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Transcript of Governor's media session

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The following is a transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after receiving the ICAC Review Committee Report from Dr Helmut Sohmen this (Friday) morning:

Governor: Good morning. Dr Sohmen has presented me the report of the ICAC Review Committee. I'd just like to place on record my gratitude, the Administration's gratitude, the community's gratitude to Dr Sohmen, Professor Lieh Mak and all the members of the Committee for a job extremely well done. I think the whole community recognises the importance of a credible and effective ICAC if we're to protect the rule of law and prevent the corrosive influence of, and impact of, corruption. I am extremely pleased with the work of Dr Sohmen's Committee has done which, I think, will enhance the position of the ICAC. We'll obviously be studying the report and all its details over the next few weeks and coming to conclusions as rapidly as possible. But, this is a difficult job which has been carried out extremely swiftly. I know how much effort and time has been involved from all sides. I'd just want to say that I am very pleased with the report and very grateful for the work that has been done. There is a press conference, I think you know, this afternoon when Dr Sohmen and Mrs Lieh Mak and colleagues will be answering questions. Thank you very much indeed.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Governor receives ICAC Review Committee report

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The Chairman of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Review Committee, Dr Helmut Sohmen, has presented the committee's report to the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, this (Friday) morning.

The committee was set up in February to advise the Governor on whether the ICAC's powers remain appropriate, necessary and sufficient and whether the ICAC's present systems of accountability for the exercise of the powers are adequate or should be modified.

The Governor said he was grateful to the members of the committee for all the work they had put into the report and would like to thank all those who contributed towards the review exercise.

"The Administration will now consider in detail the recommendations of the review committee, and will seek the Executive Council's advice on it in January.

"This comprehensive review of the ICAC's powers and accountability is the first since its establishment in 1974. The aim of the exercise is to renew the ICAC's mandate in the light of present day circumstances and the changing expectations of the people of Hong Kong," he said.

Copies of the report will be made available to members of the Executive and Legislative Councils, members of the public who responded during the public consultation period from April to June this year, as well as members of the various ICAC committees, Municipal Councils and District Boards.

Attention News Editors:

The following reminder is issued on behalf of the ICAC Review Committee:

The Chairman of the ICAC Review Committee, Dr Helmut Sohmen, and Vice-Chairman, Professor Felice Lieh Mak, will give a press conference this (Friday) afternoon to announce the committee's report on the review of the powers and accountability of the ICAC.

The press conference will begin at 4 pm in the GIS Press Conference Room, fifth floor, Beaconsfield House, Queen's Road Central. Copies of the report will be available from 3.30 pm for advance reading by media representatives.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Government to study ICAC review report

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The Government will be studying a report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Review Committee over the next few weeks and will come to conclusions as rapidly as possible, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said this (Friday) morning.

Speaking to reporters after receiving the report from the ICAC Review Committee Chairman, Dr Helmut Sohmen, the Governor said: "I think the whole community recognises the importance of a credible and effective ICAC if we're to protect the rule of law and prevent the corrosive influence of, and impact of, corruption.

"I am extremely pleased with the work of Dr Sohmen's committee has done which, I think, will enhance the position of the ICAC."

Mr Patten commended Dr Sohmen and his committee for a job extremely well done.

"This is a difficult job which has been carried out extremely swiftly. I know how much effort and time has been involved from all sides. I'd just want to say that I am very pleased with the report and very grateful for the work that has been done," he added.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

ICAC Review Committee submits report

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The following is issued on behalf of the ICAC Review Committee:

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Review Committee, set up in February to examine the powers and the accountability of the ICAC, has submitted its report to the Governor today (Friday).

The Chairman of the committee, Dr Helmut Sohmen, said the committee had met 15 times in the past nine months to deliberate on a wide range of issues within its terms of reference. It has come up with 76 recommendations and conclusions.

"We conducted a public consultation exercise from April to June to collect opinions from various sectors of the community since we believe that continued public support is crucial to the ICAC's success," Dr Sohmen said.

"In our review, we have taken full account of the views of the community as reflected through over 100 written and oral submissions made to us," he added.

"It is quite clear that the community wish to maintain a strong and effective ICAC which can tackle corruption successfully, and at the same time it wants to secure greater accountability in the use of the Commission's powers so that the rights of the individual will be protected. Throughout the review, we have tried to find the right balance between these demands and expectations," Dr Sohmen said.

"We have made a number of recommendations to improve the commission's accountability. These include measures to strengthen the functions of the Advisory Committee on Corruption, the Operations Review Committee and the ICAC Complaints Committee, and recommendations that the commission should step up its liaison with both the central Government and the Police.

"There cannot be accountability without transparency. We have therefore also suggested that the commission should provide more information on its investigative activities in its annual report. In addition, we consider that ICAC committees should also be accountable to the public by producing annual reports and by briefing the media regularly on their work during the year," Dr Sohmen added.

On the powers of the ICAC, Dr Sohmen said the committee was of the view that the ICAC would continue to need its special investigatory powers to fight corruption, particularly in the face of an increase in corruption reports during the past two years. "Members agreed that corruption offences are particularly difficult to investigate," he said.

However, he added, to provide better safeguards for the rights of the individual, the committee has recommended that the following powers should be transferred from the commission to the courts:

- * the powers to obtain certain types of information,
- * the powers of search, and
- * the power to restrain the disposal of property.

In addition, the committee has recommended that a suspect whose travel document has been retained by the ICAC should be given the choice of applying to the Commissioner or to the courts for its return. At present he can only make such an application to the Commissioner.

