



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Princess Alexandra to visit Hong Kong	1
Changes to British citizens' immigration status proposed	2
Expressways to open for traffic next week	3
Year of Heritage set to get off to flying start	8
Hong Kong's external trade statistics for December 1996	10
Weather of January 1997	20
Widening of Castle Peak Road	23
Transfer of VMs from HIDC today	23
Monitors' report submitted to CS	24
Philatelic products to be put on sale at stamp exhibition	24
1 Black Watch replace 1 Staffords	25

Princess Alexandra to visit Hong Kong

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Her Royal Highness, Princess Alexandra, will arrive in Hong Kong tomorrow (Friday) morning for a seven-day visit.

The Princess will arrive at the airport on board BA 25 at about 10.45 am and be greeted by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten.

During her stay in the territory, the Princess will attend a number of private and public engagements, including a series of police functions, which have been arranged in view of the close association of the Princess with the Hong Kong Police. Princess Alexandra has been the Honorary Commandant-General of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force (RHKPF) for over a quarter of a century.

On Monday (February 17), the Princess will visit the Police Headquarters in Wan Chai where she will be received by the Commissioner of Police and inspect a Guard of Honour.

The Princess will later view the "150th Anniversary Showcase" depicting the history of the Force.

Afterwards, the Royal visitor will unveil a commemorative plaque to mark the official opening of the Arsenal House West Wing -- a \$524 million tower block housing a number of police units and formations including the Organised Crime and Triad Bureau, the Identification Bureau, the Interpol as well as the Crime Wing Headquarters.

On Tuesday (February 18), Her Royal Highness will visit the existing Auxiliary Police Headquarters at Gascoigne Road, Kowloon where she will tour its recreation club, meet civilian staff, watch an RHKAP band performance and meet trainees at the multi-purpose hall.

After that, the Princess will travel by car to the new RHKAP Headquarters in Kowloon Bay where she will unveil a commemorative plaque on the ground floor to mark the opening of the Headquarters.

The \$70 million new headquarters is the first purpose-built headquarters for the Auxiliary Police whose history can be traced back to 1914 when the first Police Reserve in Hong Kong was formed.

In the afternoon of Wednesday (February 19), Princess Alexandra will visit HMS Peacock on Stonecutters Island.

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Changes to British citizens' immigration status proposed

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The Government is seeking legislative amendments and administrative changes in order to bring the immigration status of British citizens in line with that of other foreign nationals, a Government spokesman announced today (Thursday).

The Immigration (Amendment) Bill 1997, to be gazetted tomorrow (Friday), is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council on February 19.

"Subject to its enactment, the changes will be effective on April 1 this year together with the new administrative measures," the spokesman said.

He said that in recent months, local labour groups, the British citizens themselves as well as their employers had expressed concern about possible changes to the immigration status of British citizens.

"Currently, British citizens enjoy some special immigration status because of the special relationship between Hong Kong and the United Kingdom.

"After an internal review, the Government concluded that changes should be in place before the transfer of sovereignty to remove any differences in the immigration status of British citizens and other foreign nationals," he said.

One of the proposed changes is to require British citizens to apply for visa, just like other foreign nationals, when they come to Hong Kong for employment, study or settlement or to establish or join in a business.

This can be done administratively with the Director of Immigration issuing an order to withdraw the visa exemptions currently enjoyed by British citizens.

Another proposal, which is also an administrative measure, is to grant British citizens coming for visit a visa-free period of stay of six months, as compared with the present visa-free period of 12 months.

"The British Government currently offers six-month visa-free visit to British National (Overseas) passport holders and will offer the same treatment to future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport holders," the spokesman explained.

As for legislative changes to be effected through the Bill, one proposal is to remove the right to land in Hong Kong enjoyed by British citizens who had lived here continuously for seven years or more.

"With the removal of the right to land, it is intended that British citizens who enjoy this right in Hong Kong will be given unconditional stay in the territory automatically," the spokesman said.

"Another change proposed by the Bill is to remove the special deportation arrangements enjoyed by British citizens so that the arrangements that apply to all foreign nationals will also be applicable to them," he added.

The spokesman noted that with the Basic Law coming into effect after the transfer of sovereignty on July 1, British citizens will be able to acquire the right of abode in the HKSAR just as other persons not of Chinese nationality provided that they fulfil the requirements of Article 24(2)(4) of the Basic Law.

