



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of Secretary of State's press conference

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Following is the transcript of a press conference given by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind, today (Tuesday):

Question: ....British Government has no responsibility on solving the Vietnamese boat people problem. Is it .... change of the British Government .... discuss it with your Chinese counterpart?

Mr Rifkind: I never said that the British Government has no responsibility. That may be what you read in the press; that doesn't necessarily mean it's what I said. I indicated that we have a very considerable responsibility right up to the 30th June next year because we are responsible for the foreign relations relevant to Hong Kong. We have been carrying out these responsibilities in, I believe, an effective manner. We have seen a very substantial reduction in the number of Vietnamese people in Hong Kong, from over 60,000 to around 21,000-22,000 at the present time. The Vietnamese Government have given certain assurances that repatriation will continue. Of course we wish to use every means to realise that objective and we will continue to act in accordance with our obligations and responsibilities as long as we are the sovereign power. That is our position and that will continue to be our position.

Question: Joan Ngai from TVB News. Yesterday you have mentioned that you are waiting for more information from China concerning about the SAR passport. What more information and assurance you would like to have from China in consideration for granting the visa-free to the SAR passport holders? And secondly, recently there's one Hong Kong man, Mr Lo Tak-shing gained a Chinese passport by his own way. Do you think that it will smash the British Government's confidence and that has had any effect on this in consideration for granting the visa-free?

Mr Rifkind: I indicated yesterday that the British Government had been waiting for some more information and details on the SAR passport so that we can then address the question of visa-free access. I also indicated that a lot of that information is now available and therefore I would expect that my ministerial colleagues and I will wish to address the question of SAR visa-free access for Hong Kong residents in the near future. I realise this is a matter which people are wishing to hear our position on. I think it's now going to be possible for us to address that issue and I would expect over the next two or three month period we will be able to deal with that matter - come to a conclusion.

Question: Foreign Minister, good morning, I am from HK Cable TV. On the Vietnamese boat people issue the Chinese side have just said that the responsibility cannot leave to the SAR Government; and so, this government after 1997. But this problem, assuming that it will last up till 1997 because the UN Commission on Refugees in Hong Kong also is not so optimistic on that, so will leave past 1997; and up to that what the British side will do? This is the first question.

Another question is: the Security Secretary in Hong Kong, Peter Lai, will attend a UN Conference on Refugees by the 14th of this month. I wonder if he will still be the member of the British team or will be changed to the member of the Hong Kong team?

Mr Rifkind: I'm sorry, can you say that second question again? I didn't catch your point.

Question: Mr Peter Lai will attend a conference in this month; will he still be a member of the British team or a member of the Hong Kong team? Change to be a member.

Mr Rifkind: I am not familiar with the detail on the second point but I understand that that is indeed likely to be the case. On your earlier point, the whole objective of course is to have the repatriation of the Vietnamese completed before June of next year. That is our objective. A lot of progress has already been achieved. I believe that what we should all be concentrating on is getting that process complete within the time scale that I have referred to. If the Vietnamese Government carry out their responsibilities and adhere to their commitments, that will be achieved. And therefore the other questions that you're asking are essentially hypothetical. I believe that there is a good prospect of getting this matter resolved within the time scale. I have had to emphasise that our responsibility as the sovereign power ends on the 30th June next year. That doesn't mean we will lose interest in the subject. Of course any help that we can give thereafter we would wish to do so, but we will not have the sovereign responsibility, and that is a simple point of fact. But the objective and the overriding effort is to complete this particular policy in the time scale that we have indicated and that is what we will be addressing ourselves to.

Question: This seems to be a common theme throughout the two days that you have been here but with time running out and so many outstanding issues what impact or what can your government still do to pressure the Chinese to the bargaining table on some of these things? What bargaining chips do you still have left and what influence can you still have on talks?

Mr Rifkind: There is one massive bargaining chip and that is that the Chinese Government, like Hong Kong and like the British Government, want to see a prosperous and successful Hong Kong continuing after 30th June next year. And therefore the fundamental questions are: what is required to ensure that; what is the best way of ensuring the maintenance of confidence, the retention of Hong Kong's reputation as a successful territory? And that is a matter on which we can indicate to the Chinese Government in a very clear and unequivocal way our judgment as to what is required. And our judgment is very much influenced by what we hear in Hong Kong. One of my reasons for being here is to listen and to learn. And there have been quite a number of views expressed over the last couple of days which I believe are very pertinent and very appropriate. And if the Chinese Government wish, as I believe they do, to see Hong Kong a success, then they have to be sensitive to the views, the aspirations and the concerns of the people of Hong Kong. If they are insensitive then they would be shooting themselves in the foot and I can't believe that they will wish to do that.

Question: But you are limited. There is no chance of sending gun-boats, for example.

Mr Rifkind: That is not part of our strategy. You're correct.

Question: What influence can you have? What can you do? As Mr Lee asked yesterday.

Mr Rifkind: I think what we have to do is be absolutely frank and honest, not only with the people of Hong Kong but also with our Chinese colleagues. We have to give them the benefit of our honest judgment as to what is required from their side to ensure confidence in Hong Kong. There are certain matters for which we are responsible, where we will take decisions, and there we have to do our best to reach the right decisions. There are other matters which will be decided by China. That is a fact. What we can do is seek to influence those decisions that they themselves will take.

Over the next couple of days I shall be seeing senior Chinese leaders. I will have an opportunity in private conversations as well as any public remarks to indicate my impressions from what I have been told, from what I have learnt, from what I understand to be the situation here in Hong Kong. Given that the Chinese want Hong Kong to be a success - it is overwhelmingly in their own interests that Hong Kong should be a success - then I believe that they will be listening very carefully to what I and others will have to say. And it is right and proper that that should be so.

Question: ....in what way does the British Government want to influence the work of the Preparatory Committee, in order to avoid the British authority diluting in Hong Kong?

