogata next week and wish her a very successful visit," he added.

End

Lady Thatcher to officiate at opening of Lantau Link

* * * * *

A spokesman for Government House announced today (Friday) that the former British Prime Minister, the Rt Hon the Baroness Thatcher, has agreed to officiate at the opening ceremony of the Lantau Link on April 27.

Commenting on the announcement, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten said :

"I am delighted that Lady Thatcher has agreed to be the guest of honour at the opening of the Lantau Link.

"Lady Thatcher has been a staunch friend of Hong Kong over many years. She has played a vital role in securing Hong Kong's future. Nothing symbolises that confident future better than the magnificent Tsing Ma Bridge. It is excellent news that Lady Thatcher has agreed to fly to Hong Kong for its opening."

End

Hong Kong - Japan Air Services Agreement signed

* * * * *

Another major step forward was taken today (Friday) to ensure the smooth continuation of Hong Kong's air services beyond 30 June, with the formal signing of the Hong Kong - Japan Air Services Agreement by the Secretary for Economic Services, Mr Stephen Ip and the Consul-General of Japan, Mr Hideaki Ueda.

The Hong Kong Government's chief air services negotiator, Mr Mike Arnold, said the text of the Agreement took eight years to negotiate. It was concluded and initialled in December 1995, and the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group gave its endorsement in December 1996.

"Since the initialling of the Air Services Agreement, detailed discussions have taken place in both Hong Kong and Tokyo to finalise the air traffic arrangements that will operate under the new Agreement.

"The new arrangements were finally concluded on 26 February this year after two days of talks in Hong Kong with Mr Norifumi Ide of the Japanese Ministry of Transport." Mr Arnold said.

Representatives of Hong Kong's three airlines - Cathay Pacific, Dragonair and Air Hong Kong, the major Japanese airlines (Japan Airlines (JAL), All Nippon Airways (ANA), Japan Air System (JAS) and Nippon Cargo Airlines (NCA), as well as the Japanese Consul-General's Office were also present during the final round of talks.

While regarding the contents of the traffic arrangements was commercially sensitive, Mr Arnold, however, indicated that the new arrangements were modelled very closely on the current UK arrangements concluded in 1986 under the HK/Japan Air Services Agreement in respect of Hong Kong's air services with Japan.

"As the current arrangements had proved to have been very successful in meeting the requirements of the Hong Kong - Japan air services market, both sides in the talks decided to adopt the substance of the 1986 arrangements for the new traffic arrangements under the Hong Kong - Japan Air Services Agreement to ensure a smooth continuation of air services," Mr Arnold said.

Japan is a major market for all three of Hong Kong's airlines - Cathay Pacific, Dragonair and Air Hong Kong. In 1996, the Japanese market represented about 18 per cent of the total revenue earned by the three carriers.

Currently, the airlines of Japan and Hong Kong together carry some 4 million passengers each year, serving nine cities in Japan.

Growth of passengers in 1996 as compared with 1995 was just over 20 per cent. The large number of passengers carried reflects the close business and tourism ties that exist between Japan and Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong - Japan Agreement is the sixteenth air services agreement signed by Hong Kong. The others were signed with the Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, Brunei, France, New Zealand, Malaysia, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Australia, Germany, Korea, Singapore, Italy and India.

End

Community building activities to mark Handover

* * * * *

A variety of cultural, entertainment and community building activities to help present Hong Kong as a vibrant and caring community will be held from May to August to complement the Handover Ceremony and to facilitate and encourage greater public involvement.

Outlining the programmes at a press conference today (Friday), the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, said they ranged from district-based functions to major events of territory-wide interest.

"The Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Broadcasting, Culture and Sport Branch (BCSB) are tasked with organising these events in conjunction with other non-government organisations.

"In addition, the Urban and Regional Councils have also been invited to organise their own activities as their contribution to the official programme," Mr Suen said.

The community building activities co-ordinated by HAD will revolve around the various aspects of Hong Kong life. These include six theme-related projects in the areas of Housing, Education, Welfare, Health Care, Transport and Airport; carnivals in the urban areas and the New Territories; and an Asian Extravaganza.

"Apart from creating a positive mood, they will help to reassure the local community, overseas visitors and the international press corps that there are exciting developments on different fronts of Hong Kong that will ensure our stability and prosperity well into the next century," he added.

Cultural events, co-ordinated by BCSB, will include a ballet performance, recitals, and concerts by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and other performers.

A series of educational workshops and masterclasses will also be held for young music students, their teachers and the public.

As for the Municipal Councils, they will present a large-scale Sports and Games Carnival combining sports and entertainment activities which will also serve to pay tribute to Hong Kong sports stars in recognition of their contribution.

Other cultural events such as concerts and drama performances will also be organised by the two councils.

The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved \$233 million for holding the Handover Ceremony and related activities in October last year, \$40 million of which has been earmarked for organising these cultural and community building activities in the territory.

Joining Mr Suen at the press conference were the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau; Director of Regional Services, Mr Adolf Hsu; Director of Urban Services, Ms Elaine Chung; Deputy Secretary for Broadcasting, Culture and Sport, Mrs Jenny Wallis; and District Board chairmen.

