



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Japan gives assurance on SAR Passport

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The Prime Minister of Japan, Hon Ryutaro Hashimoto, assured the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, today (Thursday) in Tokyo that Japan will treat the SAR Passport differently from the Passport of the People's Republic of China.

Speaking to the press after meetings with Mr Hashimoto and the Foreign Minister of Japan, Hon Yukihiko Ikeda, Mr Patten said Japan's Foreign Ministry and Justice Ministry were looking at the moment at precisely how the SAR Passport should be treated.

Mr Patten said that he was pressing that it should be treated at least as well as the BNO or BDTC Passport.

Under the British Passport at the moment, people could have multiple entry to Japan for up to a year. "So obviously, we would like the SAR Passport after 1997 to be treated like the BDTC, BNO, with people being able to come and go for a year or so," the Governor said.

"It is an important issue and we think that we can justify that argument because unlike the Certificate of Identity, the SAR Passport is a proper national travel document and of course it guarantees the returnability to Hong Kong of anybody who actually breaches the rules," he added.

Mr Patten said there were discussions going on between the Foreign Ministry and the Justice Ministry and he was sure that it was the case that Japanese officials were well down the road towards an announcement and a solution.

"So I would not expect it to be very long delayed and certainly, Japanese officials were under no doubt that the sooner we can get a decision the better because it is one of those important small building blocks I think in people's confidence in Hong Kong," he said.

Earlier in the day, the Governor told a gathering of Japanese businessmen that Hong Kong would continue to thrive provided it retained its infrastructure of good government and what American political scientists called civil society, a first-class civil service, an independent Judiciary, a free and inquisitive media, the continued development of political accountability and representative institutions, so that the Government could continue to govern Hong Kong with the grain of public opinion rather than against it.

Speaking at a luncheon jointly organised by Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Tokyo, Japan Hong Kong Society and Hong Kong Japan Business Cooperation Committee, Mr Patten said Hong Kong would continue to thrive if the public and the Government remained united in their opposition to corruption and cronyism.

He noted that an important factor in fighting corruption was political will. While there was at present the political will to stamp down on corruption wherever it occurred, he thought that the will should exist after 1997 as most of the senior officials who would not turn a blind eye to corruption would continue to serve Hong Kong after the handover.

Mr Patten added that Hong Kong would continue to grow and prosper if China trusts Hong Kong.

He said: "All that China needs to do is to relax about Hong Kong and to show two qualities which perhaps pull in rather different directions.

"First, I hope they will manage Hong Kong's affairs with a light touch so as to ensure Hong Kong's continuing autonomy. Second, on the other hand I hope they will show a strong hand in insulating Hong Kong from political and commercial pressures in China," Mr Patten said during his second day of public activities in Japan.

In addition to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, the Governor also called on Japan's Minister of Finance, Hon Hiroshi Mitsuzuka; and the Minister for International Trade and Industry, Hon Shinji Sato after officiating at the opening of the Hong Kong Business Seminar attended by more than 600 Japanese businessmen.

In the afternoon, Mr Patten called on the President of the new Frontier Party, Hon Ichiro Ozawa; and the former Prime Minister and Senior Advisor of the New Frontier Party, Hon Toshiki Kaifu.

The Governor will continue with his visit tomorrow in Tokyo before going to Osaka and Kyoto. He will return to Hong Kong on Sunday (December 1).

End

Review of the development of higher education in Hong Kong

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The Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joseph W P Wong, welcomed the University Grants Committee's (UGC) Review Report: Higher Education in Hong Kong, which was published today (Thursday).

"We agree with the conclusion in the Review Report and accept the UGC's main recommendations concerning the broad planning parameters and general direction for the further development of higher education for the period 1998-2001 and beyond," Mr Wong said.

The UGC's Review Report provides the most comprehensive survey of the background and present landscape of higher education in Hong Kong.

The UGC's Report confirms that after a period of rapid expansion, the target of providing first-year first-degree (FYFD) places for 18% of the 17-20 age group has been successfully achieved without undermining the quality of higher education.

"We should now concentrate our resources and energy on the further improvement in the standards of our tertiary students.

"After the period of unprecedented expansion, quality and cost effectiveness will be our focus in the next triennium, and in these respects the Government is taking a rather more proactive approach than formerly," Mr Wong told a press conference this afternoon.