Mr Rifkind: I think what is important is first of all that we do have good co-operation between Hong Kong and the Preparatory Committee. The Preparatory Committee is going to make very important recommendations to the Chinese Government and therefore the closest co-operation will maximise the prospect of influencing those recommendations so that they are sensible. I think it is crucial also that the whole concept of autonomy for Hong Kong requires the Preparatory Committee itself to be sensitive to what that concept of autonomy requires. It is not just the form of autonomy, it is also the substance of autonomy. The decisions that are relevant to the internal affairs of Hong Kong will in future still be taken in Hong Kong. That's what autonomy is about. And therefore the Preparatory Committee, I hope, will wish to reflect that fact in the judgments they themselves come to on the matters for which they are responsible.

Question: The likely parameter of the Preparatory Committee should be on the 400-member Selection Committee, and also.... of the provisional legislature. In what way the British Government can influence on these two issues?

Mr Rifkind: I think it is going to be very important for us to emphasise what Hong Kong itself is emphasising, that for any organisations or institutions it is important that they are representative of Hong Kong opinion; that if the people of Hong Kong are to be confident in institutions or in organisations then they must know that the people who are going to be serving on them are representative of what people in Hong Kong actually feel and wish. There has I think been, quite rightly, a great deal of attention addressed to that fact. It is a point which I entirely endorse and it will certainly be part of the representations that I would myself wish to make.

Question: Queenie Wan from Apple Daily. Foreign Secretary, can you tell us whether the British Government has any role in selecting the Chief Executive Designate? And will you take this opportunity when you are in Beijing to give some advice or basic criteria to the mainland leaders in selecting the Chief Executive Designate?

Mr Rifkind: Well, I would certainly not presume to recommend particular individuals for that post but I would certainly want to emphasise to our Chinese colleagues that the position of Chief Executive will not only be crucial given the important tasks that the Chief Executive will have to carry out, but that the choice of person will be seen as very indicative of China's wider approach to the future of the territory. And therefore it is crucially important that whoever is asked to take on this responsibility should be a person who will inspire confidence in Hong Kong; that the very high standards of government that the Civil Service here represent, the absence of corruption, the high quality of the civil service, the continuity that is a desirable objective between now and what happens after 30th June next year, that these should all be maintained. And it is going to be very important also that these very large numbers of people who make up the civil service should themselves have confidence in the person who will be the Chief Executive in future so that they will have a strong motivation to carry on their responsibilities with all the enthusiasm and dedication that we have seen in the past.

Question: Mr Secretary, Francis Moriarti of Radio Television HK. A two part question if I may. First, I have the transcript of what you said yesterday in LegCo regarding the Vietnamese boat people and you make it absolutely clear that this policy is a Hong Kong problem, comes within the concept of autonomy, it is a problem of Hong Kong. So, where do you see Hong Kong's responsibility ending and beginning, and where does Britain's responsibility pick up? Point number one.

Secondly, in going to China, beyond the power of candour and moral suasion, do you go armed with anything - offers of soft loans, trade, anything - that you can use to try to bring the Chinese around to your point of view on any of these issues?

Mr Rifkind: Well, on your first point, the position I think is very, very clear: the policy with regard to Vietnam is the policy of the Hong Kong Executive Council. We have the responsibility, being responsible for Hong Kong's external relations, of acting on behalf of the Hong Kong Government in any representations that are required with regard to Vietnam. We have done that. We will continue to do that as long as we are the sovereign power, as long as we have that sovereign responsibility. That is the proper constitutional relationship and it is one that I think is right and proper. We are not trying to shirk responsibilities. We have worked very, very hard and with considerable success, in co-operation with Hong Kong, on the Vietnamese issue. A lot has been achieved. I believe that the whole effort should be to ensure that we actually complete that process within the time scale that we have indicated and which the Vietnamese Government themselves are committed to, and that is what I am going to concentrate my efforts on.

With regard to your second question, I really do not believe that a government as substantial as the Chinese Government are going to be influenced by questions of soft loans on their policy towards Hong Kong. Hong Kong for China, as for Britain, as for Hong Kong, is a fundamental issue in its own right and I am sure that the proper approach is not to try to link Hong Kong with other matters. There are lots of other matters which we will no doubt be discussing but I do not believe in linkage of that kind, nor do I think it would impress my Chinese colleagues in the way that your question implied. I think we have to concentrate on the fundamental question: that China shares with Hong Kong and with Britain a desire to see Hong Kong's success continue; what are the necessary ingredients that will maintain confidence and that will maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and identity. That is the mature argument, that is the mature discussion that needs to take place, and that is the one most likely to influence Chinese opinion.

Question: Foreign Secretary, you said yesterday in LegCo that it was a matter of judgment as to the consequences for Hong Kong of any plans China might or might not have for changing institutions which have been set up under British rule. I'm wondering what in your judgment would be the consequences should those changes take place?

Mr Rifkind: I believe it will be deeply disappointing and a considerable cause of serious concern if institutions which have been established and which are based on democratic legitimacy were dismantled. I cannot see any advantage to the objectives that China herself has set of a successful, confident Hong Kong continuing in the years to come, I cannot see any advantage from the dismantling of institutions that have been established and I very much hope that point will be taken into account before any irreversible actions are taken.

Question: It would be a cause of serious concern, I mean not a major earthquake though?

Mr Rifkind: Well, I'm not wanting to try to limit the damage that would be caused. These again, as I say, are judgmental matters; we cannot be certain. And it would very much, I suppose, be influenced by what China's alternative proposals added up to; how representative they were seen to be; to the extent to which any proposals that China might have were to take into account the views of the people of Hong Kong. These are important questions which at the moment must be speculative. What is quite clear is that the dismantling of the institutions that have been established would be damaging and could be extremely damaging. The extent of that damage would depend upon what alternatives China was proposing and how representative and democratic these were seen to be by the people of Hong Kong and by the world as a whole.

Question: Paul Harrington of AFP. Foreign Secretary, but if you note that damage, do you then do something about it or do you just gauge it and leave it be?