"They will then be eligible for a Hong Kong permanent identity card," he said.

An information leaflet detailing the proposed changes is available at all Immigration Offices, District Offices and the British Trade Commission. It is also available on the Internet Hong Kong Immigration Home Page <http://www.info.gov.hk/immd/>.

Enquiries may be made by telephone on the hotline 2824 4055, by fax on 2598 8388 or by E-mail: roa@immd.gcn.gov.hk. They can also be made in person at the special enquiries counter, British Citizens Unit, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

End

Expressways to open for traffic next week

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Two major access roads to the Chek Lap Kok new airport -- West Kowloon Expressway (WKE) and Kwai Chung Viaduct (KCV) -- will be opened for traffic on February 20 (Thursday) to provide an alternative route for motorists travelling between Tsim Sha Tsui and Kwai Chung along a segregated new road network.

On Hong Kong Island, the Sai Ying Pun Section of Route 7 between Sheung Wan and Belcher Bay is all set for opening on February 26 to provide a relief to the congested ground traffic in Sai Ying Pun.

The opening of these new roads was revealed today (Thursday) by Chief Engineer (Western Harbour Link) of Highways Department, Mr Adrian Ng, at a joint press conference with the Transport Department.

West Kowloon Expressway is a 4.2 kilometre-long dual three-lane expressway linking Kwai Chung Viaduct in the north and the Western Harbour Crossing in the south.

From WKE, motorists can connect to Lai Chi Kok area at the Lai Wan Interchange and to Jordan area at the Yau Ma Tei Interchange.

Kwai Chung Viaduct is a three kilometre-long dual four-lane expressway through Kwai Chung.

It links the Rambler Channel Bridge in the north and the WKE in the south with connection to Kwai Chung Road, Tsuen Wan Road, Ching Cheung Road and the Container Port Road.

Mr Ng said the two new expressways would serve as a direct road link between Kwai Chung and the South Kowloon area.

"The opening of these two new major roads will help relieve existing congestion on Kwai Chung Road and in West Kowloon.

"Their opening will also enable the public and motorists to familiarise themselves with the new road network before the opening of the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) which is expected to commence operation later this year."

Construction of the WKE commenced in August 1993 while works for KCV started in May 1993. The total cost of the two contracts involved amounts to about \$4,500 million.

On traffic arrangements, Chief Engineer (Kowloon) of Transport Department, Mrs Joanna Kwok, said WKE would serve as a direct road link between South Kowloon and Kwai Chung.

"Motorists can expect a smooth journey from Kwai Chung to Jordan Road. However, a number of slip roads at the Yau Ma Tei Interchange will not be opened at this stage. Pending the opening of the Western Harbour Crossing, these elevated roads at the southern end will only be connected to Jordan Road.

"The three-lane Jordan bound carriageway will be reduced to one lane before entering the Yau Ma Tei Interchange with speed limit reduced from 80 km per hour to 50 km. Motorists will experience some delay at this point when exiting WKE.

"The situation will be improved upon the opening of all the slip roads when WHC commences its operation.

"Furthermore, we expect that the queue-up would be confined to the southern end of WKE and will not affect the traffic of the local road network. The Transport Department will closely monitor the situation and make any necessary improvements."

Mrs Kwok noted that there are still road work along Canton Road, Ferry Street and Jordan Road.

"To avoid overloading these local roads, motorists from Kwai Chung/Lai Chi Kok heading for Cross Harbour Tunnel (CHT) or Hung Hom are advised to use the West Kowloon Corridor instead of the new WKE/KCV.

"The opening of the new roads will help enable some of the traffic for South Kowloon to bypass the traffic heading towards CHT and Hung Hom along the parallel routes such as West Kowloon Corridor and Nathan Road," she said.

Upon the opening of WHC, Mrs Kwok noted there would be a new network of access roads connecting to the tunnel on both sides of the harbour (Annex A) with appropriate road signs directing traffic.

As for the Sai Ying Pun Section of Route 7, it is a 1.7 km dual two-lane elevated structure along Connaught Road West linking Rumsey Street Flyover in the east and Belcher Bay Link in the west.

Near its western end, it links up with the existing Hill Road flyover serving as a connection for traffic from Pokfulam area.