The Government has also accepted the UGC's advice that as the tertiary institutions are entering a period of consolidation, they should be able to achieve a 10% reduction in student unit costs towards the end of the 1998-2001 triennium (i.e. more than 3% per annum), without sacrificing quality.

"We agree with the UGC that the institutions should be able to turn their energies from the problems of expansion to considering how to improve the efficiency and the quality of their existing activities.

"We have also accepted the UGC's advice that 50% of any savings arising from the institutions' cost-saving measures would be ploughed back to fund specific improvement measures in UGC-funded institutions. These include the further development of areas of excellence, additional quality assurance initiatives, and for any necessary institutional restructuring.

"The reduction in unit cost will also have a positive effect on tuition fees. This reflects Government's continuing commitment towards the further development of tertiary education in Hong Kong," Mr Wong said.

To tackle the problem of deteriorating language proficiency, the Government has accepted the UGC's recommendation that institutions should adhere strictly to their published minimum entry requirements for language standards.

"The Government has also proposed that with effect from the 1998 intakes, public funding of places filled by those students who failed the Use of English and Chinese Advanced Supplementary Level examinations will be withheld.

"This would complement the Government's efforts to enhance language training in the school sector which includes the provision of intensive English courses for Secondary 6/7 students," Mr Wong said.

Mr Wong stressed that this proposal would not infringe on the autonomy of the institutions because this was primarily aimed at the students.

"Indeed, the institutions are free to admit any students who fail to meet the minimum language requirements if they are satisfied that there are exceptionally good reasons for doing so. For example, these students have marginally failed their language examination but have scored excellent results in the subject examination concerned," he explained.

In response to the recent call from the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities for an extension of the undergraduate courses from three to four years, Mr Wong noted that the UGC has advised that for the great majority of students, the present three-year-course would continue to satisfy both the "general" and "specific" needs of undergraduate education.

"The UGC has also recommended that the normal length of undergraduate courses should remain at three years, following two years of sixth form study at least for the foreseeable future.

"In the meantime, the Government will seek to improve the quality of school education and liaison between schools and universities regarding the aims, objectives and relevancy of school education for students who should undergo an effective transition to higher education," Mr Wong added.

The Secretary revealed that the Government has also accepted the UGC's advice that the number of non-local students permitted in the UGC-funded institutions will be increased.

In addition to the 2% non-local students now permitted beyond the undergraduate and taught postgraduate target numbers, a further 2% of non-local students paying standard fees will be permitted.

The number of non-local research postgraduate places will also be increased from 20% to 33% within the student target.

The institutions must ensure that non-local students admitted are at least on a par with, and preferably better than, local students.

"We have decided to raise the limits within which non-local students can occupy subsidised tertiary places in Hong Kong because their presence is considered to be of benefit to our local students and will help to promote Hong Kong as a regional centre," Mr Wong said.

Explaining why the Government had not followed the UGC's advice on the increase in taught postgraduate students and possible public funding of continuing professional education, Mr Wong pointed out that the number of taught postgraduate students should be contained "as tertiary education enters a period of consolidation and as the present projection of postgraduates supply of all types for the labour market indicate a surplus by the end of the century."

"The institutions could consider whether some of the more popular postgraduate courses should be delivered as continuing and professional education, which has always been, and should continued to be, self-financing and market-driven," he said.

Mr Wong said that the Government's recommendations have set the planning parameters within which the UGC-funded institutions should develop their detailed costed proposals.

"If the institutions and the UGC put up valid justification for changing the policies, these can be further considered by Government in the context of the institutions' detailed costed proposals," he added.

End

JLG to meet in Hong Kong next week

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The 38th meeting of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group on Hong Kong will take place in Hong Kong from December 4 to 6, 1996.

The British team will be led by the British Senior Representative, Mr Hugh Davis. The other members of the British team will be Mr Nicholas Ng (Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Hong Kong Government), Mr Alan Paul (Counsellor, Office of the British Senior Representative), Mr Sherard Cowper-Coles (Head, Hong Kong Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Mr Robert Peirce (Political Adviser, Hong Kong Government).

End

More premises at Garley Building closed

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The Buildings Department announced today (Thursday) that part of the areas from the ground floor to second floor of Garley Building in Yau Ma Tei need to be closed for safety reasons.

A closure order obtained from the court this morning was posted at the premises.

The Assistant Director of Buildings (Specialist), Mr Philip Lau, said further inspections carried out yesterday (Wednesday) revealed that the lower three floors of the building, used as a department store, were also severely damaged by fire.