Representatives of the co-organisers of the activities also attended the press conference where they were presented with Certificates of Appreciation for their support and contribution.

End

Closure order proposed for unlicensed PPEs

* * * * *

The Places of Public Entertainment (Amendment) Bill 1997 which seeks to empower the licensing authorities to apply to a magistrate for a Closure Order to close any unlicensed places of public entertainment (PPEs), including cinemas, was published in the Gazette today (Friday).

Under the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation, no person shall keep or use any PPEs without a licence. At present, the Urban Council and the Regional Council which are the licensing authorities in their respective areas, have no power to order an unlicensed PPE to be closed.

"In order to strengthen enforcement action against the continued illegal operation of unlicensed PPEs, the Bill intends to empower the licensing authorities to apply to a magistrate for the grant of a Prohibition Order to prohibit the keeping or use of a PPE for all purposes or for any purposes specified in the Prohibition Order," a Government spokesman said.

"If the Prohibition Order is breached, the licensing authorities may apply to a magistrate for a Closure Order to close the unlicensed business," he added.

Similar provisions already exist under section 128 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance in respect of unlicensed food premises.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on 5 March.

End

Tender for new Lantau taxi licences

* * * * *

The Transport Department today (Friday) invites tenders for 10 new Lantau taxi licences.

The issuing of these new taxi licences would help to meet the increasing demand for taxi services in North Lantau, a spokesman for the Transport Department said.

The invitation for tender is published in today's gazette.

Speaking on this tender exercise, the spokesman said: "Tenderers for these new licences are subject to, among others, two conditions which have been introduced since 1994.

"First, no one may bid for more than one licence. Second, these new licences are not transferable within 12 months from the date of first registration of the taxi concerned."

At present, there are 40 taxis operating in Lantau.

The last tender exercise for Lantau taxis was in December 1984 when 10 licences were issued.

Tender forms are available for collection in person at the Public Vehicles Section, Transport Department, 3rd floor, United Centre, 95 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Tenderers are requested to return the completed tender forms before noon on March 14, 1997. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Results of the tenders will be published later in the Government Gazette.

End

Briefing for traders on basic telecoms negotiations

* * * * *

The Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) and the Trade Department will jointly hold a briefing session tomorrow (Saturday) for the local telecommunications industry on the outcome of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations on basic telecommunications services.

Mr Alex Arena and Mr Anthony Wong Sik-kei from the OFTA; Deputy Director-General of Trade, Miss Yvonne Choi; and Principal Assistant Secretary for Economic Services, Mr Geoffrey Woodhead will be panellists of the briefing session to be held at the Conference Hall of the Central Government Offices (New Annex).

Mr Arena will give an in-depth analysis of the commitments made by Hong Kong and other WTO members and Miss Choi will speak on the background of the negotiations, their implications for the WTO and the global trade liberalisation efforts.

A question-and-answer session will follow immediately after the briefing.

Negotiations on basic telecommunications services conducted under the auspices of the WTO were successfully concluded on February 15.

A total of 69 member governments of the WTO have made binding commitments to open up their telecommunications markets.

The far-reaching agreement provides telecommunications service suppliers access to the global telecommunications markets, estimated at over US\$600 billion per annum.

End

Provisional statistics of retail sales for December 1996

* * * * *

The value of total retail sales in December 1996, estimated at \$22 billion, increased by 8% when compared with December 1995. After discounting the effect of price changes over the period, total retail sales increased by 3% in volume.

For 1996 as a whole, total retail sales rose by 6% in value and 2% in volume when compared with 1995. This reflected a gradual pick-up in consumer spending in 1996, from the increase of 5% in value and decline of 1% in volume in 1995.

These are provisional figures on retail sales released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Compared with a year ago, the increase in December 1996 was mainly attributable to the significant surge in sales of motor vehicles (26% in both value and volume), and jewellery, watches and clocks and valuable gifts (12% in value and 14% in volume).

Concurrently, sales of some other commodities also recorded increases of various magnitudes in both value and volume terms. These included other consumer durable goods (11% in value and 9% in volume); miscellaneous consumer goods (11% in value and 5% in volume) and food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (5% in value and 1% in volume).

On the other hand, sales in supermarkets and department stores both registered an increase of 4% in value. This, however, represented decreases of 2% and 5% in volume respectively. Similarly, sales of clothing and footwear and fuels rose by 8% and 5% in value respectively, but both went down by 4% in volume.

Compared with November 1996 (but bearing in mind that this comparison is affected by seasonal factors), total retail sales in December 1996 increased by 20% in both value and volume terms.

For 1996 as a whole, total retail sales improved both in value and volume terms. Sales of most commodities registered increases by various degrees in 1996.

These included consumer durable goods other than motor vehicles (7% in value and 6% in volume); miscellaneous consumer goods (11% in value and 5% in volume); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (6% in value and 2% in volume); clothing and footwear (9% in value and 1% in volume); motor vehicles (1% in value and 0.3% in volume) and jewellery, watches and clocks and valuable gifts (3% in value and 0.1% in volume). Sales in supermarkets also went up by 8% in value and 1% in volume.