Senior Engineer (Central and Western) of Transport Department, Mrs Sorais Lee, noted that the opening of this section would provide a bypass to the existing congested ground level road network at Sai Ying Pun and would help improve the local traffic situation in the area.

Mrs Lee said there would be five new or modified junctions opened at the same time when WHC starts operation (Annex A).

She noted that the local road network in Western has been adjusted since mid-1996 to gear up for the opening of WHC.

With the completion of Smithfield Extension in late 1997, WHC traffic will have an additional alternative route to and from Pokfulam Road via Belcher Bay Link, she added.

To advise motorists of the most direct and shortest route to their destinations on the opposite side of the harbour, new logos representing these three crossings have been designed.

These new tunnel logos will be displayed on new and existing directional signs along the relevant major routes leading to the crossings.

The colour of the logos shown on direction signs on expressways will be white on green background whereas those on other roads will be white on blue background.

Annex A

Traffic arrangements for the opening of Western Harbour Crossing (WHC)

Kowloon

Upon the opening of WHC at a later date, all the slip roads at Yau Ma Tei Interchange will be opened. By then, traffic can access the WHC via the following routes:

- * From Kwai Chung district via West Kowloon Expressway
- * From Lai Chi Kok/Cheung Sha Wan area via West Kowloon Corridor
- * From Mong Kok/Tai Kok Tsui area via Cherry Street and Road P1 (S/B)
- * From Yau Ma Tei area via Waterloo Road/Ferry Street/Kansu Street
- * From Jordan/Tsim Sha Tsui area via Jordan Road/Canton Road

For the returning trip, traffic exit from the WHC can take up the following routes :

- * WKE to Kwai Chung district
- * Yau Ma Tei Interchange, West Kowloon Corridor to Lai Chi Kok/Cheung Sha Wan area
- * Road P1(N/B), Cherry Street to Mong Kok/Tai Kok Tsui area
- * Yau Ma Tei Interchange, Waterloo Road/Ferry Street for Yau Ma Tei area
- * Yau Ma Tei Interchange, Jordan Road/Canton Road for Jordan/Tsim Sha Tsui area

Hong Kong

There will be five new/modified junctions opened at the same time as the opening of WHC, namely Connaught Road West/Water Street, Connaught Road West/Eastern Street, Connaught Road West/Hill Road, Des Voeux Road West/Hill Road and Connaught Road West/Des Voeux Road West/Tram Depot access.

Traffic can access the WHC via the following routes:-

- * From Pokfulam area via Victoria Road, Cadogan Street, Kennedy Town New Praya and Belcher Bay Link;
- * From Pokfulam area via Pokfield Road, Smithfield, Forbes Street, Cadogan Street, Kennedy Town New Praya and Belcher Bay Link;
- * From Pokfulam area via existing Hill Road Flyover and Connaught Road West;
- * From Bonham Road via Pokfulam Road, Second Street, Water Street and Connaught Road West;
- * From Central via Rumsey Street flyover or slip road near Eastern Street and Route 7 at Sai Ying Pun.

For the returning trip, traffic exit from the WHC can take up the following routes :

- * Route 7 and Rumsey Street Flyover to the east;
- * Route 7, Belcher Bay Link, Sands Street, Rockhill Street Extension, Belcher's Street and Victoria Road to Pokfulam area;
- * Route 7, Belcher Bay Link, Sands Street, Rockhill Street Extension, Pokfield Road to Pokfulam Road;
- * Sai Ying Pun interchange, Connaught Road West, Western Street, Pokfulam Road to Bonham Road.

With the completion of Smithfield Extension in late 1997, WHC traffic will have an additional alternative route to/from Pokfulam Road via Belcher Bay Link. Sufficient signs will be erected to guide motorists the various routings.

End

Year of Heritage set to get off to flying start

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The community has nowadays attached much greater importance to the preservation of cultural relics than it was 20 years ago, the Chairman of the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB), Professor David Lung, said today (Thursday).

He said that since the establishment of the Board in 1976, it had made every endeavour in the preservation of the territory's culture and history.

"It is essential that this effort be sustained so that the message of heritage preservation could be further driven home," he stressed.

Speaking at a press conference to announce details of the "Year of Heritage", Professor Lung noted that Hong Kong had 6,000 years of heritage ranging from archaeological sites containing pottery and stone implements of the prehistoric era to the splendid traditional buildings of Chinese and Western styles of more recent times.