"Part of the areas on the ground floor, first floor, and second floor, as well as the whole cockloft, have to be closed for remedial works.

"We will issue a statutory order to the owner as soon as possible requiring him to appoint a building professional to carry out a detailed investigation to the premises and submit a repair proposal," Mr Lau said.

The Buildings Department applied an emergency closure order from the court on Monday (November 25) for closing the top three storeys of the building which had suffered severe structural damages.

Meanwhile, said Mr Lau, emergency works to remove immediate dangers from the building were progressing well.

"Our contractor has secured all the loose window frames and damaged air-conditioners. We have also commenced works on erecting a covered walkway at the first floor external wall facing Nathan Road.

"We are now arranging to reinstate the damaged fire doors and erected barriers to all the lift door openings on each floor," Mr Lau said.

End

\$1.4 million for families of fire victims

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More than \$1,447,000 in financial aid has been paid to victims and their family members affected by the No 5 Alarm fire at Garley Building in Yau Ma Tei last week.

The money, allocated under the Emergency Relief Fund, was given to 52 families in the form of burial grant, death grant, injury grant and maintenance grant.

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department said today (Thursday) that among the 119 families out-reached by various units of the department, 82 had requested for various welfare services.

"In addition to the granting of financial assistance, the department has provided counselling and clinical psychologist services to a total of 52 families.

"There are six other cases where child care, residential placement for the elderly, home help and housing transfer are needed," the spokesman said.

Those families who face long-term financial hardship will be granted Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, he added.

Meanwhile, the department's caseworkers will continue to contact family members of the deceased and injured to offer appropriate assistance.

End

External trade figures for October released

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Both re-exports and imports increased in October 1996 over a year earlier while domestic exports continued to fall year-on-year albeit at a slower rate than in August and September, according to the external trade figures for October 1996 released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The value of total exports (comprising re-exports and domestic exports) increased by 5.7% over a year earlier to \$129.9 billion in October 1996.

The value of re-exports increased by 8.2% to \$110.5 billion, while the value of domestic exports decreased by 6.5% to \$19.4 billion. Meanwhile, the value of imports increased by 5.2% over a year earlier to \$138.1 billion in October 1996.

As the value of total exports in October 1996 was smaller than that of total imports, a visible trade deficit of \$8.2 billion, equivalent to 5.9% of the value of imports, was recorded. This was slightly smaller than the deficit of \$8.3 billion, equivalent to 6.4% of the value of imports, in October 1995.

For the first 10 months of 1996 as a whole, the value of total exports grew by 4.2% over the same period last year. The value of re-exports rose by 6.9%, while that of domestic exports decreased by 8.7%. The value of imports showed an increase of 2.8%.

In the first 10 months of 1996, a visible trade deficit of \$110.3 billion, equivalent to 8.7% of the value of imports, was recorded. This was smaller than the deficit of \$122.4 billion, equivalent to 9.9% of the value of imports, recorded in the same period in 1995.

Commenting on the latest trade figures, a government spokesman said export performance in October 1996 improved considerably after the setback in September, with a pick-up in growth of re-exports as well as a smaller decline in domestic exports.

Meanwhile, retained imports decreased only marginally by 0.2% in value terms in October 1996 over a year earlier. This suggested that the inventory adjustment process by cutting down from the high accumulation rate last year could have started to stabilise.

The external trade figures in October 1996 is presented in the table below.

A more detailed analysis of Hong Kong's external trade for October 1996, by commodity and country, will be released in mid-December 1996.



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

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External Trade Figures for October 1996

(HK\$ Million)

