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<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Importance of continuity of legal system stressed	1
Chinese ports to complement Hong Kong	3
Tsing Ma Bridge takes final shape today	6
Tender award for river trade terminal	7
Import of frozen beef from UK suspended	8
Month-long quality promotion drive for local industries	9
Seminar on battered spouse	10
Second health promotion centre for women opened	11
More lively and effective learning through TOC	12
Residential mortgage survey results for February	14
Provisional statistics of restaurant receipts and purchases	19
1996 voter registration	22
Ching Ming Festival a statutory labour holiday	23
Road Safety Council to launch pedestrian safety campaign	23
Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations	25

Importance of continuity of legal system stressed

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The overriding priority of the Hong Kong Government is to maintain the rule of law, and ensure that it would command the confidence of the local community and the international community after 1997.

The remark was made by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, in her keynote speech at the LawAsia Business Law Conference this (Thursday) afternoon.

Mrs Chan said the Government is doing its utmost to ensure that the transfer of sovereignty is accompanied by the continuity of the local legal system which is essential in order to realise the principle of the "one country, two systems".

Mrs Chan said, a great deal had been achieved by the Government in preparing for the continuation of the legal system and the rule of law beyond 1997 in the territory, including the establishment of the Court of Final Appeal (CFA), the continued application of international rights and obligations, and the localisation of laws.

The Chief Secretary described the passage of the Court of Final Appeal Bill in July last year by a landslide vote as "truly a milestone in the transition of Hong Kong from British to Chinese sovereignty".

She said to ensure that the CFA can be established on July 1, 1997, the Government is now proceeding with the practical arrangements, including fitting out the premises where the Court will be accommodated, drawing up detailed rules of procedure and making the necessary preparatory work for the appointment of judges.

"I am confident that the change in our highest appellate court which will take place on the transfer of sovereignty will be effected smoothly and without any judicial vacuum," she said.

In respect of international rights and obligations, Mrs Chan was confident that a mechanism would be in place to ensure that the continued application of multilateral treaties to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region would be recognised by the international community.

She noted that so far, under the aegis of the Joint Liaison Group Sub-group on International Rights and Obligations, agreement had already been reached, in principle, on the continued application of some 175 treaties with only about 15 treaties left for discussions.

On the progress of the localisation of laws, Mrs Chan said the Government was reasonably confident that the programme would be completed in time with the Government hoping to obtain agreement with the Chinese side soon for the introduction of the localising Bills of 12 remaining items before the end of this year.

However, despite the achievements, the Chief Secretary cautioned that much remained to be done in two important issues.

She said: "In respect of mutual legal assistance between Hong Kong and mainland China, there is increasing concern about the need for legal and practical arrangements to be put in place, and much work remains to be done.

"In respect of the adaptation of laws, our programme of submitting proposals to the Chinese side should be completed this year, but there is an urgent need for experts of the two sides to meet to discuss the modalities for achieving the necessary adaptations."

Mrs Chan said she was confident that these outstanding problems could be resolved if they were studied in a spirit of co-operation, and without delay.

Turning to a related development, Mrs Chan said Hong Kong's interests would be best served by allowing the current Legislative Council to serve its full four-year term.

The Government's commitment is clear, she said. "That commitment is to work with the present legislature of Hong Kong, elected freely and openly by almost one million voters in 1995.

"We are now in the final and crucial stage of our transition. More than ever, Britain, China and Hong Kong need to co-operate in a realistic and pragmatic manner to resolve the remaining transitional issues so that the future Special Administrative Region can get off to a good start.

"The Civil Service plays a crucial role in the good governance of Hong Kong and in securing a smooth transition. It can only do so if it remains politically neutral and act in accordance with the law.

"The Civil Service is loyal to its leaders and loyal to the community it serves. This is so now and it will be so after 1997."

End

Chinese ports to complement Hong Kong

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Hong Kong will continue to face substantial growth in port throughput despite the rapid development of mainland Chinese ports.

This was the assessment given by the Secretary of Hong Kong's Port Development Board, Mr Tony Clark, at the China Intermodalism Conference '96 in Singapore today (Thursday)

Speaking on "Port development in China - the implications for Hong Kong" he said that while Hong Kong would certainly lose some transshipment business to mainland ports it would continue to consolidate its position as the hub port for southern China.

He told the conference: "Hong Kong is far from complacent. Competition will increase as alternative ports open; transshipment trade to Taiwan will decline once direct trade links with the mainland are established, and cargo from northern and central China is increasingly more likely to be diverted from Hong Kong. But the fact is, that the growth in our own backyard - in Guangdong Province - is likely to more than replace lost cargo; indeed, Hong Kong can expect demand for container facilities to treble during the next twenty years.