Mr Rifkind: When you say do something about it, what are you envisaging?

Question: Well, it is not for me to have a plan.

Mr Rifkind: Well actually, no, I'm sorry, I mean people find it very easy to say what are you going to do about it, implying there is some magic formula that will absolve these problems if only the political will existed. Questions, if they are to be mature questions and justify mature answers, have to take into account these sort of points.

Question: Let me just say if I was Foreign Secretary I would like to think that I had a plan for this contingency.

Mr Rifkind: We cease to be the sovereign power next year. It is no use me suggesting to you or to the people of Hong Kong that the United Kingdom can suddenly produce some formula which will deal with the determined Chinese desire to dismantle institutions. What we can do is first of all make it unequivocally clear that we share the views of the Hong Kong people as to the damage that will be done by the dismantling of the institutions. And we can also emphasise that the fundamental question is whether Hong Kong's autonomy is to be respected and whether the people of Hong Kong will feel that their institutions are representative of the people of Hong Kong.

Question: Yesterday, in your preparatory remarks to the question session with legislators you emphasised the tremendous economic importance that Britain places on its economic ties with Hong Kong over those with China. At this late date in the negotiations for the transition after 1997, which would you say presents the weightier argument in Britain's mind, the economic or the political?

Mr Rifkind: Economic or political in relation to what?

Question: In relation to negotiations for the 1997 transition.

Mr Rifkind: So far as the United Kingdom is concerned our interest in Hong Kong is both an ethical obligation, a moral obligation, it is an economic interest, and it is the combination of these factors that influence our policy. I've heard it sometimes suggested at various times that the United Kingdom is simply looking to the future in terms of its relationship with China and may not give sufficient importance to the obligations it has towards Hong Kong. I want to emphasise that important though our economic links with China are, they are modest in comparison with our economic interests in Hong Kong. Whether measured by the level of trade or the level of investment, our economic involvement in Hong Kong, which will continue long after 1997, is infinitely greater even than our interest in terms of our economic relationship with China. And therefore Hong Kong's success is not just a matter of theoretical interest or political interest, there is also a fundamental economic interest that we share with the people of Hong Kong and therefore which influences our actions.

Question: I suppose the question still remains: is that economic interest, to one extent or another, greater than or of primary importance over the political?

Mr Rifkind: I can't make a valid comparison of that kind. They are both fundamental aspects of our thinking and it so happens they compliment each other. It is not necessary to make that choice.

Question: Mr Foreign Secretary, you said the Chief Executive should inspire confidence, especially in the civil servants. Do you think that the post should then go to a civil servant?

Mr Rifkind: I'm not going to try and speculate publicly what the precise criteria should be. I don't think that would be helpful, frankly. I think we can properly indicate both privately and publicly that the person chosen must be someone who is acceptable to the civil service in Hong Kong and inspires confidence amongst the wider public. People will have a fairly clear idea of what that points towards but I'm not going to speculate, myself, on the precise detail.

Question: If I could follow up on Paul's question earlier. You seem to leave open the possibility that if China goes ahead and dismantles LegCo, Britain would pursue a symbolic gesture such as an appeal to the World Court for instance, if that's indeed the case. Is that the case?

Mr Rifkind: That particular suggestion was one raised by Martin Lee in LegCo yesterday. I said that in the hypothetical circumstances that he was referring to, obviously if there was any specific action which was available which might influence events in a positive way, of course we would wish to look at that to see whether it would indeed help. But this is all very speculative and hypothetical and what we are anxious to do at this moment is to work towards persuading our Chinese colleagues to take actions only that would inspire confidence and not that would damage confidence in Hong Kong.

End

Announcement welcomed

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In response to press enquiries, a government spokesman today (Tuesday) welcomes the announcement in Peking by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind, on an agreement with the Chinese Government on the issue of the passports of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

"The agreement demonstrates that both sides are committed to making the HKSAR passport a success," he said.

"It gives assurances to the integrity of the production and distribution systems of the passports and should help to promote acceptability of the passports and continuation of travel convenience for Hong Kong residents.

"This will also enable the Hong Kong Immigration Department to make preparations for the issue of the passports from July 1, 1997."

End

### Way forward for labour importation schemes announced

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Following the endorsement of the Governor-in-Council, the Government today (Tuesday) announced that the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS) will be implemented on February 1, 1996 and a review will be conducted when 2,000 visas have been issued under the scheme.

At a press conference to give details of the SLS, the Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joseph W P Wong, pointed out that employers would only be allowed to bring in imported workers if they were genuinely unable to find local staff to fill their job vacancies.

"All applications will be considered individually and only genuine cases meeting all the criteria of the scheme will be approved," he said.

Mr Wong explained that to ascertain whether the SLS was achieving its policy objective, a review would be conducted when 2,000 visas had been approved.

"I am pleased that the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) has agreed to take on the monitoring role. Regular reports on the operation of the scheme will be submitted to the LegCo Manpower Panel," he said.

To implement the SLS, the Labour Department will need to step up its Job Matching Programme (JMP) and to expand the service to all job seekers. A job matching centre will be set up in the city to serve as a centralised one-stop unit.

To this end, the Commissioner for Labour will require an additional annually recurrent funding of \$6 million for 23 new posts in 1995-96. The department will also need \$10.5 million in 1995-96 and \$17 million on a full year basis to operate the job matching centre.

To safeguard the interest of local workers, Mr Wong pointed out that employers applying for imported workers must first make genuine efforts to recruit locally followed by a mandatory participation in the Labour Department's JMP.

"Where appropriate, the Employees Retraining Board will be asked to organise special courses to train up local workers to meet the requirements of the employers," he said.

Mr Wong said the Government had drawn up a tentative list of jobs which will not normally be approved in the SLS. However employers who can demonstrate a genuine need for imported workers in these job categories may submit applications to the Labour Department for consideration.

"We believe that this arrangement is necessary to facilitate the screening out of undeserving applications by the Labour Department," Mr Wong said.