一九九六年十月份對外貿易數字

百萬港元

MERCHANDISE TRADE VALUES for October 1996

一九九六年十月份商品貿易價值

		Domestic Exports	Re-exports	Total Exports	Imports	Trade balance	港產品出口	轉口	整體出口	進口	貿易差額	Value	%
													變動
				October 1996	October 1995							Value	%
				一九九六年十月	一九九五年十月							貨值	百分率
Current month compared with same month last year	本月與去年同期相比			October 1996	October 1995							Value	%
				一九九六年十月	一九九五年十月							貨值	百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	19,432	(15.0%)	20,785	(16.9%)	-1,354	-6.5						
Re-exports	轉口	110,472		102,135		+8,337	+8.2						
Total Exports	整體出口	129,904		122,920		+6,983	+5.7						
Imports	進口	138,106		131,257		+6,849	+5.2						
Trade balance	貿易差額	-8,202		-8,337		+135							
Current month compared with last month	本月與上月相比			October 1996	September 1996							Value	%
				一九九六年十月	一九九六年九月							貨值	百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	19,432	(15.0%)	18,263	(14.5%)	+1,169	+6.4						
Re-exports	轉口	110,472		107,829		+2,643	+2.5						
Total Exports	整體出口	129,904		126,091		+3,812	+3.0						
Imports	進口	138,106		130,691		+7,415	+5.7						
Trade balance	貿易差額	-8,202		-4,600		-3,603							
Latest 3 months compared with same period 12 months earlier	最近三個月與早十二個月同期相比			Aug 96 to Oct 96	Aug 95 to Oct 95							Value	%
				九六年八月至十月	九五年八月至十月							貨值	百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	55,870	(14.7%)	62,436	(16.8%)	-6,567	-10.5						
Re-exports	轉口	324,989		308,240		+16,749	+5.4						
Total Exports	整體出口	380,859		370,677		+10,182	+2.7						
Imports	進口	400,814		393,345		+7,469	+1.9						
Trade balance	貿易差額	-19,955		-22,668		+2,713							
Calendar year-to-date compared with same period last year	本年首十個月與去年同期相比			Jan-Oct 1996	Jan-Oct 1995							Value	%
				九六年一月至十月	九五年一月至十月							貨值	百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	175,929	(15.1%)	192,655	(17.3%)	-16,726	-8.7						
Re-exports	轉口	986,936		923,512		+63,424	+6.9						
Total Exports	整體出口	1,162,865		1,116,166		+46,698	+4.2						
Imports	進口	1,273,202		1,238,528		+34,674	+2.8						
Trade balance	貿易差額	-110,337		-122,361		+12,024							
Last 12 months compared with same period 12 months earlier	最近十二個月與再早十二個月相比			Nov 95 to Oct 96	Nov 94 to Oct 95							Value	%
				九五年十一月至九六年十月	九四年十一月至九五年十月							貨值	百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	214,931	(15.5%)	233,228	(17.6%)	-18,297	-7.8						
Re-exports	轉口	1,175,894		1,092,310		+83,585	+7.7						
Total Exports	整體出口	1,390,825		1,325,538		+65,288	+4.9						
Imports	進口	1,525,795		1,467,197		+58,599	+4.0						
Trade balance	貿易差額	-134,970		-141,659		+6,689							

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

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

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

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Design for hospital wins architectural award

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The architectural design for the Castle Peak Hospital Redevelopment Phase 1 (Stage 1) in Tuen Mun has won the 1995 Architectural Services Department (Arch SD) Annual Award.

Six other projects have also been chosen to receive the certificates of merit. They are the Kowloon Walled City Park, Cheung Chau Field Studies Centre, Cornwall Street Park and Squash and Table Tennis Complex in Sham Shui Po, Practical School at Au Tau in Yuen Long, construction of Dog Kennels at Burma Lines in Fanling and Warehouse Project (conversion of Old Aberdeen Police Station).

There were a total of 21 entries. The panel of judges, chaired by the Director of Architectural Services, Mr Kenneth Chan, comprised the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority, Dr Yeoh Eng Kiong; and the President Designate of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Dr Tao Ho.

Mr Chan said that according to the panel, the Castle Peak Hospital project had been developed with great awareness for scale and the human aspects of the design, creating a non-institutional feeling for the patients, including pleasing interiors using the advantages of natural light.

The panel of judges described the design as a departure from the norm and was both innovative and refreshing. The care given to detail and the design of features was reflected in the quality of finish achieved, which enhanced the sense of scale and proportion achieved.

The 1995 Arch SD Annual Award and the certificates of merit will be presented at the department's annual dinner tomorrow (Friday).

Meanwhile, the 21 entries of the competition, together with other works of Arch SD, will be displayed at the deck level of the Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway between December 1 and 7.

The exhibition is organised to tie in with the Government's "Serving the Community Week" programme. Admission is free.

End

Tunnel service improvements included in TD's pledge

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The third phase of the Transport Department's (TD) performance pledge scheme will be implemented next month (December).

The Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Management and Licensing), Dr Ernest Lee Shu-wing, said this today (Thursday).

"Apart from adding more items to the existing pledged services and shortening waiting time for general licensing services, the scheme will be extended to the services of the five government tunnels from Monday (December 2)," Dr Lee said.