He said that there had been some criticism of Hong Kong because of its relatively high handling charges at the terminals. However, he pointed out that: "While cost is important, a primary concern of shippers and consignees is fast delivery. This is influenced most by the quality and level of service available.

"One big advantage Hong Kong has is its fast turnaround of vessels and together with frequency of calls; this provides quick and guaranteed pick-up and delivery.

"Another advantage is our large and well established shipping support operations - combined with Hong Kong's strong banking and financial institutions and familiarity with international trade practices. This ensures payment on time and fast, efficient documentation processing."

Mr Clark said out that the great majority of factories in Hong Kong's Guangdong hinterland were Hong Kong owned or financed. Their owners maintained their administrative headquarters in the territory and preferred to use Hong Kong banks and business institutions for their transactions.

He added: "Shippers are also attracted to Hong Kong because of our straight forward and transparent Customs formalities. These reduce the risk of goods being delayed as a result of any bureaucracy which may arise. As a port, Hong Kong is somewhat more user friendly than mainland ports."

Reviewing the developing ports in China, Mr Clark said that, of the east China ports, Shanghai was in the best geographical position. It was at the mid-point of China's east coast and close to large manufacturing centres in Zhejiang and Jiangsu Provinces. There was a large cargo base in and around Shanghai itself.

He said that Shanghai was upgrading its existing container facilities. Phase One of these improvements would bring its total capacity up to three million TEUs by the end of the century. Phase Two, to be completed in 2010 would increase capacity to between eight and 10 million TEUs.

Mr Clark added that while Shanghai was a river port and presently restricted by shallow approaches, Ningbo, some 120 kilometres south of Shanghai, had deep water and enormous potential for the future.

He added: "Xiamen, a small port in Fujian Province, is in a good position to benefit from direct trade links between the mainland and Taiwan. It could divert a substantial volume of Taiwan related cargo from Hong Kong. However, such diversion will have marginal effect on Hong Kong's total throughput."

"At present the eastern Chinese ports seem most likely to function as feeder ports transhipping to Taiwan, Korea and Japan."

He told the conference: "Indications from manufacturers and growth projections for eastern and central China show that the area served by the ports is likely to grow faster than Guangdong in the next 20 years. This area already accounts for 25 per cent of China's total export cargo."

"This high rate of growth may be more than the local ports can handle. So, Hong Kong could still experience some cargo growth from this region."

Turning to the north China ports, Mr Clark said that Tianjin and Dalian had the most extensive facilities for handling export cargo. Dalian was a deep water port and unrestricted by draft, but Tianjin, was likely to handle smaller vessels. These would primarily provide feeder services to hubs in Japan and Korea.

Qingdao and Yantai had more modest facilities that were best suited to handle feeder cargo to larger nearby ports and to Japan and Korea. There were plans for additional container berths at both these ports and for the installation of post-Panamax gantry cranes.

Some cargo originating in north China moved by road, rail and coastal feeders to Hong Kong. Much of this could be diverted to north China ports. Mr Clark said that the amount of diversion would be determined by the rate of development of those ports.. However, this cargo represented only a small proportion of Hong Kong's total cargo base.

"Japanese ports, especially Kobe, have always handled large volumes of north and eastern Chinese transshipment cargo. Future changes are not likely to have a significant impact on Hong Kong, particularly in the light of Kobe's relative high costs.

"Kaohsiung, however, is well placed to take Hong Kong transshipment cargo originating in eastern and northern China. It can also compete for southern China cargo, shipping it through feeder ports like Shekou and Chiwan and river ports such as Huangpu.

"Our current estimates put the volume of this cargo at about one million TEUs a year."

Mr Clark said: "In addition to China cargo, Taiwan will also compete with us for transshipment from Vietnam and the Philippines.

"The amount of cargo diverted from Hong Kong will be determined by the availability of low-cost and efficient port and liner services in China and Taiwan. As alternatives become more cost and service effective, cargo diversion will increase, particularly from north, central and east China."

Mr Clark said that despite the diversion of some of its business to mainland and regional ports Hong Kong: "Still needs to build container facilities as quickly as we can over the next decade just to keep up with demand."

He pointed out that: "Total cargo tonnage by all means of transport in Hong Kong is forecast to grow from 157 million tonnes in 1994 to 513 million tonnes in 2016. About 88 per cent of this cargo, or 453 million tonnes in 2016, will pass through the port.

"This means that our total container throughput, just over 11 million TEUs in 1994, will grow to 18 million TEUs in 1998, 23 million in 2001, 31 million in 2006 and nearly 40 million in 2016."