On the other hand, sales in department stores registered an increase of 4% in value, but a decrease of 1% in volume. Besides, sales of fuels recorded a decrease of 2% in value and 8% in volume. The decline was largely due to the continued shift from retail purchases to direct purchases from major fuels suppliers.

The volume of retail sales is derived from the value of retail sales after adjusting for price changes. The relevant components of the Consumer Price Index are used as deflators.

Table 1 presents the revised total retail sales figure for November 1996 and the provisional figure for December 1996.

Table 2 shows the value and volume indices of retail sales in December 1995, November and December 1996 for all retail outlets and by type of retail outlets, with average retail sales from October 1994 to September 1995 taken as 100. Comparisons of the December 1996 results with those for November 1996 and those for December 1995, as well as comparisons of retail sales in the period from January to December of 1996 with the same period in 1995 are also given.

The report containing the analysis of the December 1996 results is now on sale at \$4.00 per copy at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, G/F., Low Block, 66 Queensway; and the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19/F., Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be directed to the Wholesale and Retail Trade Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department (Tel. No. : 2802 1258).

TABLE 1 : TOTAL RETAIL SALES

Total Retail Sales for December 1996 (Provisional Figure) = HK\$22,033.8 million
for November 1996 (Revised Figure) = HK\$18,409.0 million

TABLE 2 : VALUE AND VOLUME INDICES OF RETAIL SALES FOR DECEMBER 1995, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1996

(Monthly average of October 1994 - September 1995 = 100)

| Type of Outlets | Type of Index | Index Number | | | % Change | | |
|--|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | December 1995 (Revised figures) | November 1996 (Revised figures) | December 1996 (Provisional figures) | Dec 1996 compared with Nov 1996 | Dec 1996 compared with Dec 1995 | Jan - Dec 1996 compared with Jan - Dec 1995 |
| (A) FOR ALL RETAIL OUTLETS | | (Point) | (Point) | (Point) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| | Value | 117.0 | 106.0 | 126.9 | +19.7 | +8.4 | +6.3 |
| | Volume | 113.2 | 97.2 | 116.5 | +19.8 | +3.0 | +1.6 |
| (B) BY TYPE OF RETAIL OUTLETS | | | | | | | |
| Food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (other than supermarkets) | Value | 108.4 | 103.4 | 113.5 | +9.7 | +4.7 | +5.5 |
| | Volume | 108.6 | 100.0 | 109.3 | +9.4 | +0.7 | +2.3 |
| Supermarkets ϕ | Value | 109.4 | 103.5 | 113.3 | +9.5 | +3.6 | +7.5 |
| | Volume | 104.3 | 92.7 | 102.0 | +10.0 | -2.2 | +1.1 |
| Fuels | Value | 98.2 | 87.1 | 102.6 | +17.7 | +4.5 | -1.8 |
| | Volume | 95.0 | 79.1 | 91.5 | +15.7 | -3.7 | -8.2 |
| Clothing, footwear and allied products | Value | 131.7 | 116.0 | 141.7 | +22.2 | +7.6 | +9.5 |
| | Volume | 125.0 | 97.0 | 119.5 | +23.2 | -4.4 | +1.1 |
| Consumer durable goods | Value | 98.5 | 103.2 | 112.9 | +9.5 | +14.6 | +5.1 |
| | Volume | 97.5 | 101.0 | 110.5 | +9.4 | +13.3 | +4.3 |
| - Motor vehicles and parts | Value | 67.6 | 93.1 | 85.5 | -8.2 | +26.4 | +0.7 |
| | Volume | 67.3 | 92.2 | 84.7 | -8.2 | +25.8 | +0.3 |
| - Consumer durable goods other than motor vehicles and parts | Value | 117.2 | 109.2 | 129.5 | +18.5 | +10.5 | +7.4 |
| | Volume | 115.8 | 106.4 | 126.1 | +18.5 | +8.9 | +6.4 |
| Department stores | Value | 140.6 | 102.2 | 146.4 | +43.3 | +4.1 | +4.5 |
| | Volume | 135.0 | 89.1 | 128.4 | +44.1 | -4.9 | -1.5 |
| Jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts | Value | 118.4 | 105.3 | 132.4 | +25.8 | +11.8 | +2.8 |
| | Volume | 114.9 | 103.0 | 130.6 | +26.8 | +13.7 | +0.1 |
| Other consumer goods not elsewhere classified | Value | 115.5 | 110.0 | 127.7 | +16.1 | +10.6 | +10.5 |
| | Volume | 111.1 | 100.5 | 117.1 | +16.5 | +5.4 | +5.5 |

NOTE : ϕ Not including supermarkets operating in department stores.
The underlined figures were rounded up to 5.

External trade figures for January 1997

* * * * *

In January 1997, the value of Hong Kong's re-exports and imports showed only marginal increases over a year earlier. Domestic exports continued to decline on a year-on-year basis.