The pledged performance standards for the government tunnels are as follows:

- * responding to traffic accident/vehicle breakdown in two minutes;
- * removing breakdown vehicle/obstacle from the tunnel tube in seven minutes;
- * informing tunnel users of traffic obstruction inside the tunnel through the public address and the radio rebroadcasting system in five minutes after accident;
- * keeping the average carbon monoxide concentration level inside tunnel below 100 parts per million at any five-minute interval; and
- * replying to public complaints about tunnel services in seven working days.

Managed and operated by private companies under management contracts, the five government tunnels are Aberdeen Tunnel, Airport Tunnel, Lion Rock Tunnel, Shing Mun Tunnels and Tseung Kwan O Tunnel.

In the new phase, the pledged waiting time for general licensing services below are improved to the range of 40 to 95 minutes instead of the existing 40 to 120 minutes:

- * first issue/renewal of learner's driving licence;
- * first issue/renewal of full driving licence;
- * renewal of vehicle licence; and
- * transfer of vehicle ownership

New items to be included in the third phase to enhance services to the public are as follows:

- * renewal of full driving licence or vehicle licence by post in 10 working days;
- * extension of passenger service licence for public light bus in five working days; and
- * annual examination and recheck examination of goods vehicles in 10 and four working days respectively at Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre.

A new booklet detailing the third phase of TD's performance pledge has been published and will be issued free to the general public from tomorrow at:

- * the four licensing offices of the Transport Department;
- * 15 driving test centres;
- * Kowloon Bay and New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centres; and
- * toll booths of four government tunnels except the Airport Tunnel.

Aimed to better serve the public and improve the department's efficiency, the TD's performance pledge scheme was first introduced in 1993 and its second phase in 1994.

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Best Licensing Service Award 1996 to be launched

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The Transport Department will launch the Best Licensing Service Award 1996 next month (December) for staff working in the department's Licensing Division.

The Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Management and Licensing), Dr Ernest Lee Shu-wing, said today (Thursday): "The award aims to further promote the performance pledge of the department and to recognise those who provide the best service for the public.

"First introduced in 1993, the award also demonstrates the department's continued commitment to promoting and improving the quality of customer service to the public."

Over 300 staff from the Licensing Offices, Public Vehicles Section, Driving Offence Points Office, Driving Licence Records Office, Vehicle Records Office, Vehicle Inspection Office and the Driving Test Section will take part in the competition this year.

Members of the public who come to different offices of the Licensing Division between December 2 and 7 will be invited to nominate the best staff members who provide the best service to receive the Best Licensing Service Award.

Prizes will be awarded to the 14 best staff members in the division. A prize-presentation ceremony to be officiated by the Commissioner for Transport, Mrs Lily Yam, will be held in mid-December.

Twenty nominators will be selected by a lucky draw on that day and will each receive a gift coupon of \$100.

End

199 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flights

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Two groups totalling 199 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam today (Thursday) on the 79th and 80th flights under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP).

Almost all of the returnees, comprising 69 men, 53 women, 45 boys and 32 girls, are from South and Central Vietnam. Only four of the returnees are from North Vietnam.

The majority of them arrived in Hong Kong in 1990, with the remaining in 1989 and 1991.

The two groups brought to 7,818 the total number repatriated on ORP flights since November 1991.

End

Monitors' Report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Orderly Repatriation Programme operation this (Thursday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The two monitors comprised a non-official Justice of the Peace, Miss Nora Yau Ho-chun; and representative from a non-government organisation, Mr Pele Yuen from Christian Action.

End

Knowing more about the Lands and Works Group of departments

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The Lands and Works Group of departments will organise a wide range of events next week to enable members of the public to have a better understanding of their facilities and services to the community.

These events will be part of the more than 100 activities to be organised by over 50 government departments during the "Serving the Community Week" from December 1 to 7.

Co-ordinated by the Efficiency Unit of the Government Secretariat, the "Serving the Community Week" is aimed at promoting the importance of delivering quality services to the community.

The Lands and Works group of departments will first participate at a carnival at Fa Hui Park in Mong Kok on December 1 (Sunday) to publicise their work and functions.

The Architectural Services Department will stage an exhibition between December 1 and 7 at the deck level of the Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Apart from introducing the department's organisation and functions, the exhibition will also display the 21 entries of the department's annual awards on architecture.