"Through the Year of Heritage project, we hope to raise the understanding and awareness of the general public to our marvellous heritage and thereby increase commitment to its protection for future generations," he added.

The Year of Heritage is jointly organised by the AAB, the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust and the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the Broadcasting, Culture and Sport Branch. The event will be officially kicked off by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, at the Chater Garden, Central, next Friday (February 21).

This will be followed by a wide range of activities throughout the year for public participation such as lectures and talks, exhibitions, archaeological workshops and field camps, heritage tours and walks, mini-concerts at historical monuments, setting up a "Friends of Heritage", as well as an International Heritage Conference.

Also attending the press conference were the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, Mr Alexander Au; the Chairman of the Council of the Trust, Mr Edward Ho; and the Deputy Secretary for Broadcasting, Culture and Sport, Mrs Jenny Wallis.

Mr Au stated that the establishment and effective functioning of the Trust depended entirely on donations from various individuals and organisations. "It is the enthusiastic support from the community that enables the Trust to allocate over \$3 million to sponsor the Year of Heritage project," he said.

To generate more resources for the Trust to promote the heritage work in Hong Kong, Mr Au said the Trust would organise a number of fund-raising activities including sale of souvenirs which are both educational and collectable; a Heritage Day in Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, followed by a basin meal; an Urban Heritage Walk at the Central and Western Heritage Trail; and a fund-raising dinner party.

Mr Ho also joined others to urge the public to participate in the well-designed activities and to work together with interested parties to promote the preservation and conservation of local heritage.

Television and radio APIs and posters have been produced to publicise the event ; quarterly newsletters and leaflets will also be published to keep the general public informed of the on-going programmes of the Year of Heritage.

Members of the public are welcomed to call the AMO either on telephone 2721 2326 or by fax 2721 6216 for more information.

End

Hong Kong's external trade statistics for December 1996

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In December 1996, the value of re-exports grew by 3.5% over a year earlier to \$98.4 billion, while the value of domestic exports decreased by 9.6% to \$18.2 billion. Meanwhile, imports increased by 2.9% to \$131.4 billion.

The Census and Statistics Department today (Thursday) released detailed statistics on external trade with breakdown by country/territory and commodity for December and the whole year of 1996.

Changes in the value of Hong Kong's re-exports to ten main destinations are shown in Table 1.

Comparing December 1996 with December 1995, increases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Singapore (+22%), the United States (+9.9%), China (+9.1%), the United Kingdom (+3.8%) and the Netherlands (+3.8%).

However, decreases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Germany (-15%), South Korea (-7.3%), Japan (-5.6%), Taiwan (-1.0%) and France (-0.4%).

Comparing 1996 with 1995, the value of re-exports to most main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes : Japan (+14%), the United Kingdom (+12%), the Netherlands (+9.3%), Singapore (+9.1%), China (+8.8%), France (+7.9%), the United States (+4.9%), South Korea (+4.1%) and Germany (+3.2%).

However, the value of re-exports to Taiwan decreased by 4.0%.

Taking all destinations together, the value of re-exports for the whole year of 1996 was \$1,185.8 billion, 6.6% higher than that in 1995.

Table 2 shows changes in the value of re-exports of ten principal commodity divisions.

Comparing 1996 with 1995, more notable increases in the value of re-exports were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$13.4 billion or 23%); clothing (by \$9.6 billion or 11%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$9.1 billion or 8.0%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$7.3 billion or 5.1%); footwear (by \$5.1 billion or 8.4%); and photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$4.8 billion or 9.4%).

Over the same period, decreases in the value of re-exports were registered for telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$3.0 billion or 2.6%).

Changes in the value of domestic exports to ten main destinations are shown in Table 3.

Comparing December 1996 with December 1995, the value of domestic exports to all main destinations showed decreases of various magnitudes : Singapore (-25%), Taiwan (-20%), the Netherlands (-17%), Japan (-17%), the United Kingdom (-16%), Canada (-14%), Germany (-13%), the United States (-8.6%), France (-5.5%) and China (-0.2%).