On the labour importation scheme for the new airport core (ACP) projects, Mr Wong said the scheme would continue in its present form with improved arrangements to facilitate and promote the recruitment of local workers.

In order to encourage local workers to apply for ACP job vacancies, the Airport Authority and the MTRC will set up an ACP Job Centre in town in mid-January 1996.

Job vacancies will be displayed at the job centre and it will be used for receiving job applications, conducting recruitment interviews and making arrangements for signing of employment contracts.

In addition to the existing free ferry services provided for the ACP workers, new ferry services from the Hong Kong side and Kowloon to Chek Lap Kok will be introduced on a trial basis in mid-January 1996. Also, accommodation is now available for local workers at Chek Lap Kok where about 30 local workers are living there at the moment.

Mr Wong announced that in view of the easing in labour market conditions and the introduction of the Supplementary Labour Scheme, the Government had decided to terminate the General Labour Importation Scheme and allowed it to run down naturally.

The Education and Manpower Branch has produced a pamphlet to explain the policy objective, the application, processing and monitoring procedures of the SLS.

The tentative list of job categories which would normally be excluded from the scheme is also published in the pamphlet which is being sent to employers' and employees' representatives, trade unions, major trade and industrial organisations, and members of the Labour Advisory Board.

End

Informal Get Together Between Senior Hong Kong  
Civil Servants and Officials of the Chinese Side

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Following consultation with the Xinhua News Agency (Hong Kong Branch), we are pleased to announce that the fourth informal get together between senior Hong Kong civil servants and officials of the Chinese side will take place on January 11, 1996 at the Voting Members' Box, Happy Valley Racecourse starting at 10.30 am. It will end after lunch.

Participating officers will be:

Mr Michael Sze  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Kwong Ki-chi  
Secretary for the Treasury

Mr Anthony Au Yeung  
Commissioner of Inland Revenue

Mr Harry Myers  
Government Printer

Mr Barry Woodroffe  
Commissioner of Rating and Valuation

Mr Alan Richardson  
Director of Accounting Services

Mr Lau Kam-hung  
Director of Information Technology  
Services

Mr Nigel Shipman  
Director of Government Supplies

They will be accompanied by Mr Christopher Jackson, Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service and Mrs Marion Lai, Principal Assistant Secretary for the Civil Service.

End

Government announces senior level appointments

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The Government announced today (Tuesday) the appointment of Mr Haider Barma, currently Secretary for Transport, to succeed Mr Augustine Chui as Chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC) with effect from August 1, 1996. Mr Chui has been PSC chairman since June 1991.

The Government also announced the following consequential senior level appointments which will be made in the coming months:

Mr Gordon Siu, currently Secretary for Economic Services, will take over from Mr Haider Barma as Secretary for Transport.

Mr Stephen Ip, currently Commissioner for Labour, will take over as Secretary for Economic Services.

Miss Jacqueline Willis, currently Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower, will succeed Mr Ip as Commissioner for Labour.

Mr Barma will leave the civil service in summer 1996 and take up his new appointment as PSC chairman on agreement terms on August 1, 1996.

The PSC is a statutory body which advises the Governor on appointments and promotions to posts of middle and senior ranks in the civil service and on disciplinary matters. It comprises a full-time chairman and eight non-official members appointed by the Governor.

The Government also announced today that Mr Lawrence Li, will succeed Mr D M Watson as Commissioner of Customs and Excise on June 21, 1996. Mr Watson will proceed on pre-retirement leave on that date having served the Government for 35 years.

Following are biographical notes of the officers:

Mr Haider Hatim Tyebjee Barma, ISO, JP  
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Aged 51. Mr Barma joined the Government in March 1966 as an Executive Officer and became an Administrative Officer in August 1966. During the early years of his career with the Administrative Service, he served in a number of branches and departments including the former Economics Branch and Environment Branch, Home Affairs Department (later the City and New Territories Administration) and Housing Department. Senior positions held over the last 10 years included Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (Appointment) (1986-1988), Director of Regional Services (1988-1991) and Director of Urban Services (1991-1993). Mr Barma took up his present appointment as Secretary for Transport in October 1993, and was promoted to his present rank of Secretary, Government Secretariat in January 1995.

Mr Gordon Siu Kwing-chue, JP  
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Aged 50. Mr Siu joined the Government in February 1966 as an Executive Officer and became an Administrative Officer in August 1968. During the early years of his career in the Administrative Service, he served in a variety of branches and departments including the Finance Branch, the former Social Services Branch and Education Department. Over the years, Mr Siu has held a number of senior positions including Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (1981-1985), Secretary-General of the former UMELCO (1985-1987), Postmaster General (1988-1989), Commissioner for Transport (1989-1992) and Director, NAPCO (1992-1993). He took up his present appointment as Secretary for Economic Services in April 1993 and was promoted to the rank of Secretary, Government Secretariat in January 1995.

Mr Stephen Ip Shu-kwan, JP  
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Aged 44. Mr Ip joined the Government in 1973 as an Administrative Officer. He has served in a number of branches and departments including Home Affairs Department (later City and New Territories Administration) and the former Lands and Works Branch. He spent six years in the former Monetary Affairs Branch from 1987 to 1992, first as Principal Assistant Secretary and later as Deputy Secretary. After a brief tour in the Chief Secretary's Office and then as Chairman, AO Recruitment Board, Mr Ip became Commissioner of Insurance in mid-1993. He took up his present post of Commissioner for Labour in December 1994. Mr Ip was promoted to his present rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade A (AOSGA) on January 1, 1996.

Miss Jacqueline Ann Willis, JP  
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Aged 48. Miss Willis joined the Government as an Administrative Officer in 1969. Over the years, she has served in various branches and departments, including the Social Welfare Department, the former Social Services Branch, Home Affairs Branch and the former Administrative Services and Information Branch. Senior positions held by Miss Willis in recent years included Deputy Director of Regional Services (1988-1990), Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1990-1992) and Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare (1992-1994). Since December 1994, she has been Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower with responsibility over manpower issues. Miss Willis was promoted to her present rank of AOSGA on January 1, 1996.