The Buildings Department and the Geotechnical Engineering Office of the Civil Engineering Department will jointly organise two "meet-the-public" sessions for the public to make enquiries on matters relating to slope safety and maintenance. Details are as follows:

<u>Venue</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>
Wan Chai District Office	December 3 (Tuesday) (noon to 2 pm)
Eastern District Office	December 6 (Friday) (6 - 8 pm)

During the week, the Civil Engineering Department will also continue its roving exhibition on slope maintenance on the third floor of the Cheung Fat Shopping Centre in Tsing Yi from December 2 (Monday) to 8 (Sunday).

The week-long exhibition, to be open to public daily from 10 am to 10 pm, will feature various aspects of proper slope maintenance through display of colourful illustrations and photographs. A promotional video will also be shown at the venue.

Both the Drainage Services Department (DSD) and the Water Supplies Department (WSD) will open their treatment plants in Sha Tin on December 7 (Saturday).

The DSD's Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works at Shui Chong Street, Sha Tin, will be open from 9.30 am to 5 pm. Members of the public can make use of the free shuttle bus services at Sha Tin Centre Street (fronting Sha Tin Plaza), Kent Road at Kowloon Tong (near Kowloon Tong Mass Transit Railway Station), and the Kowloon Canton Railway University Station.

WSD will open to public their Sha Tin Water Treatment Works at 12 Keng Hau Road, Hin Tin, Sha Tin, from 10 am to 4 pm. The plant is the largest water treatment works in Hong Kong and free shuttle bus services will be provided at Tai Wai Railway Station.

The department will also organise exhibitions on water works at two customer enquiry centres. Details are as follows:

<u>Venue</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>
Wan Chai Customer Enquiry Centre, first floor, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	December 2 - 4 (9 am - 4 pm)
Mong Kok Customer Enquiry Centre, ground floor, 128 Sai Yee Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon	December 5 - 6 (9 am - 4 pm)

To tie in with the "Serving the Community Week", the Land Registry will hold an opening ceremony for its Central Search Office on the 19th floor, Queensway Government Office, at 4.15 pm on December 3 (Tuesday).

The Central Search Office, which will start operating on December 16, will centralise all land search services which are currently provided on two different floors.

An out-reach programme to schools will be organised by the Planning Department from December 2 (Monday).

Exhibitions and talks on town planning will be held at 12 secondary schools throughout the territory. An opening ceremony to be officiated by the Director of Planning, Dr Peter Pun, at Saint Mark's School at 460 Shau Kei Wan Road, Shau Kei Wan, will be held at 10.15 am on December 2.

End

Public continued to be reminded against drink driving

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The Government will continue with its publicity efforts to remind the public against drink driving through television commercials as the festive season approaches, a spokesman for the Road Safety Council said today (Thursday).

"Drink driving is extremely dangerous and is a cause for many traffic accidents, some of them are fatal," he said.

Since August 3, drink driving has been taken as a criminal offence and is accorded a status equal to that of reckless driving, reckless driving causing death and furious driving.

Anyone who drives with an alcoholic level exceeding 35 micrograms per 100 milligrams of breath found at breath tests is liable to prosecution.

"A mere consumption of three half-pints of beer, 450 millilitres (three glasses) of table wine or 90 millilitres of alcoholic liquid will exceed such a level," the spokesman added.

He cited a case where a couple of weeks ago a taxi driver was found to have an alcoholic level of 148 micrograms, which is 4.3 times over the prescribed limit. His licence was subsequently suspended.

More than 8,000 drivers have been given breath tests by the Police since the drink driving legislation was enforced in December last year, the Road Safety Council was told at its meeting yesterday (Wednesday).

The meeting, chaired by the acting Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations), Mr Douglas Lau Yuk-kuen, also noted that of all the drivers tested, 557 were found to have exceeded the alcoholic limit allowed and were charged, of which 391 pleaded guilty.

End

Slope experts to meet the public

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Government engineers and building surveyors will hold two sessions of face-to-face meetings with members of the public during the Serving The Community Week starting next Tuesday (December 3).

Jointly organised by the Civil Engineering Department (CED) and the Buildings Department (BD), the meet-the-public sessions aimed to promote the importance of slope maintenance and to improve the departments' services to the public, a spokesman for CED said today (Thursday).

"The two sessions will be attended by geotechnical engineers from CED and building surveyors from BD who are ready to provide comprehensive guidance and advice relating to slope maintenance and slope safety," he said.