"In other matters, such as the use of the power of dismissal under section 8(2) of the ICAC Ordinance, we consider the Commissioner should give the officer concerned a chance to defend himself and that the Commissioner should seek the advice of the Advisory Committee on Corruption before he comes to a decision on the case," Dr Sohmen said.

"On section 30 of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance concerning the disclosure of ICAC investigations, we believe that the existing provision strikes the right balance between the need, on the one hand, to ensure that a suspect is not forewarned and therefore has the opportunity to destroy evidence, while at the same time protecting the reputation of an individual who is still under investigation, and respect for the freedom of expression on the other.

"This section was examined, debated and upheld by the Legislature as recently as 1992 and the circumstances have not changed since then," Dr Sohmen said. "It was also debated at length in the committee and we had considered submissions from the Hong Kong Journalists Association. At the end, a clear majority of members favoured retention."

Apart from Dr Sohmen, the committee had Professor Felice Lieh Mak as its Vice-Chairman. Other members were Ms Christine Loh Kung-wai, Mr Jimmy McGregor, Mr Anthony Neoh, Mr William Wan Hon-cheung and Mr Norman Yuen Kee-tong. The official members were the Attorney General, Mr Jeremy Mathews, and the Director of Administration, Mr Richard Hoare.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Proposed amendments to Employment Ordinance agreed by LAB

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At a special meeting held at the Labour Department Headquarters this (Friday) afternoon, members of the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) agreed on a package of improvements to severance and long service payments under the Employment Ordinance.

Details of the LAB's agreed package are as follows:

- a) To remove the ceiling of 12 months' wages for the calculation of severance payment (SP) and long service payment (LSP);

- b) To increase the years of service for the calculation of SP and LSP from the current limit of 18 years to 25 plus 50 per cent of any remaining service immediately upon effective of the amendment. This limit will be increased by two years for every subsequent year until it reaches 43 years by the year 2004. There will be no ceiling thereafter. Details of the agreed increases in years of service are given in the following schedule:

<u>Column A</u>	<u>Column B</u>
Enactment to year end	25
1996	27
1997	29
1998	31
1999	33
2000	35
2001	37
2002	39
2003	41
2004	43
2005 and thereafter	no ceiling

- c) To raise the absolute payment ceiling from the current limit of \$180,000 to \$210,000 upon effective of the amendment. This limit will be increased by \$20,000 for every subsequent year until it reaches \$390,000 by the year 2004. Details of the agreed increases in payment ceiling are given in the following schedule:

<u>Column A</u>	<u>Column B</u>
Enactment to year end	\$210,000
1996	\$230,000
1997	\$250,000
1998	\$270,000
1999	\$290,000
2000	\$310,000
2001	\$330,000
2002	\$350,000
2003	\$370,000
2004 and thereafter	\$390,000

The Commissioner for Labour and LAB chairman, Mr Stephen Ip, told reporters after the meeting he was glad that LAB had agreed on a comprehensive and forward-looking package of improvements that will bring immediate and long-term benefits to the workforce.

"Once again, LAB has proven itself to be a very important and successful forum for employee and employer representatives to discuss labour matters in a constructive and understanding manner," he said.

Mr Ip said the LAB had considered carefully the views of the Legislative Council and the interests and concerns of all parties concerned at today's meeting.

"The Administration will now proceed to draw up a new Employment (Amendment) Bill for submission to the Legislative Council in January next year after taking advice of the Executive Council.

"We are anxious to see the LAB agreed improvements implemented as early as possible," Mr Ip added.

The Commissioner for Labour said he hoped both Legislative Council members Mr Tam Yiu-chung and Mr Ho Mun-ka would find LAB's agreed package fair and reasonable, and that they would reconsider their position in the light of the latest situation.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

New LAB members appointed

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The Government today (Friday) announced the appointment of 11 employer and employee representatives to the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) for a two-year term starting on January 1, 1995.

A list of the new LAB members was published in the Gazette today. They are:

Employee representatives elected by registered employees trade unions:

* Mr Cheung Kwok-bui

* Mr Chu Ming

* Mr Leung Fu-wah

* Mr Leung Tsz-leung

* Mr Poon Siu-ping

* Mr Cheung Wood-lun

Employer representatives nominated by employer associations:

* Mr Martin Hayton of the Employers' Federation of Hong Kong

* Mr Ho Sai-chu of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce

* Miss Angela Koo of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce

* Mr Joseph Lau of the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong

* Mr Andrew Leung of the Federation of Hong Kong Industries

Appointed members:

* Dr Harry Lee

The LAB is a tripartite consultative body which advises the Commissioner for Labour on labour matters including legislation and the application of the International Labour Convention and Recommendations.

The new board will hold its first meeting in January 1995.

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Rules on Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board gazetted

A Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board (MECAB) has been established in the Labour Department to determine employment claims involving not more than five claimants whose amount of claim will not exceed \$5,000 each.

A set of rules prescribing the procedures and practices of the Board is published in the Gazette today (Friday) to enable it to commence operation.

The rules are generally modelled on the Labour Tribunal Rules to allow the Board to function in a quick and informal manner.

The MECAB (General) Rules provide for the setting up of a Registry and the procedures involving the transfer of claims, leave to appeal, hearing of appeals, and registration of awards and orders in the District Court.

The MECAB (Fees) Rules prescribe the form of payment and the amount of fees for claims, reviews and appeals.

The MECAB (Suitors' Funds) Rules provide for the payment of funds into and out of the Board. The rules also provide for an annual statement of accounts to be prepared in respect of the funds.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Bill ensures prudent management of Exchange Fund

The Government has proposed to modernise certain provisions in the Exchange Fund Ordinance to enhance the robustness of the legal framework for monetary management and for the prudent management of the Exchange Fund.