There was, he said, a limit to the port development that Hong Kong could sustain. This meant that: "In the future there must be more port development in China. It is one of the world's fastest growing economies and port development must, eventually, keep pace with that growth.

"This will take time to reach the level of service provided by Hong Kong.

"I am confident, however, that over the next decade we will see the ports in southern China develop simultaneously with Hong Kong to provide the facilities which are necessary to support the fastest growing economy in the world."

End

Tsing Ma Bridge takes final shape today

* * * * *

The gap on the main span of the Tsing Ma Bridge, one of the world's longest suspension bridges, was closed this (Thursday) evening.

The lifting operation of the last of the 95 pieces of steel units which make up the bridge deck started shortly after 2 pm and this unit was lifted into its final position shortly before 6 pm.

With completion of erection of its main span, the bridge, which has become a showpiece of the Airport Core Programme and a new landmark for Hong Kong, has taken its final shape.

"This is excellent progress and we are delighted that this major milestone has been achieved on schedule," said the Project Director of the Lantau Fixed Crossing, Mr C.K. Lau.

"All that remains to be done now is for the sections to be joined up by welding, electrical and mechanical works, and work on public lighting and road surfacing. Installation of the rail movement joint has been substantially completed and other railway works have been progressing well. The Railway Envelope should be ready for handing over to the MTRC on schedule in August this year.

"Work on the bridge is now about 88 per cent complete and looking ahead we are confident that the Tsing Ma Bridge will be completed in May next year, on time and on budget," said Mr Lau.

Erection of the bridge's main span started in August last year with the deck units lifted in pairs from the middle of the bridge outwards towards the support towers on Tsing Yi and Ma Wan. Each unit measures 18 metres long and 41 metres wide and weighs 500 tonnes or the equivalent of 20 double decker buses.

About 50,000 tonnes of steel has been used in the construction of the bridge deck which is more than three times the quantity used in the Bank of China Building.

On completion the Tsing Ma Bridge, with a central span of 1,377 metres, will be the world's longest suspension bridge carrying both road and rail traffic. The double-decked bridge will carry six lanes of expressway on the upper deck and two rail tracks and two single emergency traffic lanes on the enclosed lower deck for use in bad weather.

Together with its sister bridge, the 820-metre long Kap Shui Mun Bridge, and the Ma Wan Viaduct, the Tsing Ma Bridge will form the Lantau Fixed Crossing which will provide the first road link between Lantau Island and the rest of Hong Kong.

Mr Lau said work on the Kap Shui Mun Bridge was also progressing well with the erection of its main span completed on March 18:

The Tsing Ma Bridge is being constructed by the Anglo Japanese Construction Joint Venture under a \$7.2 billion contract awarded by the Highways Department in May 1992.

End

Tender award for river trade terminal

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The Government announced today (Thursday) the tender award at a premium of \$1,141,110,000 to the River Trade Terminal Company Limited for the design, development and operation of a river trade terminal at Area 38 of Tuen Mun.

The land grant is for a period up to 30 June 2047. It involves an area of about 65 hectares designated as Tuen Mun Town Lot No 393.

The successful tenderer is required to bring into operation cargo handling facilities at the terminal in two phases, initially with a capacity to handle not less than 2.1 million tonnes of cargo a year within 36 months from the date of the land grant and subsequently to increase the capacity to not less than 8.5 million tonnes a year within another 18 months.

Facilities in the terminal will include a berthing frontage of 3,000 metres for the fast-growing river trade with China, cargo working areas, lorry parking, a container freight station and government accommodation.

In response to the public tender invitation, the Government received bids from two tenderers: Odelon Limited and River Trade Terminal Company Limited. Following detailed examination and evaluation in accordance with the requirements and criteria published in the tender invitation documents, the Odelon Limited tender was found to have failed in a number of requirements specified in the tender invitation document.

End

Import of frozen beef from UK suspended

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Following yesterday's decision by the European Commission to prohibit the export of UK beef, the Government has decided to suspend the issue of import licences covering all frozen and chilled beef from the United Kingdom with immediate effect.

Announcing this today (Thursday), a government spokesman said separate notices had been issued to stockholders informing them of the Government's decisions and advising them to label the origin of their beef.

Those who have already imported British beef into Hong Kong have also been directed to withhold their stocks and not to release them to wholesalers, retailers, or any other persons for sale or consumption.

"These measures have been taken to restore consumer confidence in beef sold as well as to avoid further market confusion in Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

Only two to three per cent of frozen beef sold in Hong Kong comes from the United Kingdom. The rest originates mainly from Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Argentina.