These are shown in the external trade figures for January 1997 released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The value of total exports (comprising re-exports and domestic exports) in January 1997 decreased by 0.7% over a year earlier to \$119.4 billion. Within total exports, the value of re-exports increased by 0.9% to \$102.1 billion, but the value of domestic exports decreased by 9.1% to \$17.3 billion.

The value of imports increased by 1.1% in January 1997 over a year earlier to \$131.8 billion.

As the value of total exports in January 1997 was smaller than that of total imports, a visible trade deficit of \$12.4 billion, equivalent to 9.4% of the value of imports, was recorded. The corresponding visible trade deficit in January 1996 was \$10.1 billion, equivalent to 7.7% of the value of imports.

Commenting on the latest trade performance, a Government spokesman said that trade figures usually displayed greater volatility in the first two months of each year. The small growth in both imports and re-exports in January 1997 was likely to have been affected by the different timing of the Lunar New Year Holidays in 1996 and 1997 and the high base of comparison resulting from the strong growth in external trade in January 1996. Thus it should be more meaningful to make comparison based on the figures for January and February combined, when the latter figures become available towards the end of next month.

The table presents the external trade figures in January 1997.

A more detailed analysis of Hong Kong's external trade for January 1997, by commodity and country/territory, will be released in mid-March 1997.



Census and Statistics Department
Hong Kong
香港政府統計處

External Trade Figures for January 1997

一九九七年一月份對外貿易數字

(HK\$ Million)
百萬港元

| MERCHANDISE TRADE VALUES for January 1997 | | 一九九七年一月份商品貿易貨值 | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| | Domestic Exports | | 港產品出口 | | 17,274 |
| | Re-exports | | 轉口 | | 102,100 |
| | Total Exports | | 整體出口 | | 119,374 |
| | Imports | | 進口 | | 131,765 |
| | Trade balance | | 貿易差額 | | -12,392 |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| | | | | Change | 變動 |
| Current month compared with same month last year | 本月與去年同期相比 | January 1997 一九九七年一月 | January 1996 一九九六年一月 | Value 貨值 | % 百分率 |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 17,274 (14.5%) | 18,993 (15.8%) | -1,719 | -9.1 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 102,100 | 101,192 | +908 | +0.9 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 119,374 | 120,185 | -811 | -0.7 |
| Imports | 進口 | 131,765 | 130,279 | +1,487 | +1.1 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -12,392 | -10,093 | -2,298 | |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Current month compared with last month | 本月與上月相比 | January 1997 一九九七年一月 | December 1996 一九九六年十二月 | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 17,274 (14.5%) | 18,217 (15.6%) | -942 | -5.2 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 102,100 | 98,446 | +3,653 | +3.7 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 119,374 | 116,663 | +2,711 | +2.3 |
| Imports | 進口 | 131,765 | 131,409 | +357 | +0.3 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -12,392 | -14,745 | +2,354 | |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Latest 3 months compared with same period 12 months earlier | 最近三個月與早十二個月同期相比 | Nov 96 to Jan 97 九六年十一月至九七年一月 | Nov 95 to Jan 96 九五年十一月至九六年一月 | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 53,505 (15.1%) | 57,996 (16.7%) | -4,491 | -7.7 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 300,922 | 290,150 | +10,771 | +3.7 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 354,427 | 348,146 | +6,281 | +1.8 |
| Imports | 進口 | 394,145 | 382,872 | +11,273 | +2.9 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -39,719 | -34,726 | -4,993 | |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Last 12 months compared with same period 12 months earlier | 最近十二個月與早十二個月同期相比 | Feb 96 to Jan 97 九六年二月至九七年一月 | Feb 95 to Jan 96 九五年二月至九六年一月 | | |
| Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports) | 港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比) | 210,440 (15.1%) | 232,473 (17.1%) | -22,032 | -9.5 |
| Re-exports | 轉口 | 1,186,666 | 1,130,519 | +56,147 | +5.0 |
| Total Exports | 整體出口 | 1,397,106 | 1,362,991 | +34,115 | +2.5 |
| Imports | 進口 | 1,537,069 | 1,516,456 | +20,613 | +1.4 |
| Trade balance | 貿易差額 | -139,963 | -153,464 | +13,502 | |

Note: Value of domestic exports and value of re-exports may not add up to the value of total exports due to rounding.

This sheet can be obtained free of charge from:
Trade Statistics Dissemination Section
Census and Statistics Department
Address: 19/F., Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, H.K.
Tel 2582 4915 Fax 2802 1101

註: 由於進位關係, 港產品出口貨值加上轉口貨值, 可能會與整體出口貨值略有出入。

本單張可以於下列地點免費索取:
香港政府統計處
貿易統計資料發布組
地址: 香港灣仔港灣道十二號灣仔政府大樓十九樓
電話: 2582 4915 傳真: 2802 1101

End

2/97

Monetary statistics for January 1997

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According to statistics published today (Friday) by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), both deposits and loans and advances increased during January 1997.

Table 1 summarises figures for January 1997 and comparisons with earlier months.