Details of the proposed legislation were contained in the Exchange Fund (Amendment) Bill 1994 which was published in the Gazette today (Friday).

A Government spokesman said the proposals were made to take into account the changes in Hong Kong's monetary system and international financial markets over the past years.

First, the bill seeks to provide the Financial Secretary with the statutory power to require any authorised institution to maintain an account with the Monetary Authority for the account of the Exchange Fund. This proposal will provide statutory backing for the "Accounting Arrangements", a crucial monetary reform measure introduced in 1988.

The "Accounting Arrangements" is a contractual agreement between the Financial Secretary as the Controller of the Exchange Fund and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) as the Management Bank of the Clearing House of Hong Kong Association of Banks.

Under the Accounting Arrangements, HSBC is required to maintain an account with the Exchange Fund and to manage the net clearing balance of the rest of the banking system in such a way that it will not exceed the balance in its account with the Exchange Fund.

Through the Accounting Arrangements, the Government has acquired an effective monetary management mechanism to influence the level of interbank liquidity and hence interbank interest rates, thereby greatly improving the Government's capability to deliver exchange rate stability.

"The proposed change will also facilitate the implementation of a new and more robust interbank payment system which will involve all licensed banks opening clearing accounts with the Monetary Authority," the spokesman said.

Secondly, the bill seeks to widen the investment ambit of the Exchange Fund such that the Financial Secretary can enter into any financial arrangements for the prudent management of the Fund, after consulting the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee.

Thirdly, the bill contains provisions that would remove an impediment for the Exchange Fund to raise funds in short notice when circumstances warrant.

Under the existing provisions, the Financial Secretary may borrow for the account of the Fund on the security of any asset held by the Fund or on the general revenue, but such secured borrowings are subject to a limit stipulated in section 3(4).

The bill disapplies the borrowing limit to borrowings secured on the Fund's assets. The borrowing limit will, however, continue to apply to Exchange Fund's borrowings which are secured on the general revenue.

Fourthly, the bill proposes a tightening of the present mechanism for a transfer of "excess assets" of the Exchange Fund to the general revenue and other funds of Hong Kong in section 8 of the ordinance.

The bill imposes an additional requirement in that the Financial Secretary must be satisfied that such a transfer would not adversely affect his ability to fulfil the purposes of the Fund as set out in sections 3(1) and 3(1A) of the ordinance, i.e. affecting the exchange value of the Hong Kong dollar and maintaining the stability and integrity of the monetary and financial systems of Hong Kong.

Fifthly, the bill makes provisions for the issue and redemption of certificates of indebtedness in computerised book entry form to improve the efficiency and security of the process.

Lastly, the bill transfers to the Hong Kong Government certain powers over the control of the Exchange Fund which are at present vested in the Secretary of State of the United Kingdom Government. These amendments are consistent with the provisions in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Suruga Bank granted licence

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A Government spokesman said today (Friday) the Suruga Bank, Ltd. (SBL) had been granted a banking licence to conduct business in Hong Kong.

Established in 1895, SBL is a regional bank based in Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture. It has 140 branches in Japan and an overseas branch in New York. It is the 51st largest bank in Japan and ranks 223rd in the world in terms of capital.

In Hong Kong, SBL has been operating a representative office since 1987.

The bank wishes to upgrade the representative office to a branch to offer a wider range of banking services to its clients, who have business transactions in Hong Kong, China and other Southeast Asian countries.

The principal business of the proposed branch includes trade financing, loan syndication, money market transactions and securities investments.

The spokesman said the continuing interest of foreign banks in entering the local market reflected Hong Kong's continued importance and attractiveness as a major international financial centre. The licence for SBL is the tenth banking licence granted in 1994.

There are now 180 licensed banks in Hong Kong, of which 148 are incorporated outside the territory. Of these, 43 are from Japan.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Tsuen Wan illegal rooftop structures dwellers should register for rehousing

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The Director of Buildings, Mrs Helen Yu, today (Friday) urges former dwellers of illegal rooftop structures to leave the roof of Cheuk Ming Building in Tsuen Wan as the closure orders are still in force.

"Any unauthorised entry or occupation is in breach of the closure orders," Mrs Yu said.

"Apart from workers of the Government contractor who are demolishing the unauthorised structures, the presence of any other person could cause disruption and pose danger to site."

"The Building Authority has the responsibility to ensure safety of demolition work. We would not wish to see any person injured," she said.

"The former dwellers should register themselves with the Housing Department for rehousing arrangements. There is no need for anyone to be homeless," she added.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Contract awarded for Govt facilities at Chek Lap Kok airport

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The Secretary for the Treasury, on the advice of the Central Tender Board, has approved the award of an Airport Core Programme (ACP) contract for the supply and installation of an Aerodrome Meteorological Observing System for the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

The contract, valued at about \$19.5 million, has been awarded to Hagenuk GmbH of Germany.

The company will be responsible for the supply and installation of meteorological instruments at the new airport. Information from the instruments will be processed and transmitted to air traffic controllers and airline operational staff for their reference.

The installation and commissioning of the system will be completed in early 1997.

The award of this contract brings the total number of ACP contracts awarded so far to 98, with a total value of over \$64 billion.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Bus lanes help improve efficiency

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Five bus lanes will be designated next Thursday (December 29) in the New Territories to improve the efficiency and reliability of bus services as part of the measures to address traffic congestion.

Announcing details of the scheme today (Friday), the Transport Department's Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories East, Mr Sin Kwok-keung, said the main objective of the scheme was to accord priority to buses, in particular franchised buses, by enabling them to jump traffic queues in the morning peak hours.