The spokesman assured the public that Hong Kong did not import fresh meat from the UK. All fresh beef sold in local markets comes from cows from China which are slaughtered in Hong Kong.

"To ensure the wholesomeness of the meat, all slaughtered animals are inspected by qualified health inspectors of the municipal services departments," he stressed.

The Government notes the European Commission statement that "the evidence suggests that even should there be a link to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), the risk to human health has been eliminated or at worst reduced to a minimal level following the ban in 1989 on putting specified bovine offal (SBO) into the food chain" and that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that, following the very stringent precautions already taken in the UK, the risk of human beings becoming contaminated by this disease is absolutely remote.

The Director of Health, Dr Margaret Chan, has already made it clear that it is not necessary, on the evidence currently available, to prohibit the import of British beef on health grounds.

The decision made today has been taken in order to restore confidence in the beef market in Hong Kong.

However, the Government notes that WHO will be holding a further meeting on April 2 to consider again the whole question of BSE. The Government will take particular note of the outcome of that meeting.

End

Month-long quality promotion drive for local industries

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The Industry Department is organising a Quality Month in April to promote greater consciousness and application of quality concepts and tools in Hong Kong.

"Following the two very successful Quality Weeks organised in 1994 and 1995, this year's event has been expanded to a 'Quality Month 96', to give due recognition to the growing interest of Hong Kong companies in 'Quality' matters," the Director-General of Industry, Mrs Regina Ip, said today (Thursday).

The theme for this year's Quality Month programme is "Quality - for Excellence and Profitability".

The Quality Month 96 programme will feature a series of seminars, workshops and training courses on quality and quality management. An exhibition and a factory visit will be organised. The Industry Department has produced a promotional video entitled "Quality - the Way to Go", bearing the message that everyone has a role to play in creating quality.

The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue, will officiate at an opening ceremony of the "Quality Month 96", to be held tomorrow (Friday).

The Director-General of Industry, Mrs Ip, will also be attending the ceremony.

The Quality Month programme activities are organised by the Industry Department in conjunction with 13 participating organisations.

They are City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Management Association, Hong Kong Productivity Council, Hong Kong Q-Mark Council, Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency, Hong Kong Quality Management Association, Hong Kong Society for Quality Control, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Institute of Quality Assurance (Hong Kong) Branch, Paper Communication Exhibition Services, Quality and Reliability Centre of Hong Kong Polytechnic University and University of Hong Kong.

End

Seminar on battered spouse

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About 400 social workers, doctors, clinical psychologists, police officers, lawyers and academics will attend a seminar tomorrow (Friday) to exchange views on how to handle the problem of battered spouse.

The one-day seminar - Multi-disciplinary Co-operation in Handling Battered Spouse Cases - to be held at the Lady Trench Training Centre, is organised by the inter-departmental Working Group on Battered Spouse with an aim to help concerned professionals to have a better understanding of the problem.

Social workers, police officers, clinical psychologists, academics, medical personnel, lawyers and a victim of spouse battering will speak at the seminar to share their views and experience on the subject.

The Chairman of the working group, Mrs Patricia Chu, who is also Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare), will give an overview of the issue of spouse battering and highlight the importance of multi-disciplinary approach in the handling of battered spouse cases at the seminar.

The working group, set up in April last year, is convened by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and comprises representatives from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, the Police Force, Department of Health, Hospital Authority, Education, Housing, Information Services, Legal and Legal Aid departments.

It is tasked with the following terms of reference:

- * to examine the existing service provision and to recommend new measures to tackle the problem of battered spouses;
- * to examine the existing procedures and to draw up a set of multi-disciplinary procedural guidelines on handling of battered spouse cases; and
- * to strengthen co-ordination and co-operation among concerned government departments and non-governmental organisations in handling and combating the problem of battered spouse.

The working group has held five meetings since Last April and has drawn up a set of multi-disciplinary guidelines on handling of battered spouse cases for reference of various professionals from concerned government departments and non-governmental organisations.

End

Second health promotion centre for women opened

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Another Woman Health Centre set up by the Department of Health has started to operate in Chai Wan today (Thursday) to provide health promotion and disease prevention programmes for women aged between 45 and 64.

The new centre, Chai Wan Woman Health Centre, is the second of such clinic runs by the department. The first one is in Lam Tin.

A spokesman for the department said: "The setting up of woman health centres is important for the promotion of health among women and screening for cancers of the breast and cervix in them."

He said the centre would provide health education, counselling and support services to enable women to practice healthy life styles in general and how to handle menopausal problems in particular.

"Early detection and treatment of cancers of the breast and cervix can increase a patient's chance of cure, and a lot of complications may also be avoided," he added.