Deposits

Total deposits rose by 1.4% in January 1997, reversing the fall of 1.1% in December 1996. This resulted from increases in both HK\$ and foreign currency deposits of 2.2% and 0.3% respectively.

The increase in HK\$ deposits was led by rises in demand and time deposits, which outweighed the fall in savings deposits. Demand deposits surged further by 11.4% in January, following a 8.3% growth in the previous month, while time deposits grew by 2.4%, having fallen by 3.5% in December 1996. The rapid rise of demand deposits might reflect the increase in transaction demand for money ahead of the Chinese New Year and the buoyancy of asset markets. On the other hand, savings deposits fell by 1.2%, having risen for five consecutive months by a total of 12.8%.

US\$ deposits dropped further by 0.3% during January, following a 2.7% decrease in the previous month. On the other hand, non-US\$ foreign currency deposits rose by 0.9%. As a result, total foreign currency deposits registered a 0.3% rise in January.

Loans and Advances

Total loans and advances rose slightly by 0.1% in January, following a fall of 0.2% in December 1996. Domestic credit rose by 3.8%, contributed by a 0.2% increase in loans for trade financing and a 4.2% increase in other loans for use in Hong Kong. The notable growth in other loans for use in Hong Kong was partly attributable to property-related lending and partly to the credit demand for settling payments before the Chinese New Year. The result of the January 1997 Residential Mortgage Survey of 33 authorized institutions revealed that outstanding residential mortgage loans grew by 2.6% during the month. Offshore loans dropped by 3.1% in January, in part due to the valuation effect stemming from the depreciation of Japanese Yen, since the bulk of these loans are Euro-yen loans booked in Hong Kong.

Analysed by currency, HK\$ loans rose by 5% while foreign currency loans fell by 2.7% during the month. As the increase in HK\$ loans was larger than that of HK\$ deposits, the HK\$ loan-to-deposit ratio rose to 106.1% at end-January 1997 from 103.3% at end-December 1996.

Money Supply

HK\$M1 surged by 11.5% in January, reflecting an increase of 11.4% in HK\$ demand deposits and a rise of 11.6% in currency held by the public. HK\$M2 and HK\$M3 increased by 2.7% and 2.6% respectively, reversing the 0.7% decrease in the previous month. In the twelve months to January 1997, HK\$M1 rose by 25.3%, HK\$M2 increased by 21.4% while HK\$M3 grew by 21.1%.

TABLE 1 : MONETARY STATISTICS - JAN 1997

| | (HK\$mn) | | | |
|--|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Jan 1997 | Earlier months (% change to Dec 1996) | | |
| | | Dec 1996 | Oct 1996 | Jan 1996 |
| Money Supply | | | | |
| M1 - HK\$ | 221,087 | 198,304 (11.5) | 188,522 (17.3) | 176,481 (25.3) |
| Foreign currency | 18,150 | 19,149 (-5.2) | 18,694 (-2.9) | 19,351 (-6.2) |
| Total | 239,237 | 217,453 (10.0) | 207,215 (15.5) | 195,832 (22.2) |
| M2 - HK\$@ | 1,543,467 | 1,503,341 (2.7) | 1,442,300 (7.0) | 1,271,678 (21.4) |
| Foreign currency* | 1,004,813 | 1,003,583 (0.1) | 997,368 (0.7) | 999,957 (0.5) |
| Total | 2,548,280 | 2,506,924 (1.6) | 2,439,668 (4.5) | 2,271,635 (12.2) |
| M3 - HK\$@ | 1,560,253 | 1,520,199 (2.6) | 1,458,943 (6.9) | 1,287,896 (21.1) |
| Foreign currency* | 1,069,297 | 1,066,126 (0.3) | 1,059,955 (0.9) | 1,061,874 (0.7) |
| Total | 2,629,550 | 2,586,325 (1.7) | 2,518,898 (4.4) | 2,349,770 (11.9) |
| Notes and coins in circulation | 99,501 | 87,113 (14.2) | 82,522 (20.6) | 82,403 (20.7) |
| of which held by public | 85,430 | 76,516 (11.6) | 73,575 (16.1) | 70,949 (20.4) |
| Total Deposits | | | | |
| Total Demand deposits | 153,807 | 140,937 (9.1) | 133,640 (15.1) | 124,883 (23.2) |
| Total Savings deposits | 516,864 | 520,575 (-0.7) | 489,076 (5.7) | 440,940 (17.2) |
| Total Time deposits | 1,796,665 | 1,771,433 (1.4) | 1,750,776 (2.6) | 1,646,697 (9.1) |
| With licensed banks | 1,736,829 | 1,712,989 (1.4) | 1,692,518 (2.6) | 1,592,566 (9.1) |
| With restricted licence banks | 44,604 | 42,897 (4.0) | 42,564 (4.8) | 37,118 (20.2) |
| With deposit-taking companies | 15,232 | 15,547 (-2.0) | 15,694 (-2.9) | 17,013 (-10.5) |
| HK\$ deposits@ | 1,431,081 | 1,399,815 (2.2) | 1,344,311 (6.5) | 1,180,868 (21.2) |
| Demand deposits | 135,656 | 121,787 (11.4) | 114,946 (18.0) | 105,532 (28.5) |
| Savings deposits | 361,714 | 366,109 (-1.2) | 343,301 (5.4) | 301,200 (20.1) |
| Time deposits@ | 933,711 | 911,918 (2.4) | 886,063 (5.4) | 774,135 (20.6) |
| US\$ deposits* | 515,408 | 517,126 (-0.3) | 513,000 (0.5) | 513,631 (0.3) |
| Other foreign currency deposits* | 520,847 | 516,004 (0.9) | 516,181 (0.9) | 518,021 (0.5) |
| Foreign currency deposits* | 1,036,254 | 1,033,130 (0.3) | 1,029,181 (0.7) | 1,031,652 (0.4) |
| All deposits | 2,467,336 | 2,432,945 (1.4) | 2,373,492 (4.0) | 2,212,519 (11.5) |
| Foreign currency swap deposits | 37,899 | 38,502 (-1.6) | 38,889 (-2.5) | 47,849 (-20.8) |
| Total Loans and advances | | | | |
| Loans for use in H.K. | 1,889,694 | 1,820,627 (3.8) | 1,759,693 (7.4) | 1,596,398 (18.4) |
| To finance H.K.'s visible trade | 164,509 | 165,311 (-0.5) | 163,392 (0.7) | 157,390 (4.5) |
| To finance merchandising trade not touching H.K. | 21,120 | 19,979 (5.7) | 18,998 (11.2) | 18,832 (12.1) |
| Other loans for use in H.K. | 1,704,065 | 1,635,337 (4.2) | 1,577,304 (8.0) | 1,420,177 (20.0) |
| Loans for use outside H.K.# | 2,027,949 | 2,092,617 (-3.1) | 2,064,114 (-1.8) | 2,088,997 (-2.9) |
| Other loans for use outside H.K. | 1,987,673 | 2,052,056 (-3.1) | 2,024,381 (-1.8) | 2,050,772 (-3.1) |
| Other loans where the place of use is not known | 40,276 | 40,562 (-0.7) | 39,733 (1.4) | 38,225 (5.4) |
| Loans in HK\$ | 1,518,017 | 1,446,238 (5.0) | 1,396,507 (8.7) | 1,259,607 (20.5) |
| Loans in foreign currencies | 2,399,626 | 2,467,006 (-2.7) | 2,427,300 (-1.1) | 2,425,788 (-1.1) |
| Total loans and advances | 3,917,644 | 3,913,245 (0.1) | 3,823,808 (2.5) | 3,685,395 (6.3) |