Comparing 1996 with 1995, the value of domestic exports to all main destinations showed decreases of various magnitudes : Singapore (-18%), Taiwan (-16%), the United States (-12%), Canada (-10%), the Netherlands (-9.3%), France (-7.1%), Germany (-6.5%), Japan (-4.6%), the United Kingdom (-3.1%) and China (-3.0%).

Taking all destinations together, the value of domestic exports, at \$212.2 billion, decreased by 8.4% in 1996.

Table 4 shows changes in the value of domestic exports of ten principal commodity divisions.

Comparing 1996 with 1995, the value of domestic exports of most principal commodity divisions decreased. More notable decreases were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$4.8 billion or 27%); clothing (by \$4.4 billion or 5.9%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$2.0 billion or 12%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$2.0 billion or 19%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares (by \$1.8 billion or 9.0%); and electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$1.5 billion or 4.8%).

Over the same period, an increase in the value of domestic exports was registered for professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus (by \$382 million or 13%).

Changes in the value of imports from ten main suppliers are shown in Table 5.

Comparing December 1996 with December 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from Malaysia (+24%), Germany (+16%), the United Kingdom (+12%), Singapore (+9.7%), Italy (+3.8%), China (+3.2%), South Korea (+2.1%) and Japan (+0.9%).

However, the value of imports from the United States and Taiwan decreased by 3.4% and 2.0% respectively.

Comparing 1996 with 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from Malaysia (+18%), Italy (+15%), the United Kingdom (+9.2%), Germany (+5.8%), China (+5.7%), the United States (+5.2%) and Singapore (+4.4%).

However, there was basically no change in the value of imports from South Korea while the value of imports from Japan and Taiwan decreased by 5.9% and 4.7% respectively.

Taking all sources together, the value of imports, at \$1,535.6 billion, increased by 3.0% in 1996.

Table 6 shows changes in the value of imports of ten principal commodity divisions.

Comparing 1996 with 1995, more notable increases in the value of imports were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$12.6 billion or 18%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$10 billion or 5.4%); clothing (by \$7.5 billion or 7.7%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$4.1 billion or 4.0%); and footwear (by \$4.0 billion or 7.6%).

Over the same period, decreases in the value of imports were recorded for telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$4.9 billion or 3.4%); textiles (by \$2.7 billion or 2.1%); and non-metallic mineral manufactures (by \$569 million or 1.3%).

All the trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and no account has been taken of changes in prices between the periods of comparison.

A separate analysis of the volume and price movements of external trade for December 1996 will be released in early March 1997.

Detailed trade statistics analysed by commodity and by country/territory are published in trade statistics reports.

The December 1996 issue of the "Hong Kong External Trade" with detailed analyses on the performance of Hong Kong's external trade in December 1996 will be on sale at \$129 per copy around 20 February 1997.

The report can be purchased at either the Government Publications Centre, Ground Floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, or the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Enquiries regarding regular subscription to this report may be directed to the Publications (Sales) Office, 28th Floor, Siu On Centre, 188 Lockhart Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong (Tel. No. 2598 8194) and enquiries on trade statistics to the Census and Statistics Department (Tel. No. 2582 4915).

TABLE 1 : RE-EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 96 OVER DEC 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 96 OVER JAN-DEC 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	38,814	+ 9.1	417,752	+ 8.8
UNITED STATES	18,272	+ 9.9	242,342	+ 4.9
JAPAN	5,913	- 5.6	80,154	+ 14.4
GERMANY	3,694	- 15.4	47,216	+ 3.2
UNITED KINGDOM	2,831	+ 3.8	35,991	+ 11.6
SINGAPORE	2,731	+ 22.4	28,388	+ 9.1
TAIWAN	2,326	- 1.0	26,638	- 4.0
SOUTH KOREA	1,581	- 7.3	20,091	+ 4.1
FRANCE	1,611	- 0.4	18,823	+ 7.9
NETHERLANDS	1,605	+ 3.8	18,261	+ 9.3

TABLE 2 : RE-EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 96 OVER DEC 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 96 OVER JAN-DEC 95 (% CHANGE)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	10,690	+ 3.3	149,528	+ 5.1
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	10,446	+ 3.0	123,764	+ 8.0
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	8,835	- 6.4	115,959	- 2.6
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	7,961	+ 5.7	100,524	+ 10.5
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	7,241	- 3.0	95,719	+ 3.1
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	7,053	+ 21.8	70,757	+ 23.4
FOOTWEAR	5,291	+ 1.5	65,233	+ 8.4
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	4,474	- 6.0	55,519	+ 9.4
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	3,125	+ 11.1	36,785	+ 5.1
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	2,433	+ 8.1	29,134	+ 8.4