Mr Augustine Chui Kam, CBE, JP  
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Aged 62. Mr Chui was appointed as Chairman of the Public Service Commission in June 1991 upon his retirement from the civil service. His two-year appointment has been extended three times since 1993, the latest extension to run till July 31, 1996.

Including his chairmanship on the PSC, Mr Chui has been in public service for 43 years. He joined the Government in 1952 and was appointed as an Administrative Officer eight years later. Whilst in the Administrative Service, he held a number of senior positions including Director of Urban Services, the then Secretary for Municipal Services and Secretary for Recreation and Culture. He retired at the rank of Secretary, Government Secretariat in 1991.

Mr Li Shu-fai, Lawrence, JP  
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Aged 52. Mr Li joined the Hong Kong civil service in 1963 as a Revenue Sub-Inspector in the Customs and Excise Department. He was promoted to his present post of Deputy Commissioner of Customs and Excise in 1994. He has acted as the Commissioner of Customs & Excise on several occasions.

Mr D M Watson, QPM, CPM  
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Aged 55. Mr Watson joined the Hong Kong civil service in 1960 as a Probationary Sub-Inspector of Police in the Royal Hong Kong Police Force. He was promoted to the rank of Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police in 1988 and was appointed to his present rank of Commissioner of Customs & Excise in 1993. He will proceed on pre-retirement leave on June 21, 1996 after over 35 years of service with the Hong Kong Government.

End

Environmental Protection Liaison Group concludes meeting

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The Hong Kong-Guangdong Environmental Protection Liaison Group (EPLG) held its sixth meeting yesterday (Monday) at Guangzhou.

Both sides reviewed the work in 1995 and discussed future plan for 1996.

At the meeting, the Technical Sub-group reported progress of the past year, and submitted the Final Report on Air, Water and Sediment Quality of the Deep Bay Joint Monitoring Programme.

The EPLG endorsed the report unanimously and expressed satisfaction at the successful completion of the joint monitoring work.

Both sides expressed concern about the serious water pollution problem of water catchment areas around Deep Bay and the water quality of Deep Bay as reflected in the study. The two sides agreed they should continue to jointly monitor water and air quality and conduct modelling work on Deep Bay water quality.

Following the success in joint study and monitoring work, both sides agreed to undertake a similar study at Mirs Bay. The scope of the study was agreed at the meeting.

The Guangdong side introduced at the meeting the planning features of Pearl River Delta economic zone and economic development and planning in Shenzhen. The Hong Kong side briefed the meeting on the sub-regional planning strategies of North East and North West New Territories. Both sides exchanged views on environmental matters of mutual concern.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Wang Yinkun, Director of the Environmental Protection Bureau of Guangdong Province and Mr Bowen Leung, the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands.

End

#### Suspension of all paper-packed Vitasoy and Vita products

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The following statement was issued by the Department of Health in connection with the suspension of all paper-packed Vitasoy and Vita products:

A spokesman for the Department said: "In our close contact with the Vitasoy International Holdings Limited today (Tuesday), we understood that there were further complaints of sour taste with another batch of Vitasoy products.

"Discussion was held immediately with its top management at which we were informed of the company's decision to conduct a full recall of all paper-packed Vitasoy and Vita products from the market and to temporarily suspend all production at its Tuen Mun plant to facilitate a thorough investigation.

"The Department of Health welcomes the company's decision and considers that it is a responsible and appropriate step to take in the light of latest developments.

"Retailers are asked to stop selling all paper-packed Vitasoy and Vita products at once.

"The public are advised to return all paper-packed Vitasoy and Vita products to the company and contact its hotline for enquiries.

"The Department of Health and the Municipal Services Departments will continue to monitor closely the recall and investigation processes and inform the public of any further development."

The department also announced the preliminary results of some of the laboratory tests on samples of Vitasoy products collected in the past few days. Of the 240 test results received so far, four were found to give abnormal acidity.

"While bacteria were found in these four samples, they were not of pathogenic nature. Further tests will be conducted to confirm the exact identity of the bacteria," the spokesman added.

End

#### Bedspace apartment operators warned of prosecution risk

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The Home Affairs Department (HAD) is pressing ahead with the licensing scheme to improve the safety of bedspace apartments (BSAs) and warns operators that they risk prosecution if they evict their tenants under the pretext of complying with safety requirements.

In response to reports that a number of operators of apartments in Tai Kok Tsui and Mong Kok were forcing tenants out against their will, an HAD spokesman said today (Tuesday) that this might constitute an offence under the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance which protected the rights of tenants.

"These operators are claiming that they are closing down because of the need to carry out improvements to their premises under the licensing scheme for BSAs. However, this is clearly not the case because these BSAs are given until July 1, 1998 to comply with the licensing requirements," the spokesman said.

"The operators are simply using the licensing scheme as an excuse and should realise that they may face prosecution."

HAD staff have visited the premises concerned in Mong Kok and will be assisting lodgers in finding alternative accommodation.

The department has undertaken that no BSA lodger will be made homeless as a result of the licensing scheme and is in the process of constructing a multi-storey hostel in Sham Shui Po for around 600 lodgers. The hostel is expected to open in mid-1998 to coincide with the licensing scheme.

End

#### Volume and price movements of external trade in October

\* \* \* \* \*

In the first 10 months of 1995, the volume of re-exports increased by 15% over the same period last year, while the volume of domestic exports increased by 3.6%, according to the statistics released today (Tuesday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Taking re-exports and domestic exports together, the volume of total exports increased by 13%. Meanwhile, imports increased by 15% in volume.

The growth in the volume of trade is derived from the growth in trade values with the effect of price changes being discounted.

As regards price changes over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 3.8% and 2.6% respectively. Import prices increased by 5.5%.