* Adjusted to exclude foreign currency swap deposits.

@ Adjusted to include foreign currency swap deposits.

Including those where place of usage is unknown.

Note : Data may not add up to total due to rounding.

End

HKMA Quarterly Bulletin February issue now on sale

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The latest issue of the Quarterly Bulletin published by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (Friday) contains a tentative analysis by the HKMA of Hong Kong's Balance of Payments (BoP) statistics, which are released for the first time.

The HKMA carried out a desk-top research exercise to estimate the BoP for Hong Kong in an attempt to understand the trends in these external accounts.

Hong Kong had an overall surplus in the BoP (excluding reserves) in 1993, 1994 and 1995. There was a modest current account surplus in 1993 and a small deficit in 1994. This was reflected in net private capital inflow and increased international reserves, which are beneficial for the long-term growth of Hong Kong.

There are many gaps in BoP statistics, the estimates in the HKMA study are therefore very rough estimates for indications purposes only.

Also published in the February issue of the Quarterly Bulletin is an article entitled "Hong Kong's Real Time Gross Settlement System" which outlines the important issues relating to the implementation and operations of the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system.

The article pointed out that the performance of the RTGS system has been stable and satisfactory. Banks are generally managing their intraday liquidity reasonably well. An average of 499 intraday repo transactions, involving HK\$26 bn, were done daily to facilitate payment flows. This represents about 33% of the HK\$78 bn Exchange Fund paper currently held by banks. The Liquidity Adjustment Window, which was designed as a fall-back intraday liquidity facility, has been triggered only three times involving a total of HK\$30 mn from December 9, 1996 to January 6, 1997.

The Quarterly Bulletin also carries an article entitled "Financial Disclosure Package 1996", which provides an update on the disclosure regime recommended for banking institutions by the HKMA.

The latest disclosure package covers cash flow statements, market risk exposure and segmental reporting. It is applicable to all licensed banks incorporated in Hong Kong and those restricted licence banks and deposit taking companies with total assets of HK\$1 bn or more or those with total customer deposits in excess of HK\$300 mn.

The Quarterly Bulletin also contains other articles including official assessments of banking and monetary environment during the quarter ending December 1996.

The publication, which is on sale at the Government Sales Centre, may also be ordered from the Press and Publications Section of the HKMA.

End

HK & China set up network of automatic weather stations

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Members of the Electronic Maintenance Team (EMT) of the Royal Observatory, under the leadership of Mr Ng Kin-fai, held a meeting right after the Chinese New Year holidays in preparation for the maintenance of the automatic weather station (AWS) at Huangmaozhou.