TABLE 3 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 96 OVER DEC 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 96 OVER JAN-DEC 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	5,264	- 0.2	61,620	- 3.0
UNITED STATES	4,852	- 8.6	53,860	- 12.1
GERMANY	1,150	- 12.8	11,388	- 6.5
JAPAN	813	- 16.9	11,335	- 4.6
UNITED KINGDOM	905	- 16.1	10,597	- 3.1
SINGAPORE	733	- 25.3	10,009	- 18.2
TAIWAN	501	- 19.9	6,705	- 15.9
NETHERLANDS	494	- 17.0	4,674	- 9.3
CANADA	333	- 14.2	3,885	- 10.2
FRANCE	287	- 5.5	2,947	- 7.1

TABLE 4 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 96 OVER DEC 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 96 OVER JAN-DEC 95 (% CHANGE)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	6,796	- 4.4	69,447	- 5.9
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	2,373	- 22.3	30,357	- 4.8
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WARES)	1,419	- 4.4	18,092	- 9.0
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	1,216	- 14.7	15,084	- 11.7
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,021	- 4.8	13,693	- 2.4
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	1,036	- 23.8	13,090	- 26.7
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	706	- 10.3	8,586	- 18.9
MANUFACTURES OF METALS	345	- 23.9	4,213	- 10.1
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	248	- 30.4	3,823	- 15.2
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CONTROLLING INSTRUMENTS AND APPARATUS	294	+ 10.6	3,298	+ 13.1

TABLE 5 : IMPORTS FROM TEN MAIN SUPPLIERS

SUPPLIER	DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 96 OVER DEC 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 96 OVER JAN-DEC 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	46,612	+ 3.2	570,442	+ 5.7
JAPAN	18,762	+ 0.9	208,239	- 5.9
TAIWAN	10,759	- 2.0	123,202	- 4.7
UNITED STATES	9,709	- 3.4	121,058	+ 5.2
SINGAPORE	6,965	+ 9.7	81,495	+ 4.4
SOUTH KOREA	6,039	+ 2.1	73,302	*
MALAYSIA	3,283	+ 24.0	33,994	+ 18.0
GERMANY	3,271	+ 16.4	33,884	+ 5.8
UNITED KINGDOM	3,011	+ 12.4	33,264	+ 9.2
ITALY	2,919	+ 3.8	31,799	+ 15.1

* DENOTES LESS THAN 0.05%

TABLE 6 : IMPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 96 OVER DEC 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 96 OVER JAN-DEC 95 (% CHANGE)
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	16,784	+ 6.9	195,942	+ 5.4
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	12,115	- 3.9	141,033	- 3.4
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	9,993	- 3.8	127,730	- 2.1
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	8,379	+ 9.3	108,193	+ 4.0
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	9,117	+ 7.5	105,419	+ 7.7
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	7,598	+ 12.3	81,382	+ 18.4
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,113	- 0.1	62,745	*
FOOTWEAR	4,819	+ 2.7	56,734	+ 7.6
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	3,381	- 3.0	43,919	+ 4.7
NON-METALLIC MINERAL MANUFACTURES	3,737	+ 10.2	43,391	- 1.3

* DENOTES LESS THAN 0.05%

End

Weather of January 1997

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January 1997 was on the whole warmer and wetter than normal. The monthly mean temperature of 16.7 degrees and total rainfall of 44.6 millimetres were 0.9 degrees and 21.2 millimetres higher than the normal figures of 15.8 degrees and 23.4 millimetres respectively.

The month also saw a total sunshine of 173.6 hours which was 21.2 hours higher than normal.

The fine and sunny weather at the end of 1996 continued into 1997. It turned cloudy and rainy on January 2 as winds freshened from the east. Winds changed to northerly gradually the next evening and rain eased off on January 4.

A weak cold front crossed the south China coast on January 5 bringing fresh northerly winds and drier air to clear the clouds. Winds became easterly on January 6 while the weather remained fine and dry for the next few days.