Price changes are reflected by changes in unit value indices, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, based on specific price data.

The terms of trade index, defined as the ratio of total export price index to import price index, decreased by 1.9% in the first 10 months of 1995 over the same period last year.

Comparing October 1995 with October 1994, the volume of re-exports increased by 9.2%, while that of domestic exports decreased by 4.3%. Taken together, the volume of total exports increased by 6.7%. Meanwhile, the volume of imports grew by 9.3%.

Over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 3% and 2.3% respectively. Import prices increased by 3.3%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of re-exports by end-use category are shown in Table 1.

Comparing October 1995 with October 1994, the volume of re-exports of most of the end-use categories recorded increases of various magnitudes: fuels (+116%), capital goods (+21%), raw materials and semi-manufactures (+12%), and consumer goods (+3.2%).

On the other hand, the volume of re-exports of foodstuffs decreased marginally, by 0.4%.

Over the same period of comparison, increases in the prices of re-exports were noted of most of the end-use categories: raw materials and semi-manufactures (+6.4%), consumer goods (+2.1%), foodstuffs (+2%), and capital goods (+0.5%). On the other hand, the re-export price of fuels decreased by 2.7%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of domestic exports by principal commodity group are shown in Table 2.

Comparing October 1995 with October 1994, commodity groups which recorded increases in volume of domestic exports included radios of all kinds (+87%); and travel goods, handbags and similar articles (+18%).

On the other hand, the volume of domestic exports of footwear and textile made-ups and related articles decreased by 50% and 30% respectively.

Commodity groups which recorded increases in domestic export prices included textile yarn and thread (+13%); and metal ores and scrap (+8.7%).

On the other hand, the domestic export price of domestic electrical appliances decreased by 1.9%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of imports by end-use category are shown in Table 3.

The import volume of foodstuffs increased by 10% in October 1995 compared with October 1994.

Significant increases in the import volume were noted of wheat and flour; and meat and meat preparations. However, decreases in the import volume were noted of animals of the bovine species, live; and fruit.

Over the same period of comparison, the import volume of consumer goods decreased by 0.8%.

Significant decreases in the import volume were noted of passenger motor cars; and tobacco manufactures. However, increases in import volume were recorded in alcoholic beverages; and miscellaneous made-up articles of textile materials.

The import volume of raw materials and semi-manufactures increased by 15% in October 1995 compared with October 1994.

Significant increases in import volume were noted of raw cotton; and iron and steel. However, the import volume of silk fabrics; and yarn of wool and mixtures declined.

Imports of fuels increased by 40% in volume in October 1995 compared with October 1994.

As regards capital goods, the import volume increased by 18% in October 1995 over October 1994.

Notable increases were recorded in the import volume of transport equipment; and electrical machinery. The import volume of industrial machinery (other than electrical machinery and textile machinery); and textile machinery however declined.

Comparing October 1995 with October 1994, the import prices of most of the end-use categories increased: raw materials and semi-manufactures (+6.3%), foodstuffs (+2.8%), consumer goods (+2.2%), and capital goods (+1.4%).

On the other hand, the import price of fuels decreased by 7%.

Details of the above statistics are published in the October 1995 issue of the "Hong Kong Trade Index Numbers".

The report will be available on sale around January 11, 1996 at \$14 per copy at either the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway or the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries regarding regular subscription to this report may be directed to the Publications Sales Office of the Information Services Department, 28th floor, Siu On Centre, 188 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong (Tel 2598 8194) and enquiries on trade indices to the Census and Statistics Department on 2582 4918.

Table 1 : Changes in re-exports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing OCT 1995 with OCT 1994			Comparing JAN-OCT 1995 with JAN-OCT 1994		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	1.2	2.0	-0.4	18.1	2.1	17.0
Consumer goods	5.7	2.1	3.2	10.4	2.3	8.2
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	19.1	6.4	11.7	30.0	8.7	19.3
Fuels	110.4	-2.7	116.0	52.0	0.9	50.5
Capital goods	17.9	0.5	21.0	24.0	0.4	28.1
ALL COMMODITIES	11.8	3.0	9.2	18.6	3.8	15.3

Table 2 : Changes in domestic exports by principal commodity group

Commodity group	Comparing OCT 1995 with OCT 1994			Comparing JAN-OCT 1995 with JAN-OCT 1994		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Clothing	-7.0	1.8	-7.2	3.0	1.7	2.0
Textile fabrics	-5.9	2.7	-11.3	-5.6	4.3	-10.3
Textile yarn and thread	-9.9	13.0	-20.3	-7.1	4.9	-12.0
Textile made-ups and related articles	-31.0	0.3	-30.2	5.7	8.6	-3.2
Radios of all kinds	113.9	7.9	87.1	30.1	2.6	31.2
Electronic components	7.5	5.1	4.0	21.9	4.7	18.7
Footwear	-50.3	0.8	-50.0	-59.2	3.1	-61.9
Metal manufactures	-7.2	6.1	-13.5	3.3	3.4	-0.2
Metal ores and scrap	-3.6	8.7	-10.7	31.1	6.1	24.3
Watches and clocks	-9.8	0.8	-10.5	8.6	1.8	5.9
Travel goods, handbags and similar articles	19.0	1.1	18.2	4.9	-1.1	7.3
Domestic electrical appliances	6.6	-1.9	6.8	-4.7	0.7	-5.0
ALL COMMODITIES	-2.6	2.3	-4.3	6.2	2.6	3.6

Table 3 : Changes in imports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing OCT 1995 with OCT 1994			Comparing JAN-OCT 1995 with JAN-OCT 1994		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	12.8	2.8	10.2	17.1	4.5	12.1
Consumer goods	2.0	2.2	-0.8	10.7	3.8	7.0
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	21.9	6.3	15.1	28.8	8.8	18.5
Fuels	38.8	-7.0	40.3	18.3	-1.0	20.1
Capital goods	20.2	1.4	18.2	31.9	3.9	27.4
ALL COMMODITIES	12.9	3.3	9.3	21.2	5.5	15.1

End

### New measures to improve ambulance services

\* \* \* \* \*

The Fire Services Department (FSD) is actively pursuing the implementation of the recommendations made by a consultant to improve the emergency ambulance services, the Chief Ambulance Officer, Mr Mak Kwai-pui, said today (Tuesday).