The members were very excited about this task as it was not just a routine maintenance but a complete renovation of the AWS by installing state-of-the-art hardware and software, both are products of months of hard work by the EMT members. Led by Mr. Leung Yum-fai, they will go to Huangmaozhou sometime this Spring.

Huangmaozhou is a remote island in the South China coastal waters about 50 kilometres southwest of Hong Kong. The AWS there was jointly set up by the Royal Observatory and the Guangdong Meteorological Bureau in 1985.

Years ago, Huangmaozhou was only accessible by boat. Now, with the construction of a helipad, the island can be reached by helicopter taking off from Zhuhai, Guangdong.

Apart from this station, the Royal Observatory and the Guangdong Meteorological Bureau had jointly established two more AWSs, one at Tuoning Dao to the east and another at Neilingding Dao to the west of Hong Kong. Both were recently completed in 1996.

The joint project this year includes the construction of an AWS on Dangan Dao, an island to the south of Hong Kong. This will be the fourth AWS at the Pearl River Estuary. Site selection, communication test and civil work will start soon. Installation work is expected to commence in the middle of this year.

The AWS will transmit data on wind direction, wind speed, air temperature, air pressure and rainfall to the Royal Observatory every 10 minutes. These will then be transmitted to Guangzhou through a network for exchange of meteorological data.

In this way, valuable meteorological data are provided to both Hong Kong and Guangdong meteorological authorities, facilitating the accurate forecast of hazardous weather and issue of timely warnings.

Besides the AWSs in the Pearl River Estuary, AWSs in the territory of Hong Kong are equally important. Two such AWSs were set up recently at Sek Kong and Tai Mo Shan in 1996, providing weather watch for the central part of the New Territories.

Altogether, there are more than 60 AWSs in Hong Kong which are managed by the EMT. These stations transmit data on wind direction, wind speed, air temperature, air pressure and rainfall to the Royal Observatory every minute. Hong Kong is literally operating one of the most intensive weather watch networks in the world.

These AWSs have to be maintained regularly to keep them in their best working condition. Should any problem occur, careful analysis must be conducted to find out the core problem before taking remedial actions to put the system back to normal.

Languages of electronic and computing technology are not the only languages of the members of the EMT, they also speak, or learn to speak Putunghua. Since last year, some members attended courses on Putunghua organised by the Civil Service Training and Development Institute, despite the fact that no problem has ever been encountered in communication with our Guangdong counterparts using the Guangzhou dialect. The reason is, as remarked by Mr. Yip Wing Sing, an EMT member, "Since our AWS hardware and software have very good reputation in China, we are expecting an expanded scope of co-operation with China, within and beyond Guangdong."

End

Two lots of land for auction

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Two pieces of Government land will be put up for auction at 2.30 pm on March 25 (Tuesday) at the Concert Hall of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui.

The first lot, located at Siu Sai Wan in Chai Wan, has an area of about 25,592 square metres. It is intended for non-industrial purposes, excluding godown, petrol filling station, hotel and service apartment.

The developer has to complete a gross floor area of not less than 145,000 square metres on or before March 31, 2002.

The first three floors of the development shall accommodate a public transport terminus, supermarkets, restaurants, retail shops, a public carpark and carpark ancillary to residential and retail uses, while the remaining floors will be used for private residential purposes.

Covering an area of about 2,627 square metres, the second lot is in Chung Hau Street, Ho Man Tin.

The lot is earmarked for private residential purposes, and the developer has to complete a gross floor area of not less than 11,822 square metres on or before March 31, 2001.

Full particulars and conditions of sale can be obtained from the Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong; and the District Lands Offices/Kowloon, Yau Ma Tei Car Park Building, 10th floor, 250 Shanghai Street, Kowloon.

Conditions of sale will also be available at the District Lands Offices of Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan, Sai Kung, Kwai Tsing, Tai Po, North and Islands.

End

Recreation facilities in Ho Man Tin and Kwun Tong

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Construction of two recreation grounds will begin in the middle of this year to provide additional leisure facilities for residents in Ho Man Tin and Kwun Tong.

The Ho Man Tin Recreation Ground will comprise a three-storey L-shaped recreation centre, two leisure pools, a seven-a-side soccer pitch and two basketball courts.

Construction is expected to complete in December 1998.

Works on the Shun Lee Estate Recreation Ground in Kwun Tong will include construction of a four-storey family leisure centre comprising a multi-games hall for badminton, basketball, hockey and archery, squash courts, mini-golf court, dancing studio, gymnasium and cafeteria.

Other facilities of the recreation ground will include covered car parks, a garden, outdoor sports and playing facilities for children.

Works will complete in about 16 months.

The Architectural Services Department is inviting separate tenders for these projects.

Details of the tender invitations are published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

End

Film archive and leisure centre for Sai Wan Ho

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The Architectural Services Department is building a film archive and a leisure centre at Sai Wan Ho reclamation on the Hong Kong Island.