The annual fee is \$285. Included in the charge are consultation and physical examination by doctor, urine tests and cervical smear screening.

Participants who needed mammographic screening will have to pay a separate fee of \$205.

The new centre is on the second floor of Chai Wan Health Centre at Hong Man Street, Chai Wan. Its telephone number is 2897 9321.

Those who wish to obtain the services have to use the telephone appointment system.

End

More lively and effective learning through TOC

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The Deputy Director of Education, Mr T F Kwan, said today (Thursday) that it is only through adopting Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) that schools can really understand how the new curriculum can enhance motivation in learning and develop students' potentials.

Speaking at the opening of the TOC Resource Centre (New Territories Region), Mr Kwan urged other primary schools to join more than 530 schools that will be adopting TOC this September.

The 530-odd TOC schools represent more than 60 per cent of all primary schools in Hong Kong.

"By September 2000, all levels in the primary sector will adopt this curriculum," Mr Kwan said.

Experience from the tryout period showed that students at TOC schools are better motivated than ever before and are more eager to ask questions and actively participate in class activities.

Educational researchers and front-line educators agree that whether educating gifted children or students with learning difficulties, teachers should stimulate thinking and innovative ideas in students by means of lively, carefully designed learning activities so as to develop pupils' potentials.

Students should be active participants, rather than a captive audience, in the learning process while teachers should offer prompt and effective feedback and assistance. This way, students will develop a sense of achievement and be more motivated and effective in learning.

"This, in fact, is part of the essence of TOC," Mr Kwan said.

While anticipating problems with schools in the initial stages of implementing TOC, the Education Department is providing professional support where it is needed.

This includes training for school heads, TOC co-ordinators and teachers; provision of teaching and learning materials and assessment guidelines; and funds for teaching equipment and activities.

Mr Kwan added that the department has set up three TOC resource centres throughout the territory, including the one opened today. The centres are well-equipped with facilities and resources for successfully implementing TOC. Their addresses are:

- * Hong Kong Region
14th and 15th floor, CRE Building,
303 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai

- * Kowloon Region
7th floor, To Kwa Wan Market and Government Offices,
165 Ma Tau Wai Road, To Kwa Wan

- * New Territories Region
Units 709-711, 7th floor, Landmark North,
Sheung Shui

The centres are open from 9 am to 5 pm on weekdays, and from 9 am to noon on Saturdays.

End

Residential mortgage survey results for February

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The growth of residential mortgage loans for the purchase of properties in Hong Kong grew at a faster rate in February, according to the results of the latest monthly survey conducted by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA).

The latest figures show that the total amount of outstanding mortgage lending by the 33 institutions in the survey grew by 1.6% in February (1.2% in January) to \$280.6 billion. The growth rate is higher than the monthly average of 1.4% over the last twelve months.

"The higher growth in lending reflected the increased activity in the primary market in January," said the Executive Director (Banking Policy) of HKMA, Mr Peter Pang.

The annualised rate of growth in lending over the last three months increased to 17% from 15.8% in the three-month period to January. The 12-month average of outstanding loans showed an annualised growth rate of 17.2%, compared with 15.7% in January.

The amount of new loans approved but not yet drawn increased by \$1.3 billion (22.7%) to \$7.1 billion in February.

"Judging from these figures and the sustained trading activities in the primary market in February, the growth of outstanding loans should continue at a rapid pace in March," said Mr Pang.

Lending for the purchase of properties in China increased by 0.2% to \$5.4 billion in February. Gross loans made in February decreased both in number (to 185 from 293) and in amount (to \$88 million from \$147 million).

New loans approved in February decreased in number (to 260 from 279) but increased in amount (to \$149 million from \$146 million).