"Of them, three are on the southbound approach roads towards Tate's Cairn Tunnel in Sha Tin, and one each on Tai Po Road eastbound near Yuen Chau Tsai in Tai Po and on the northbound slip road of Lam Tei Interchange in Tuen Mun," he said.

The three bus lanes to be designated on the southbound approaches to the Tate's Cairn Tunnel between 7 am and 10 am daily except Sundays and public holidays are:

- * a section of about 250 metres of the kerbside lane on Siu Lek Yuen Road eastbound near Yuen Hong Street;
- * a section of about 40 metres of the middle lane on Siu Lek Yuen Road eastbound near its junction with the slip road leading to the Tate's Cairn Tunnel; and
- * a section of about 200 metres of kerbside lane on Tate's Cairn Highway southbound leading to the toll plaza of Tate's Cairn Tunnel.

"The bus lanes will benefit more than 90 bus trips of 17 franchised bus routes carrying more than 12,000 passengers through the Tate's Cairn Tunnel plying between the New Territories, East and South Kowloon and Hong Kong Island each hour during the morning peak period," he said.

"In addition, about 1,600 passengers of one green minibus route and nine residential service bus routes will also be benefited," he added.

Moreover, the Transport Department has planned to construct additional traffic lanes to provide bus-only lanes on the approaches to Tate's Cairn Tunnel. This is scheduled to be completed later next year.

The bus lane in Tai Po is for franchised bus only and is effective between 7 am and 10 am daily except Sundays and public holidays. It is on a section of about 80 metres of the kerbside lane on Tai Po Road - Yuen Chau Tsai section eastbound near Kwong Wang Street.

The concerned section of Tai Po Road fronting Kwong Fuk Estate and leading to Tolo Highway is one of the busiest roads in Tai Po.

Mr Sin said the bus lane would help about 19,000 passengers riding on more than 80 bus trips of 11 franchised bus routes bypassing the traffic queues on this main corridor.

It would also deter illegal loading/unloading activities by other vehicles in this busy section.

The 95-metre long kerbside lane of the northbound slip road of Lam Tei Interchange will be a 24-hour daily franchised bus-only lane the whole year round.

Together with the bus lane on the southbound slip road of Lam Tei Interchange which took effect in September this year, it will facilitate efficient bus service between Yuen Long/Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun Road and benefit more than 10,000 passengers riding on about 100 bus trips of seven franchised bus routes.

These two bus lanes have also enabled the provision of a pair of bus stops near Siu Hong Court and Fu Tei Village.

"While public transport will be benefited by the bus lanes by reducing journey time for the majority of commuters, general traffic might be affected with long queues, particularly at the approach roads towards Tate's Cairn Tunnel," Mr Sin noted.

"These measures will be closely monitored and their impact will be assessed and adjustments will be made if deemed necessary," he added.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Provisional results of retail sales survey for October

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The value of total retail sales in October 1994, estimated at \$17.1 billion, increased by 12% when compared with October 1993, according to the statistics released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

After discounting the effect of price changes over the period, total retail sales rose by 5% in volume in October 1994 over a year earlier.

The increase in October 1994 was mainly attributable to growth in spending on clothing and footwear, and consumer durable goods (other than motor vehicles).

Sales of these two items increased by 29% and 14% respectively in value; and 13% and 10% respectively in volume.

Moderate increases were recorded in the sales in supermarkets (9% in value and 2% in volume) and sales of foodstuffs, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (6% in both value and volume).

Meanwhile, sales in department stores and sales of jewellery and watches increased by 9% and 6% respectively in value, but both dropped by 1% in volume.

Sales of motor vehicles however continued to decrease by 12% in value and 20% in volume. Sales of fuels also decreased by 1% in value and 7% in volume.

Compared with September 1994, but bearing in mind that this comparison may be affected by seasonal factors, total retail sales in October 1994 increased by 2% in value and 1% in volume.

Comparing the period from January to October 1994 with the same period in 1993, total retail sales rose by 12% in value and 6% in volume.

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 September 1994 and the provisional figure for October 1994.

Table 2 shows the value and volume indices of retail sales in September and October 1994 for all retail outlets and by type of retail outlet, with average retail sales from October 1989 to September 1990 taken as 100.

Comparisons of the October 1994 results with those for September 1994 and those for October 1993, as well as comparisons of retail sales in the period from January to October 1994 with the same period in 1993 are also given.

The report containing the analysis of the October 1994 results is now on sale at \$3 per copy at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, Ground Floor, 66 Queensway; and the Publications Section of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be directed to the Wholesale and Retail Trade Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on tel 802 1258.

TABLE 1 : TOTAL RETAIL SALES

Total Retail Sales for October 1994 (Provisional Figure) = HK\$17,132.5 million
for September 1994 (Revised Figure) = HK\$16,749.5 million

TABLE 2 : VALUE AND VOLUME INDICES OF RETAIL SALES FOR SEPTEMBER 1994 AND OCTOBER 1994

(Monthly average of Oct. 89 - Sept. 90 = 100)