The film archive building will be a six-storey structure with cinemas and film libraries.

When completed in late 1998, the archive will help to preserve the territory's rich film heritage.

A six-storey leisure centre with indoor swimming pools, indoor games hall with ancillary accommodations, covered car parks and landscaped open space will also be built.

The Department is inviting tenders for the project, which is scheduled to start in June.

End

Wo Keng Shan DPA plan published

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The Town Planning Board announced today (Friday) the publication of the draft Wo Keng Shan Development Permission Area (DPA) Plan.

Located about 3.4 kilometres to the east of Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town, the Wo Keng Shan area covers about 574 hectares of land bounded by the Frontier Closed Area Boundary to the north, Hung Fa Chai to the east, Man Uk Pin and Tai Tong Wu to the south and Ping Che to the west.

Wo Keng Shan area comprises vegetated hill slopes, undulating terrains and relatively flat valley floors with both active and abandoned/fallow agricultural land as well as village settlements. The North East New Territories Landfill is located within the area.

"The DPA plan serves to provide a planning framework for development control, a basis for the consideration of development proposals and the carrying out of enforcement action against unauthorised developments," a spokesman for the Board said.

On the plan, about 394 hectares of land, or 69 per cent of the total area, have been zoned 'Green Belt' to conserve the natural environment and to safeguard it from encroachment by urban type developments.

About 50 hectares of land have been zoned 'Agriculture', about two hectares for 'Government/Institution/Community', about two hectares for 'Village Type Development' and about 124 hectares for 'Other Specified Uses (Landfill)'.

The draft plan (No. DPA/NE-WKS/1) is available for public inspection until April 28 during office hours at :

- * Planning Department
16th floor, Murray Building
Garden Road
Central
Hong Kong;

- * Sha Tin, Tai Po and North District Planning Office
Ground floor, Sha Tin Government Offices
6 Tung Lo Wan Hill Road
Sha Tin
New Territories; and

- * North District Office
3rd floor, North District Government Offices
3 Pik Fung Road
Fanling
New Territories.

Any person affected by the amendment plan may submit written objections to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board, c/o Planning Department, 13th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, before April 28.

Copies of the draft plan are available for sale at the Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong and the Kowloon Map Sales Office, ground floor, 382 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

End

Prompt collection of BN(O) passports

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Applicants who have been notified to collect their British National (Overseas) passports should pick up their passports promptly from the date when the passports are ready for collection at their chosen immigration offices, a spokesperson of the Immigration Department appealed to them today (Friday).

Currently, there are around 41,600 prepared BN(O) passports ready for collection by applicants at various immigration offices.

With effect from April 1997, the British Trade Commission will take over from the Hong Kong Immigration Department responsibility for application and issuing of BN(O) passports. All uncollected passports at the immigration offices by then will be transferred to the Passport Section of the British Trade Commission.

For their convenience, applicants are reminded to pick up their passports in time at the immigration offices which have been chosen by them upon application. They will be required to collect their passports at the British Trade Commission if they do not do so before the transfer of passport functions in April 1997.

For enquiries, members of public may telephone 2824 1177 (English), 2824 1717 (Chinese) or use fax line 2877 7711.

End

Application for part-time teachers invited

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Qualified teachers are reminded to submit their application for part-time teaching vacancies in various courses organised by the Adult Education Section of the Education Department by March 22.

The Adult Education Section organises a number of courses, including English course, government evening secondary school course and adult education (general background) in centres throughout the territory.

Applicants should be qualified teachers with a genuine interest in teaching adults in the evening.

Experience in teaching arts, science, social or commercial subjects at senior secondary levels and/or possession of a Diploma/Certificate in Education or Advanced Certificate in Teacher Training would be an advantage.

The pay scale for part-time teaching is as follows:

\$395 per hour for G.C.E. 'O' Level or Secondary 6 level subjects;

\$325 per hour for senior secondary level subjects;

\$260 per hour for junior secondary level subjects; and

\$235 per hour for primary level subjects.

Application forms can be obtained from the department's Adult Education Section on 11th floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai and completed forms should be returned on or before March 22.

If applicants are not called for interview by May 1, they should assume that their applications are unsuccessful.

For further information, please contact the section at 2892 6669.

End

Flushing water cut in To Kwa Wan

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Flushing water supply to all premises in To Kwa Wan will be suspended from 9 am to 5 pm on March 3 (Monday) for alteration work on watermains.

The suspension will affect Sung Wong Toi Road, To Kwa Wan Road, Hok Ling Street, Chun Fat Street, In On Street, Sin Luen Street, Hung Wan Street, Pang Ching Street, Ying Yeung Street, Lung Cheung Street, Lok Ming Street, Fung Yee Street, Lung To Road, Ming Luen Street, Chung Shun Street, Hing Ying Street, Hing Yan Street, San Shan Road, San Ma Tau Street, King Wan Street, Kwei Chow Street, Mei Kwong Street, Yuk Yat Street, Shun Fung Street, Lok Shan Road, Cheung Ling Street, Ha Heung Road, Kowloon City Road and Ma Tau Kok Road.

End