**Residential Mortgage Loans in Hong Kong
Results of Survey for February 1996**

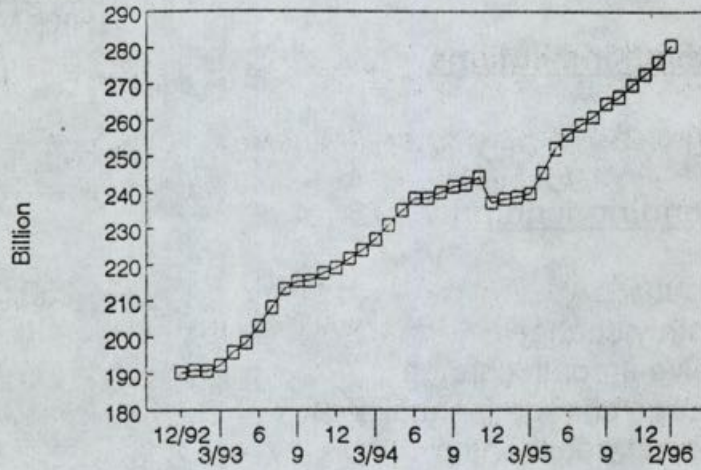
	<u>Feb</u> <u>1996</u> HK\$ Mn	<u>Jan</u> <u>1996</u> HK\$ Mn
<u>33 authorised institutions</u>		
1. <u>Outstanding lending</u>		
a. Amount	280,589	275,968
b. Monthly change	1.6% **	1.2%
c. Twelve-month change	17.2% **	15.7%
d. Average change (annualized)		
Latest three months	17.0% **	15.8%
Latest twelve months	17.2% **	15.7%
2. <u>Gross loans made during month</u>		
a. Amount	8,999	9,312
b. Number	6762	7208
3. <u>New loans approved during month</u>		
a. Amount	10,399	9,029
b. Number	7243	7117
4. <u>New loans approved during month but not yet drawn</u>		
a. Amount	7,139	5,818
b. Number	4819	4462

Note : ** Adjusted for the effect of the addition of a subsidiary of a banking group to the survey.

Chart A

**RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LOANS IN HONG KONG
(33 institutions)**

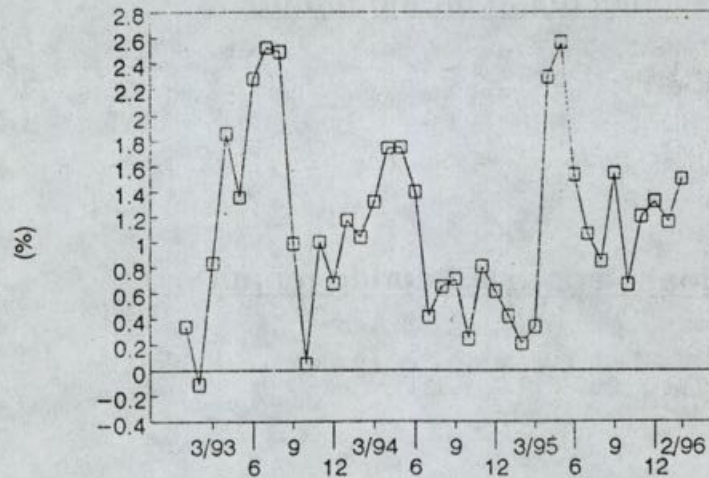
Outstanding balance at end of month



A1

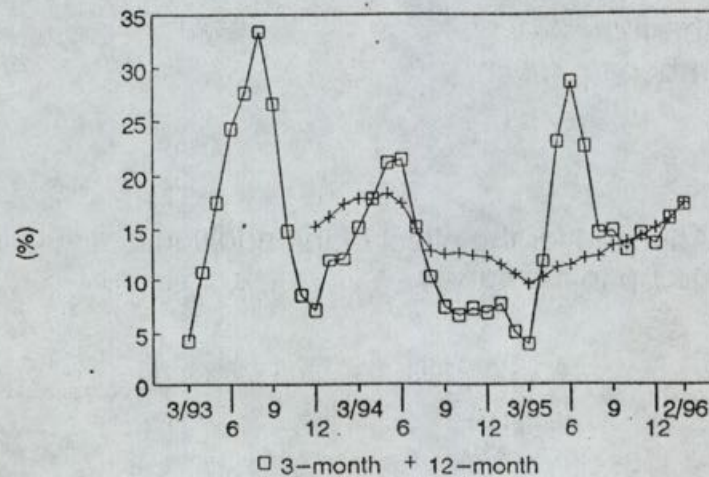
Remarks : The significant fall of outstanding balance in December 1994 was due to the effect of reclassification, securitization and sale of loans by some institutions.