Type of Outlet	Type of index	Index number		October 1994 compared with September 1994		October 1994 compared with October 1993		Jan.-Oct.1994 compared with Jan.-Oct.1993	
		September 1994 (Revised figures)	October 1994 (Provisional figures)	(Points)	(%)	(Points)	(%)	(Points)	(%)
(A) FOR ALL RETAIL OUTLETS									
	Value	178.4	182.4	+4.1	+2.3	+19.3	+11.8	+19.3	+12.3
	Volume	139.2	139.9	+0.7	+0.5	+6.1	+4.5	+8.2	+6.2
(B) BY TYPE OF RETAIL OUTLET									
Foodstuffs, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (other than supermarkets)	Value	147.2	140.4	-6.8	-4.6	+8.4	+6.3	+10.1	+8.1
	Volume	108.8	106.3	-2.5	-2.3	+5.8	+5.7	+4.0	+4.0
Supermarkets ϕ	Value	165.3	151.9	-13.5	-8.1	+12.5	+8.9	+15.3	+11.0
	Volume	116.1	106.0	-10.0	-8.7	+1.7	+1.6	+4.1	+3.8
Fuels	Value	169.0	166.3	-2.7	-1.6	-1.7	-1.0	+6.7	+4.5
	Volume	116.3	114.5	-1.9	-1.6	-8.3	-6.8	#	#
Clothing, footwear and allied products	Value	238.7	259.4	+20.7	+8.7	+57.5	+28.5	+53.5	+27.2
	Volume	168.2	173.4	+5.2	+3.1	+20.0	+13.0	+26.4	+17.2
Consumer durable goods	Value	190.7	176.6	-14.1	-7.4	+1.4	+0.8	+4.8	+2.7
	Volume	158.2	142.8	-15.4	-9.7	-5.0	-3.4	-1.5	-1.0
- Motor vehicles and parts	Value	180.9	181.8	+0.9	+0.5	-25.1	-12.1	-6.8	-3.6
	Volume	128.0	125.7	-2.2	-1.7	-31.8	-20.2	-15.4	-10.3
- Consumer durable goods other than motor vehicles and parts	Value	197.8	172.9	-24.9	-12.6	+20.6	+13.5	+13.2	+8.1
	Volume	180.1	155.2	-24.9	-13.8	+14.5	+10.3	+8.5	+5.5
Department stores	Value	137.7	143.1	+5.5	+4.0	+12.0	+9.1	+11.3	+8.1
	Volume	101.8	101.5	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	+1.5	+1.3
Jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts	Value	153.7	169.6	+15.9	+10.3	+9.9	+6.2	+18.8	+12.5
	Volume	145.8	158.5	+12.7	+8.7	-1.8	-1.1	+8.4	+5.5
Other consumer goods not elsewhere classified	Value	227.0	254.4	+27.4	+12.1	+54.2	+27.1	+36.8	+21.7
	Volume	177.8	197.5	+19.7	+11.1	+34.9	+21.5	+24.1	+17.2

NOTE : ϕ Not including supermarkets operating in department stores.

Change within ± 0.05

More control on waste import and export

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The Government is to introduce a permit system to control the import and export of hazardous and other wastes in line with the international requirements on the control of transboundary movement of waste.

Under the Waste Disposal (Amendment) Bill gazetted today (Friday), potential importers and exporters are required to apply to the Environmental Protection Department for a permit for the import or export of hazardous wastes for either disposal or recycling activities.

Non-hazardous wastes imported or exported for disposal will also be subject to the same permit control.

The penalty for importing or exporting waste without a permit issued by the Environmental Protection Department will be a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment for the first offence and \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment for subsequent offences.

A Government spokesman said most of Hong Kong's existing waste traders are dealing with non-hazardous wastes to be used in recycling or recovery operations. They will not be affected by the new provisions.

The Waste Disposal Ordinance currently provides only for the control over the import of waste into Hong Kong for disposal.

The spokesman said: "Hong Kong's waste trade will be seriously affected if we failed to meet the higher international standard of minimising the environmental and health risks caused by the generation of hazardous and other wastes as well as their transboundary movement."

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Appointments to Antiquities Advisory Board announced

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The Governor has re-appointed Mr David Lung Ping- yee as Chairman of the Antiquities Advisory Board for a period of two years from January 1, 1995, it was announced in the Gazette today(Friday).

The Governor has also re-appointed nine members and appointed five new members for a period of two years from the same date.

The following is a full list of the members of the Board:

Mr David Lung Ping-yee (Chairman)

Mr Au Ka-fat

Ms Jane Cheng Chee-hing

Ms Wailee Chow

Dr Michael Lau Wai-mai

Mr Lew Kam-chuen

Mr Poon Huen-wai

Mrs Pamela Rogers

Dr Janet Lee Scott

Dr Elizabeth Sinn

Ms Gloria Tse

Dr Deric Daniel Waters

Mr Paul Yu Shiu-tin

The Chairman of the Urban Council or his representative

The Chairman of the Regional Council or his representative

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Port to protect Stone Age village

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The following is issued on behalf of the Port Development Board:

Development of the new container port on Lantau will ensure that the Neolithic village site, now being excavated on the Pa Tau Kwu Peninsula, will be fully preserved.

The Secretary of the Port Development Board, Mr Tony Clark, said the archaeological importance of the site had been taken fully into account in planning the port and its back-up areas.

For this reason the Pa Tau Kwu Peninsula had been designated an open area at an early stage in the port planning process.

He said although the area would, eventually, be surrounded by reclamation for the port, the peninsula itself would not be developed.

Archaeologists from the Chinese University believe the 3,500-year-old village, near Penny's Bay, could be the oldest complete village site in the territory.

It was discovered during a university archaeological survey of the North Lantau Expressway in 1991.

Mr Clark discounted reports that archaeologists were working against time to excavate the Neolithic village before the developers moved in.

"There will be no bulldozers there," he said. "What is now a peninsula will be preserved as a pleasant hill adjacent to the port," he said.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Marine Police Headquarters a historical building

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The Marine Police Headquarters Compound at Tsim Sha Tsui has been gazetted as a historical building under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance.

The Marine Police Headquarters compound (MPH) comprises the Main Building, a Stable Block and a Signal Tower (the Round House) which were built in 1884 and have since been occupied by the Marine Police except during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45).