A hill fire broke out in Fei Ngo Shan on January 7 lasting for 15 hours. Trees in an area of 0.36 million square metres were destroyed.

A replenishment of the winter monsoon reached the south China coastal area on January 8. It remained fine and dry until January 12 when easterly winds returned. Cloudy condition set in and there were light rain patches on January 14. After the passage of a weak cold front on January 15, the weather became fine and sunny during the day.

Another weak cold front brought along generally cloudy condition to the territory again on January 18. It was misty or hazy at times inside the harbour during the next couple of days.

The weather became overcast with rain patches late on January 21. Meanwhile, an intense cold front formed over China and moved southwards.

Winds strengthened from the east early on January 22. A cargo vessel capsized near the Ninepin Group, fortunately all crewmen were rescued. In addition, a scaffolding collapsed in Lam Tin and a sign board in Jordan was blown down in strong winds injuring one person.

The cold front crossed the coast of Guangdong on January 23 with squally showers affecting Hong Kong. Temperatures dropped a few degrees in one hour. A minimum temperature of 10.2 degrees, the lowest in the month, was recorded on both January 24 and 25.

Drier air from the north cleared the clouds gradually on January 26. Apart from some cloudy periods on January 30, fine and dry weather prevailed until the end of the month. Temperatures rose to 23.9 degrees, the highest in the month, on January 31.

Only one tropical cyclone occurred in the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in the month. Details of the issuance/hoisting and cancellation/lowering of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1.1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal of January are tabulated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Warnings and Signals in January 1997

Type of Warnings/Signals	Beginning Time		Ending Time	
	day/month	hour	day/month	hour
<u>Strong Monsoon Signals</u>	21/1	2300	23/1	0630
	23/1	2115	24/1	1000
<u>Fire Danger Warnings</u>				
Yellow	1/1	0600	2/1	0615
Red	2/1	0615	2/1	1220
Yellow	5/1	0600	6/1	0600
Red	6/1	0600	6/1	1800
Yellow	6/1	1800	8/1	0600
Red	8/1	0600	8/1	1730
Yellow	8/1	1730	10/1	1800
Red	10/1	1800	12/1	0600
Yellow	12/1	0600	14/1	0600
Yellow	19/1	0600	19/1	1800
Yellow	24/1	0800	24/1	1615
Yellow	25/1	0605	27/1	0600
Red	27/1	0600	29/1	0600
Yellow	29/1	0600	31/1	0600
<u>Gas Water Heater Safety Alerts</u>	7/1	1630	12/1	1630
	23/1	1630	27/1	1615

Table 1.2 Figures and Departures from Normal - January 1997

Meteorological Element	Figure of the month	Departure from normal	
		above normal	below normal
Total Bright Sunshine (hours)	173.6	21.2	---
Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation (megajoule/square metre)	11.28	---	0.35
Total Rainfall (millimetres)	44.6	21.2	---
Mean Cloud Amount (%)	47	---	11
Mean Relative Humidity (%)	71	Normal	
Mean Daily Maximum Air Temperature (Degree Celsius)	18.9	0.3	---
Mean Air Temperature (Degree Celsius)	16.7	0.9	---
Mean Daily Minimum Air Temperature (Degree Celsius)	14.7	1.1	---
Mean Dew Point (Degree Celsius)	11.1	0.9	---
Total Evaporation (millimetres)	70.9	---	26.6

Remarks: All measurements were made at the Royal Observatory except sunshine, solar radiation and evaporation which were recorded at King's Park Meteorological Station.

End

Widening of Castle Peak Road

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Castle Peak Road between Siu Lam and So Kwun Tan will be upgraded and widened to dual-two carriageway.

The \$243-million contract for the works was signed today (Thursday) by the Highways Department's Acting Assistant Director/Major Works, Mr Ma Lee-tak, and representatives of B + B Construction Company Limited.

Supervised by Babbie BMT (Hong Kong) Ltd, works will commence by the end of this month for completion in mid-1999.

On completion, the 2.5-kilometre road section will be of 7.3-metre wide in each direction and greatly enhance traffic flow as its capacity will be increased to 4,000 vehicles per hour (v/h) comparing to the present 1,100 v/h.