Monthly growth rate



A2

3-month and 12-month moving average growth rate on annualised basis



A3

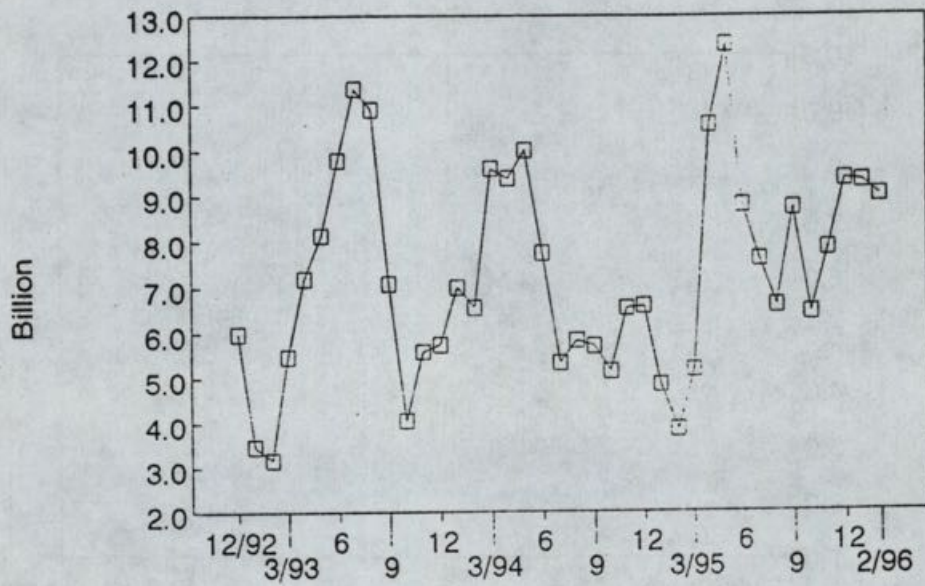
□ 3-month + 12-month

Chart B

RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LOANS IN HONG KONG
(33 institutions)

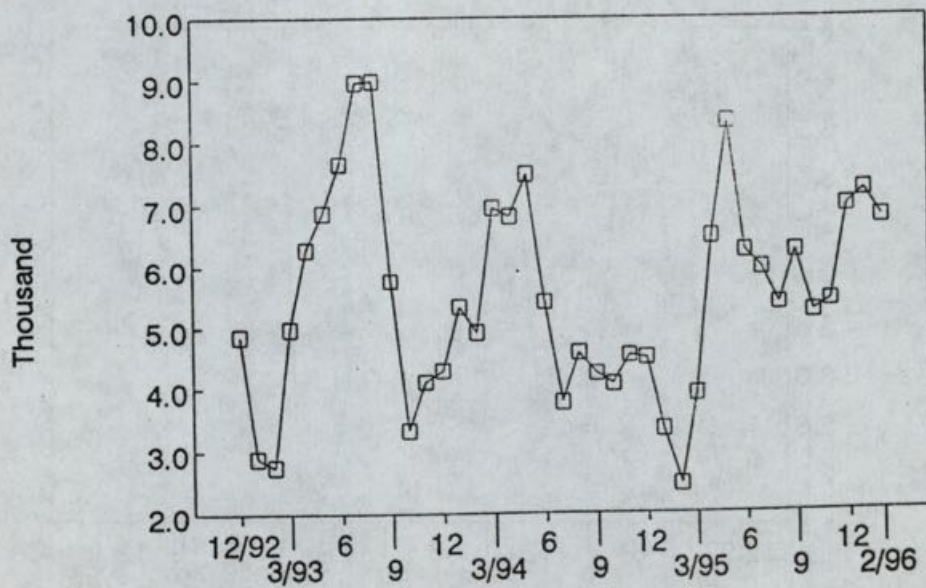
GROSS LOANS MADE DURING THE MONTH

Amount



B1

Number of accounts



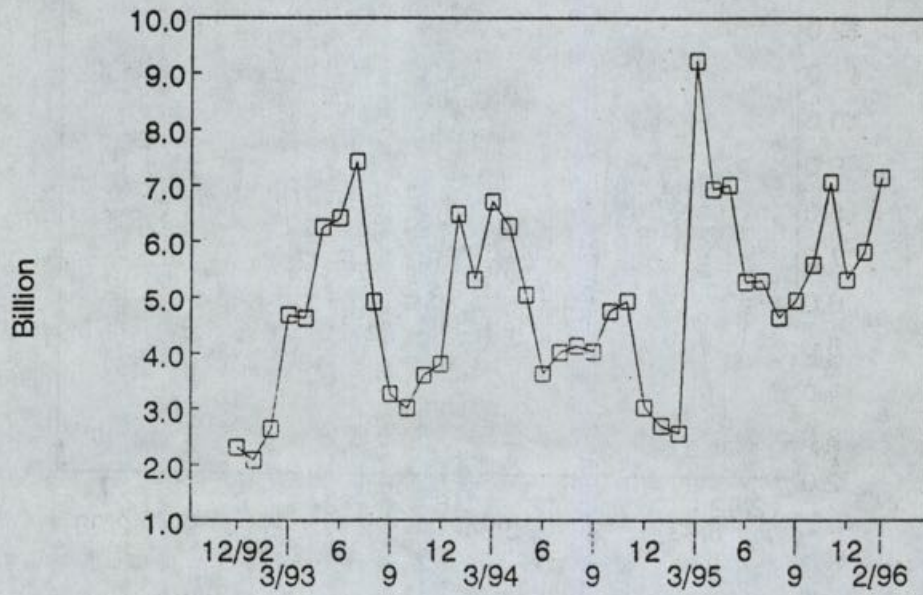
B2

Chart C

RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LOANS IN HONG KONG
(33 institutions)