Before the construction of the MPH, the Water Police (as it was then known) was stationed on an old wooden hulk which was completely destroyed by fire in February 1884.

The MPH after its opening, was described as a building of a graceful and even palatial appearance.

It occupied one of the most commanding positions and possessed an uninterrupted and significant view of every part of the harbour and also the Kowloon Peninsula.

The Main Building of MPH was originally of two storeys with the top floor added in the early 1920s.

Most of the rooms in the Main Building were originally barracks and duty rooms.

The two towers on the south-east and south-west corners of the Main Building were used as married quarters until 1975 when they were converted into offices and the Officers' Mess.

During the Japanese Occupation, the MPH was used as a base by the enemy navy, extensive tunnels under the lawn were built and the MPH was painted in camouflage colours.

These various measures helped to keep MPH in reasonable condition during the war.

After the War, the lawn was restored and the network of tunnels was filled in for safety reasons.

A special feature of the MPH is the Round House which is a two-storey tower built in 1884 on the very end of the promontory as a time signal station.

The time ball dropped at 1 pm every day to enable ships in the harbour to check their chronometers. It ceased to operate in 1907 when the ball and its mechanism were removed to Signal Hill.

The Round House is now used as an exhibition gallery by the Marine Police.

A spokesman for the Antiquities and Monuments Office of the Recreation and Culture Branch said: "The MPH is the fourth oldest surviving historical government building, ranking only after the Former Flagstaff House (built 1846), the Old Stanley Police Station (built 1859) and the Royal Observatory (built 1883).

"All these three latter buildings have been declared as historical buildings."

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

More secondary schools for Fanling, Tuen Mun and Tai Po

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The Architectural Services Department is inviting tenders for the construction of three secondary schools in Fanling, Tuen Mun and Tai Po. Each of the schools will have a main teaching block and a block of special rooms.

The main teaching block will contain 26 classrooms, a library, a computer room, staff rooms, administration offices and changing rooms. The block of special rooms will house facilities for science and technical subjects.

There will be a covered playground, an assembly hall, separate ancillary buildings, staff quarters, a basketball court, a car park and planting areas in all of the schools. Construction works are expected to start in March for completion by July 1996.

Tender forms and further particulars can be obtained from the Architectural Services Department, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway.

Tender offers will close at noon on January 20.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Sewage tunnel from Stonecutters Island to Kellett Bank

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The Drainage Services Department will construct a sewage tunnel from Stonecutters Island to Kellett Bank next year.

The tunnel works, which includes an outfall diffuser structure, will begin in March next year for completion in 27 months.

The land situated on the route of the tunnel is described in a notice gazetted today (Friday).

The tunnel will be constructed at a depth of more than 70 metres below surface.

Any person who has an estate or interest registered in the Land Registry on the land where the tunnel will lie may object in writing to the Director of Drainage Services on or before February 23, 1995.

The notice of objection should describe the objector's estate or interest in the land and the reasons for the objection.

The notice, and all relevant information in both English and Chinese, together with the related plans KCE/S/G/762A, 763A and 764A which show the route of the proposed tunnel can be inspected at the following Government offices during office hours from Monday to Friday (9 am to 4.30 pm) and on Saturday (9 am to noon):

- * Lands Department,
Survey and Mapping Office,
14th floor, Murray Building,
Cotton Tree Drive,
Central,
Hong Kong;
- * Sham Shui Po District Office,
Public Enquiry Service Centre,
6th floor, West Coast International Building, 290-296 Un Chau Street,
Sham Shui Po,
Kowloon; and
- * Kwai Tsing District Office,
Public Enquiry Service Centre,
2nd floor, Kwai Hing Government Offices Building,
Hing Fong Road,
Kwai Chung,
New Territories.

Members of the public who wish to seek additional information on the project may contact the Drainage Services Department on tel 834 9430.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Sewage facility for Pokfulam

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The Government will construct a 750-metre long submarine outfall within 39 hectares of foreshore and sea-bed at Sandy Bay, Pokfulam, to provide sewage disposal facility for the district.

The work will begin in September next year for completion by September 1997.

The extent of the area affected is notified in the gazette today (Friday).

The notice and its related plan can be seen at the Lands Department Survey and Mapping Office, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road; and at the District Lands Office, Hong Kong South, 20th floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai; the Central and Western District Office, Ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central; and the Southern

District Office, Shop 25, Ground floor, Mei Fung Court, Aberdeen Centre, 7-11 Nam Ning Street, Aberdeen.

The plan can also be purchased at the Survey and Mapping Office.

Any person who considers that his interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and sea-bed involved will be affected by the above undertaking may submit a written claim for compensation to the Director of Lands on or before December 23, 1995.

He should state in his submission the sum of money that he is willing to accept in full and final statement of his claim and should submit particulars to substantiate the claim.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Roadworks planned for west Kowloon

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The Territory Development Department is planning the construction of a network of roads in west Kowloon.

The roadworks, which form part of the West Kowloon Reclamation project, will link Sham Shui Po and Tai Kok Tsui with West Kowloon Expressway, Airport Railway Tai Kok Tsui Station and future developments on the new reclamation area.

The works include construction of roads to provide access to the proposed local developments, which will include education, government and industrial usages; reconstruction of sections of Tung Chau Street, Tai Kok Tsui Road, Pok Man Street and Hoi King Street, and construction of a subway at the junction of Oak Street and Cherry Street.

Other works involve construction of footpaths and planting areas within the roadside verges, and drainage and other ancillary works.

During the construction period, appropriate traffic and pedestrian accesses will be maintained so that any inconvenience to the public will be minimised. A notice of the proposed roadworks was gazetted today (Friday).