End

Transfer of VMs from HIDC today

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A group of about 200 Vietnamese migrants in High Island Detention Centre, including more than 60 from the North Camp and 130-odd from the South Camp, will be transferred to the Centre's Security Unit today (Thursday) in preparation for their return to Vietnam under the Orderly Repatriation Programme.

They will go through pre-flight documentation and medical checks prior to their repatriation on February 18.

The transfer will be observed by independent monitors.

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the transfer of Vietnamese migrants selected for the Orderly Repatriation Programme from the High Island Detention Centre to the Centre's Security Unit this (Thursday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The four monitors comprised two non-official Justices of the Peace, Professor John Leong Chi-yan and Mr Leung Sau-chi; and representatives from two non-government organisations, Mr Thierry Taveaux from Medecins Sans Frontieres and Mr Milton Arab from Caritas, Hong Kong.

End

Philatelic products to be put on sale at stamp exhibition

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The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, said today (Thursday) that to commemorate the Hong Kong '97 Stamp Exhibition, the following products will be put on sale tomorrow:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Availability</u>	<u>Sales Quota</u>
1992 and 1997 Definitive Stamps Twin Pack	Exhibition Venue only	1
Serviced Souvenir Covers for Definitive Stamp Sheetlets "Hong Kong Classics" Series No. 7 to 9	Exhibition Venue only	2
"Hong Kong - Past & Present" Prestige Stamp Booklet	Exhibition Venue and all post offices	1
Definitive Stamp Sheetlets "Hong Kong Classics" Series No. 7 to 9	Exhibition Venue and all post offices	5

On the sale of the 1992 and 1997 Definitive Stamps in the form of twin pack in the Exhibition, Mr. Footman explained that this is not the last opportunity for the public to purchase the old definitive stamps as philatelic products.

He said there are plans to put on sale at selected philatelic offices on February 25, 1997, such stamps in the form of whole sheets for the latest 16 denominations, viz. 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1, \$1.20, \$1.30, \$1.40, \$1.60, \$2, \$2.10, \$2.50, \$3.10, \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50. Details of sales arrangement will be announced later.

End

1 Black Watch replace 1 Staffords

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The 1st Battalion The Black Watch have arrived in Hong Kong to replace the 1st Battalion The Staffordshire Regiment as the resident infantry battalion of the Hong Kong Garrison.

No strangers to the Territory, most of the 511 troops of the Battalion have already served here as the last military occupants of Stanley Fort between January 1993 and August 1994 and have now returned to be amongst the last military representatives of British sovereignty in Hong Kong. Like the Staffordshire Regiment, they will be unaccompanied by their families for the duration of their four-month tour.

The Black Watch were formed in 1725 as a result of the Scottish Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. After the Rebellion it became necessary to raise a force to oversee the warring clans. This force wore a tartan so dark it was almost black and as their role was to "watch" over the Highlands, they were nicknamed "Am Freiceadan Dubh" or "The Black Watch".

Famous for their kilts, bagpipes and fierce Highland Charge, The Black Watch have an illustrious battle history. Their first blooding occurred in Flanders in 1745 at the Battle of Fontenoy, where the French dubbed them the "Highland Furies". They subsequently saw action in the Americas, the Napoleonic Wars and 173 years after their first battle, they again fought at Fontenoy.

The French were so grateful for the stalwart assistance given to them in the Champagne region in 1918 that they honoured the regiment by erecting a cairn on the spot where The Black Watch soldier who had advanced the furthest had fallen, inscribed "Here shall flourish forever the glorious thistle of Scotland among the roses of France".

The Black Watch lived up to their motto "nemo me impune lacessit", translated as "nobody provokes me without being hurt", during World War II where they were the first Regiment to cross the Rhine and saw service in every major theatre of war, except Norway and Malaya. Since the end of the war they have seen operational service in Korea, Kenya and Cyprus and have conducted 11 tours of Northern Ireland.

Their duties during the final months of British rule in Hong Kong will be similar to those undertaken during their tour of the Territory in 1993-94. Assisting with anti-smuggling operations in conjunction with the Royal Hong Kong Police border observation duties and the guarding of key installations, will make up the daily tasks for 1 Black Watch. However their most high profile role will be as ceremonial troops during the handover ceremonies in June.

In July 1996, the Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alistair Loudon, returned home to Scotland to be stationed in Fort George, Inverness, after an absence from the Highlands for over 50 years.

End