Mr Mak said: "The consultant has recommended a number of immediate measures which involve no additional resources but will collectively improve the performance of emergency ambulance services by two per cent over the coming two years.

"We have already adopted some of the measures and the transfer of the remaining non-emergency removals to another agency may be completed within the next financial year."

The immediate measures include optimising the deployment of ambulances and crews to areas of high local demand, improving the geographical coverage by stationing ambulances at some key fire stations and streamlining operational procedures to achieve a more efficient mobilisation of ambulances.

On recommendations with new resources implications, Mr Mak said they would be actively pursued in the context of the Government's 1996 Resources Allocation Exercise (RAE).

Mr Mak said FSD had already submitted a proposal, in advance of the 1996 RAE, to retain 15 manned ambulances which had become surplus upon the completion of transfer of the non-emergency removals to the Hospital Authority.

"This particular proposal will in effect advance and immediately make available half of the additional 31 ambulances the consultant identified to be required," he said.

On the proposed six-minute response time standard, Mr Mak said the consultant had recommended that a response time target should only be considered when the emergency service could consistently achieve a standard that 95 per cent of all emergency calls fall within the 10-minute travel time target.

"Adoption of a six-minute response time standard at this juncture is not only unrealistic but will require disproportionately more resources which would not be cost-effective," Mr Mak stressed.

End

Report on aircraft accident published

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The Government today (Tuesday) published the report of an investigation into an aircraft accident involving a China Airline's Boeing 747 which veered off the runway into the sea while landing at Kai Tak about two years ago.

The investigation was conducted by the Civil Aviation Department with assistance from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch of the United Kingdom's Department of Transport. The objective of the report is to identify the cause of the accident and prevent a recurrence.

The report contains an analysis of circumstances surrounding the accident, which occurred on November 4, 1993, together with conclusions and recommendations. All 296 people on board Flight CAL-605 were rescued but 10 of them sustained injuries.

In the conclusion of the report, the following causal factors were identified:

- \* The commander of the aircraft deviated from the normal landing roll procedure in that he inadvertently advanced the thrust levers when he should have selected reverse thrust.
- \* The commander diminished the co-pilot's ability to monitor rollout progress and proper autobrake operation by instructing him to perform a non-standard duty and by keeping him ill-informed about his own intentions.
- \* The co-pilot lacked the necessary skill and experience to control the aircraft during the landing rollout in strong, gusty crosswind conditions.
- \* The absence of a clearly defined crosswind landing technique in China Airline's Operations Manual deprived the pilots of adequate guidance on operations in difficult weather conditions.

A total of 18 recommendations are made in the report concerning China Airlines, Boeing and the Kai Tak Airport. The recommendations are addressed to the regulatory authority of the State having responsibility for the matters concerned. It is for that authority to decide whether and what action is taken.

Copies of the report are for sale at the Government Publication Sales Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

End

### Over 10,000 agreements lodged with Land Registry in December

\* \* \* \* \*

A total of 10,613 sale and purchase agreements for building units, which include both residential and non-residential properties, were lodged with the Land Registry last month (December 1995).

The figure represents an increase of 32.5 per cent from that of November 1995 and a 46.2 per cent increase when compared with the same month in 1994.

The total consideration of these agreements in the month is \$26.71 billion, up 29.6 per cent and 10.3 per cent when compared with the amounts for November 1995 and December 1994 respectively.

The figures are contained in the monthly statistics released today (Tuesday) by the Land Registry on deeds relating to property transactions received for registration in the Urban and New Territories Land Registries last month. Relevant statistics for November 1995 and December 1994 were provided for comparison.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months and the year-on-year rate of change were also released.

The statistics generally relate to land transactions executed up to four weeks prior to their submission for registration, as there is usually a time lag between the execution of deeds and their lodgement for registration.

End

### Selling endangered wild animals as food against law

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Restaurants offering endangered wild animals to customers could face enforcement action and subsequent prosecution under the Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance.

This advice came from an Agriculture and Fisheries Department's (AFD) conservation officer, Mr Cheung Chi-sun, following the seizure of protected animals during a raid on a Yau Ma Tei restaurant last Friday.

He said AFD field officers, assisted by Police, searched a restaurant in Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon after a report was made saying that the restaurant offered giant salamander for food.

Two dead specimens of giant salamander, a pangolin carcass and half a kilogram of pangolin scales were seized from the premises.

Investigations into the case are still continuing and prosecution against the restaurant operator is anticipated.

In another development, a 39-year-old woman was fined \$10,000 in the Western Magistracy last week for possessing a live eagle owl without a licence issued by AFD. The woman was found carrying a nylon bag containing the owl while being stopped by police officers in Western last month.

Mr Cheung pointed out that under the ordinance, any person found guilty of possessing, importing or exporting a highly endangered species for commercial purpose was liable to a maximum fine of \$5 million and two years' imprisonment.

Citing a previous court case as an example, he said a trader was fined a record \$500,000 in November for possessing medicines claiming to contain tiger ingredients.

Mr Cheung also took the opportunity to thank both the Police and Customs and Excise Department who have all along been offering assistance to AFD in curbing illegal trade in endangered species.

End

#### Beat drugs courses for teachers

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School principals are invited to nominate teachers to attend courses on drug education which are part of the Government's effort to step up the "Beat Drug Campaign".

The campaign aims to speed up and strengthening in-service teacher training on drug education.

The courses are aimed at enhancing teachers' knowledge on the problem of substance abuse and its effects on health as well as equipping teachers with skills for helping students with such a habit.