The plan and the scheme of the works can be seen at the following offices:

- * The Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Central and Western District Office, ground floor, Harbour Building, Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- * The Kowloon West District Lands Office, 10th floor, Yau Ma Tei Carpark Building, 250 Shanghai Street, Kowloon;
- * The Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Sham Shui Po District Office, sixth floor, West Coast International Building, 290 Un Chau Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon; and
- * The Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Yau Tsim Mong District Office, ground floor, Mong Kok Government Offices Building, 30 Luen Wan Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon.

Any person wishing to object to the proposal should write to the Secretary for Transport, Central Government Offices, East Wing, second floor, lower Albert Road, no later than February 21, 1995, describing his interest and manner in which he will be affected.

End/Friday, December 23, 1995

New road proposed to facilitate drainage maintenance

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The Territory Development Department has proposed building a new road in Chau Tau Tsuen, Yuen Long, for the maintenance of flood protection facilities.

The works also include reconstruction of the existing roads and footpaths and construction of associated earth, drainage and slope works.

A notice about the proposed works was gazetted today (Friday).

The plan and scheme can be seen during office hours at:

- * The Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Central and Western District Office, ground floor, Harbour Building, Pier Road, Central;
- * Yuen Long District Office, Yuen Long District Branch Offices Building, 269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long; and
- * Yuen Long District Lands Office, ninth to 11th floors, Yuen Long Government Offices, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long.

Anyone wishing to object to the proposals should write to the Secretary for Transport, Central Government Offices, East Wing, second floor, Lower Albert Road, no later than February 21 next year, describing his interest and how he will be affected.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Proposed roadworks for Ma Hang village

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The Governor-in-Council has authorised proposed road works at Ma Hang Village, the Government Gazette notified today (Friday).

The works are part of the Housing Authority's redevelopment programme for the village, which will also improve traffic conditions in Stanley.

The proposed road works include:

- * construction of a carriageway to connect the extended section of Cape Road in Chung Hom Kok with the existing Carmel Road in Stanley;
- * construction of a roundabout at the end of the existing Stanley Main Street near Stanley Bay; and
- * construction of a transport interchange with provision of a bus terminus and facilities for public transport along the proposed Carmel Road extension.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Footbridge for Yuen Long authorised

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The Governor-in-Council has authorised the Territory Development Department to build a footbridge in Yuen Long.

The footbridge forms a grade-separated system for pedestrian movement from the north-western part of Yuen Long Town, including Long Ping Estate, to Castle Peak Road by joining an existing footbridge in Chun Yin Square.

The works includes the shifting of a section of the proposed footbridge at On Shun Street westwards; the reconstruction of sections of the existing footpath at On Shun Street; the provision of unbreakable translucent screen to enclose a section of proposed footbridge at Chun Yin Square, and associated road layout amendments and landscaping works.

The works are scheduled to begin in July next year for completion in 24 months.

A notice of the footbridge construction was gazetted today (Friday).

The plan and scheme showing the proposed works can be seen during office hours at:

- * The Public Enquiries Service Centre of the Central and Western District Office, ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central;

- * Yuen Long District Lands Office, ninth to 11th floor, Yuen Long Government Offices, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, New Territories; and
- * Yuen Long District Office, Yuen Long District Branch Offices Building, 269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long, New Territories.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Mui Wo Fringe Development Permission Area Plan approved

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The Governor-in-Council has approved the Mui Wo Fringe Development Permission Area (DPA) Plan (No. DPA/LI-MWF/2), a spokesman for the Town Planning Board said today (Friday).

"The plan will provide a planning framework to guide and control developments within the DPA," he noted.

The Mui Wo Fringe DPA plan covers an area of about 240 hectares immediately to the west and south of the Mui Wo proper on Lantau Island.

The major economic activities in the area include commercial farming and market gardening, such as growing of vegetables and flowers.

The fringe area of Mui Wo remains one of the main agricultural areas on the island.

Although the area is not accessible to motor traffic at the moment, the availability of relatively flat land and its close proximity to the developed parts of Mui Wo has attracted certain undesirable developments such as open storage, temporary workshops and improper dumping.

These uncoordinated uses have caused general degradation of the rural environment.

"The Mui Wo Fringe DPA plan has been prepared to enable enforcement actions to be undertaken against unauthorised developments within the DPA," the spokesman said.

On the plan, about 12.4 hectares of land have been zoned for "Village Type Development". Within this zone, village house developments under the small house policy do not require planning permission from the Board.

The "Government/Institution/Community" zone, which covers an area of about 7.8 hectares, has been reserved for the development of community facilities to meet the local and district demands.

Other land uses shown on the plan include the "Open Space" zone of about 1.2 hectares for providing district open space for sports and recreation purposes, and the "Green Belt" zone of about 138 hectares to delineate areas with high landscape or amenity value.

"Unspecified Use" zoning has also been designated on the plan. Within this zone, all developments, except a few exempted uses such as agricultural use, ancestral hall, burial ground, plant nursery, shrine and tree plantation, require planning permission from the Board.

The approved plan is available for public inspection until December 30 from :

- * Planning Department,
16th floor, Murray Building,
Garden Road,
Hong Kong;
- * Lantau and Islands District Planning Office,
10th floor, Leighton Centre,
Leighton Road, Causeway Bay,
Hong Kong; and
- * Islands District Office,
20th floor, Harbour Building,
Pier Road, Central,
Hong Kong.

Copies of the plan can be bought at the Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, and the Kowloon Map Sales Offices, 382 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Board to review Outline Zoning Plan

The Government-in-Council has referred the draft South Lantau Coast Outline Zoning Plan to the Town Planning Board for further consideration and amendments to take account of changing circumstances and the latest planning proposals, a spokesman for the Board announced today (Friday).