The first session will be held on December 3 between noon and 2 pm at the conference room of the Wan Chai District Office, 21st floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai.

The other session will be held from 6 to 8 pm on December 6 (Friday) at the conference room, first floor, Causeway Bay Community Centre, Eastern District Office, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay.

Members of the public who wish to participate in these two meet-the-public sessions are requested to make prior appointments on 2760 5760 during normal office hours. Appointments will be arranged on a first-come-first-served basis.

End

Election of LAB employee representatives on Saturday

Twelve candidates nominated by registered employee unions will be competing for five employee representatives seats in the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) on Saturday (November 30).

The successful candidates will be appointed to the board for a term of two years starting from next January.

The candidates are:

- * Cheung Kwok-bui
Hong Kong Civil Servants General Union
- * Leung Chau-ting
Clerical Grades Civil Servants General Union
- * Leung Tsz-leung
Hong Kong and Kowloon Free Clerical Workers' Union
- * Leung Ping-fai
Hong Kong Construction Industry Professional Plant-operators and Mechanics' Association
- * Chan Ngan-yau
Hong Kong Construction Industry Professional Plant-operators and Mechanics' Association
- * Sam Chiu-fai
Hong Kong Construction Industry Professional Plant-operators and Mechanics' Association
- * Leung Fu-wah
Hong Kong and Kowloon Rubber and Plastic Workers General Union
- * Poon Siu-ping
Hong Kong Storehouses and Transportation Staff Association
- * Wai Kam-tim
Government Schools Clerical Staff Association

- * So Ping-chi
Hong Kong Marine Department Local Professional Officers' Association
- * Tse Siu-hung
Hong Kong Marine Department Local Professional Officers' Association
- * Cheng Yeung-ming
Hong Kong Marine Department Local Professional Officers' Association

A spokesman for the Labour Department said today (Thursday) that 307 employee unions had registered as electors in the LAB election to be held at 3 pm in the hall of Haking Wong Technical Institute, 702 Lai Chi Kok Road, Cheung Sha Wan.

"Each elector may appoint up to two authorised representatives, who must either be paid-up members, officers or paid staff of the union, to attend the election," the spokesman said.

"The authorised representatives are required to arrive at the institute before 2.30 pm on the election day. They must produce their Hong Kong identity cards for inspection before being admitted to the election hall."

Representatives of the Secretary for Education and Manpower and Registrar of Trade Unions will be present to supervise the counting of votes. Assistant Commissioner for Labour, Mr William Siu, will act as the Returning Officer.

End

Apply travel documents early to avoid holiday rush

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The Immigration Department advises members of the public that they should apply for travel documents as early as possible if they intend to travel abroad during the Christmas holidays.

"The number of people travelling outside Hong Kong will increase sharply during this time of the year," a spokesperson for the department said today (Thursday).

"In order to avoid last minute rush, members of the public are advised to apply for passports and certificates of identity well in advance of the date on which they intend to travel."

Under the present arrangement, applications for British National (Overseas) passports and Hong Kong certificates of identity can be submitted to the Immigration Department by post or depositing into the drop-in boxes installed at the Immigration Headquarters or at any immigration branch offices.

"Other than applications for Hong Kong travel documents, applications for identity cards and other Registration of Persons services are also on high demand during this time of the year," the spokesperson added.

"To avoid congestion, applicants are also requested to submit their applications before school or public holidays."

Applicants are also encouraged to make use of the Automated Telephone Appointment Booking System which is operating 24 hours a day. The number is 2598 0888.

Information leaflets on application procedures and documents required are issued together with application forms which are available at the Immigration Headquarters and all Immigration Offices.

Enquiries can be made on 2824 6111 or by using the faxline 2877 7711.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	3,459	0930	+40
Closing balance in the account	3,756	1000	+40
Change attributable to:		1100	+40
Money market activity	+37	1200	+40
LAF today	+260	1500	+37
		1600	+37

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.7 *+0.1* 28.11.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF Bills		EF Notes/MTRC Notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.64	2 years	2811	5.72	100.33	5.61
1 month	4.64	3 years	3910	6.28	100.95	6.00
3 months	4.65	5 years	5109	7.32	103.52	6.55
6 months	4.76	7 years	7311	6.80	100.23	6.87
12 months	5.10	10 years	1610	7.37	102.69	7.11
		5 years	M503	7.35	102.32	6.88

Total turnover of EF Bills and Notes - \$21,526 million

Closed November 28, 1996

End