A spokesman for the Education Department reminded school heads that the closing dates for nomination of secondary school teachers and primary school teachers are January 15 and January 20 respectively. Completed nomination form should reach the department on or before the closing dates.

The two three-day courses on drug education for secondary school teachers, jointly organised by the department's Biological Sciences Section and the Community Drug Advisory Council, will be held between January 27 and March 21.

The courses offer experiential learning to participants so as to enable them to build up confidence and ability of conducting preventive drug education in school.

The two one-day courses for primary school teachers to be held on February 8 and 9 consist of three talks given by experts in the field and a workshop on teaching drug education in primary schools.

End

#### 54 new building plans approved in October 95

\* \* \* \* \*

The Buildings Department approved 54 building plans in October 1995.

Of the plans, 16 are for Hong Kong Island, 13 for Kowloon and 25 for the New Territories.

The approved plans include 14 for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, 14 for commercial developments, 13 for factory and industrial developments, and 13 for community services developments.

In the same month, consent was given for work to start on 43 building projects, which involve 122,130 square metres of usable domestic floor area and 158,473 square metres of usable non-domestic floor area.

During the same period, the department also issued 23 Occupation Permits - nine for Hong Kong Island, three for Kowloon and 11 for the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation in the month, the usable floor areas for domestic and non-domestic uses are 103,479 square metres and 40,122 square metres respectively.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in the month totalled about \$1,528 million.

In addition, 25 demolition consents involving 48 buildings and structures were issued.

In October, the Buildings Department's Control and Enforcement Division received 581 complaints of unauthorised building works, and issued 251 Removal Orders on unauthorised works.

End

#### Offices urged to reduce waste

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Wall charts on waste reduction initiatives in an office setting have been produced by the Environmental Protection Department to encourage office managers and workers to cut down waste paper and paper consumption.

"The initiatives are easy to follow. They can be achieved through better working practices by office workers in the use of printing machines, facsimiles and photocopiers," acting Principal Environmental Protection Officer, Mr Edmond Ho, said.

While resources can be saved by printing or photocopying on both sides of paper, Mr Ho said another way of saving paper would be by disseminating messages through electronic files.

"Reduction results will even be better if offices can start their own waste paper recovery programmes through segregation of waste paper, including computer printouts, business forms and scratch paper. These waste papers can then be recovered for reuse or recycling," Mr Ho said.

At present, a total of 8,500 tonnes of municipal solid waste, which includes domestic, commercial and industrial wastes, are generated every day.

"Municipal waste is expected to increase from the current daily level to some 13,000 tonnes by the year 2006. It is therefore important that every individual should play a part in waste minimisation," he said.

Initially, wall charts will be sent to 800 companies, including banks, legal and financial firms, which are more involved in paper work. A pledge card will also be attached to the wall charts for offices to set realistic waste reduction targets according to their own plans and resources.

Similar wall charts and pledge cards will also be produced for households and retail shops to further disseminate waste reduction messages.

Radio programmes to inform the public about Hong Kong's waste problems and ways to minimise waste are also being broadcast on RTHK until March.

Enquiries on waste minimisation can be made on 2755 2750.

End

#### Year of the Rat special stamps

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The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Tuesday) that a set of special stamps will be issued on January 31 (Wednesday) on the theme of the Year of the Rat.

This is the 10th in the current series of Lunar New Year special stamp issues released by the Post Office commencing with the Year of the Rabbit in 1987.

There will be four denominations - \$1.2, \$2.1, \$2.6 and \$5. A souvenir sheet incorporating the four stamps will also be issued. A stamp booklet containing six each of the \$1.2 and \$2.6 stamps will be available at \$22.8 each. The stamps were designed by Mr Kan Tai-keung and printed by Joh Enschede of the Netherlands.

As from January 17, the stamps will be on display for advance information of the public at the General Post Office, Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office, Tsuen Wan Post Office and Sha Tin Central Post Office. Official first day covers will also be available for sale at all post offices at \$1 each as from the same day. Advance orders for serviced first day covers will be accepted from January 17 to 24. The minimum number of serviced first day covers per order is five.

A restriction of two stamp booklets, 20 souvenir sheets and five sheets of stamps of each denomination (namely 250 sets of stamps) per customer queuing will be imposed on the first day of issue.

A beautifully designed presentation pack containing the four stamps will be available for sale at \$19 each at all post offices as from January 31.

On the first day of issue, hand-back service will be provided at all post offices to official and privately-made covers bearing indication of the first day of issue on January 31, 1996.

End

#### Fresh water cut in Tai Po

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Tai Po will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Friday (January 12) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains testing.

All premises along Kwong Fuk Road, Pak Shing Street, Kam Shan Road and Shek Lin Road, including Shek Kwu Lung, Kam Shan and Kam Shek New Village will be affected.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

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Tender date	9 Jan 96
Paper on offer	EF bills
Issue number	Q602
Issue date	10 Jan 96
Maturity date	10 Apr 96
Coupon	---
Amount applied	HK\$9,430 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.36 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.36 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 87 PCT
Average tender yield	5.38 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 15 January 1996

Tender date	15 Jan 96	15 Jan 96
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q603	H656
Issue date	17 Jan 96	17 Jan 96
Maturity date	17 Apr 96	17 Jul 96
Tenor	91 days	182 days
Amount on offer	HK\$1,500+300 MN	HK\$800+160 MN

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
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Opening balance in the account	2,190	0930	-190
Closing balance in the account	1,950	1000	-190
Change attributable to :		1100	-190
Money market activity	-190	1200	-190
LAF today	-50	1500	-190
		1600	-190

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 123.3 \*+0.0\* 9.1.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.38	2 years	2711	5.60	100.40	5.44
1 month	5.38	3 years	3810	6.15	101.60	5.60
3 months	5.38	5 years	5012	6.38	101.93	6.01
6 months	5.38	7 years	7211	6.82	103.46	6.29
12 months	5.37	5 years	M502	7.30	104.29	6.35

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$12,615 million

Closed January 9, 1996

End