"The Board will revise the Plan, which, after incorporating the latest amendments, will be exhibited for public inspection in due course," the spokesman said.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Tenders invited for village improvement works

The Civil Engineering Department is inviting tenders for village improvement works at Chung Uk Tsuen in Tuen Mun.

The work include forming four hectare of land, building 400 metres of road and 1,500 metres of footpath and constructing 1,500 metres of storm water drains and 1,800 metres of sewers.

The project is expected to start in March next year and will take 12 months to complete.

Tender forms and further particulars of the project can be obtained from the Chief Engineer, Development and Airport Division, Civil Engineering Office, Civil Engineering Department, second floor, Civil Engineering Building, 101 Princess Margaret Road, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon.

Tender offers for the project will close at noon on January 13.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Hydrocarbon wax allowed in chewing gum

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Hydrocarbon wax will be allowed as masticatory substance in chewing gum and other products of a like nature and use, a Government spokesman announced today (Friday).

Under the Mineral Oil in Food (Amendment) Regulation published in the Gazette, the permissible level of the wax should not exceed good manufacturing practice.

The spokesman noted that the use of hydrocarbon wax in chewing gum products had been cleared in major countries.

"Mineral hydrocarbon, usually in the form of hydrocarbon wax, present in the chewing gum poses no health hazard to the consumer as studies indicated that no significant amount will be extracted when the product is chewed," he said.

"The wax remains basically non-extractable from the gum base even in extreme cases such as in the presence of various digestive juices and acids," he added.

"To allow the acceptable use of hydrocarbon wax in chewing gum and other products of a like nature is therefore in line with international practice," the spokesman said.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Cargo working areas and ferry terminals remain open on holidays

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The Marine Department announced today (Friday) that all Public Cargo Working Areas would stay open from 7 am to 9 pm during the general holidays on December 26 and 27 and on January 2, 1995.

The working areas administered by the department are at the Western District, Sheung Wan, Wan Chai, Chai Wan, Yau Ma Tei, Kwun Tong, Cha Kwo Ling, Tsuen Wan and Rambler Channel.

A spokesman for the department said: "The Tuen Mun and Western District Public Waterfronts will also be open from 7 am to 9 pm during the holidays."

Macau Ferry Terminal will remain open 24 hours while China Ferry Terminal in Tsim Sha Tsui will be open as normal between 6 am and 10 pm on these days.

The Victoria Marine Office in Harbour Building will be open from 9 am to 11 am on December 26 and January 2, 1995 for entry and outward clearance only.

The Port Formalities Office in the same building will also be open from 9 am to 11 am on December 26 and January 2, 1995.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Public reminded not to bring back endangered species

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Members of the public visiting China and overseas countries during Christmas and New Year holidays are reminded not to bring back any endangered species or medicine containing or claiming to contain tiger or rhino ingredients on their return to Hong Kong.

Any person found importing, exporting or in possession of these prohibited items is contravening the Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance. It carries a maximum fine of \$25,000 on first offence and \$50,000 fine plus six months' imprisonment on subsequent offences upon conviction.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Department's (AFD) Acting Senior Conservation Officer, Mr Chan Ping-kwong, said today (Friday) that usually after a relatively long holiday, a number of seizures would be made at the checkpoints by Customs and Excise officers.

Mr Chan said: "Among the more commonly seized species were live or stuffed specimens of parrot, eagle, owl, slow loris, pangolin, cobra, land tortoise and coral."

From January to November this year, there were a total of 539 prosecutions for offences relating to the ordinance with a total fine of more than \$1.33 million.

He pointed out that Customs and AFD officers had stepped up inspection at the checkpoints and retail shops where endangered species might be offered for sale.

Mr Chan reiterated the Government's continued efforts to clamp down on illegal import, export and possession of endangered species to help conserve them and implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Shing Mun Visitor Centre closed for repairs

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The Shing Mun Country Park Visitor Centre has been closed to countryside visitors until further notice, the Agriculture and Fisheries Department announced today (Friday).

A spokesman for the department said the centre had to be closed because repair work was required on its air-conditioning system.

The spokesman pointed out that the centre was popular, with more than 36,200 visitors recorded in the past 12 months.

He said visitors could still tour the scenic Shing Mun Country Park and make use of its many facilities.

The spokesman said six other visitor centres in the territory were still open for public use. They are located in country parks in Aberdeen, Shuen Wan, Clear Water Bay, Sai Kung and Tai Mo Shan as well as at the Lions Nature Education Centre in Tsiu Hang.

The centres are open daily, except Tuesdays, from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. They are established with the main aim of helping visitors enjoy and understand the countryside through displays and visual aids.

The spokesman also called on country park visitors to help prevent countryside fires, especially when the fire danger warning is red or yellow, and keep the countryside clean and green.

End/Friday, December 23, 1994

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,326	0930	-522
Closing balance in the account	1,978	1000	-502
Change attributable to :		1100	-432
Money market activity	-430	1200	-430
LAF today	+82	1500	-430
		1600	-430

LAF rate 3.75% bid/5.75% offer TWI 121.8 *-0.1* 23.12.94

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.89	17 months	2605	6.35	98.75	7.43
1 month	5.21	23 months	2611	6.90	98.78	7.74
3 months	5.64	28 months	3704	6.15	96.50	7.96
6 months	6.27	34 months	3710	7.25	98.32	8.07
12 months	6.92	60 months	5912	8.15	99.45	8.46

Total turnover of bills and bonds - 10,001 million

Closed December 23, 1994

End/Friday, December 23, 1994