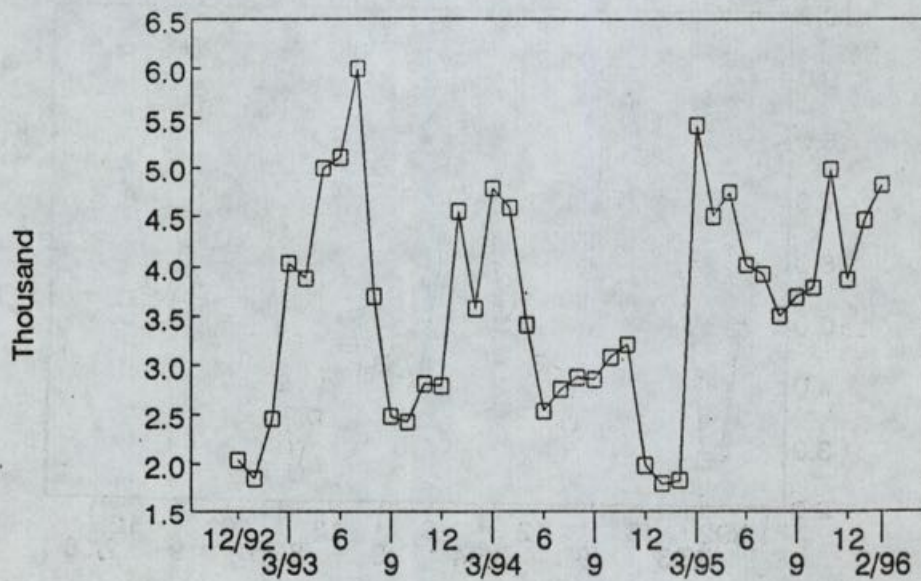
NEW LOANS APPROVED BUT NOT YET DRAWN

Amount



C1

Number of accounts



C2

Provisional statistics of restaurant receipts and purchases

The value of total receipts for the restaurant sector in the fourth quarter of 1995, estimated at \$13.4 billion, increased by 6% compared with the same quarter in 1994, according to the provisional statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

After discounting the effect of price changes over the period, total receipts showed virtually no change in volume terms. Following declines for six consecutive quarters, restaurant business seemed to have bottomed out more recently. The value of total purchases of restaurants, estimated at \$4.8 billion, increased by 5%.

Among the different types of restaurants, the total receipts of bars and Chinese restaurants rose by 9% and 6% respectively in value. In volume terms, they increased by 4% and 1% respectively. The total receipts of fast food shops recorded an increase of 9% in value, but showed virtually no growth in volume.

Meanwhile, the total receipts of non-Chinese restaurants increased by 3% in value but decreased by 4% in volume. On the other hand, receipts of miscellaneous eating and drinking places recorded a decrease of 7% in value and 13% in volume, due to a high comparison base in the fourth quarter of 1994, when increases of 37% in value and 21% in volume were registered.

Comparing with the preceding quarter, and bearing in mind that the comparison is affected by seasonal factors, total restaurant receipts in the fourth quarter of 1995 increased by 1% in value, but showed virtually no change in volume.

For the year 1995 as a whole, total restaurant receipts estimated at \$52.4 billion, increased by 5% compared with 1994. In volume terms, the receipts decreased by 2%. The value of total purchases of restaurants increased to \$18.8 billion, by 5%.

The largest growth in total receipts in 1995 was recorded for miscellaneous eating and drinking places and bars, by 14% and 13% respectively in value, and by 5% and 8% respectively in volume.

Likewise, the total receipts of fast food shops increased notably, by 10% in value and 3% in volume.

Meanwhile, the total receipts of non-Chinese restaurants and Chinese restaurants increased by 5% and 3% respectively in value but decreased by 2% and 4% respectively in volume.

Restaurant receipts in volume terms are derived from receipts in value terms after adjusting for price changes. The relevant components of the Consumer Price Index are used as deflators.

Table 1 presents the revised figures for the total receipts and total purchases of the restaurant sector for the third quarter of 1995 and the provisional figures for the fourth quarter of 1995.

Table 2 shows the value and volume indices of total receipts by type of restaurant for the fourth quarter of 1994, the third quarter and the fourth quarter of 1995, with the quarterly average from October 1989 to September 1990 taken as 100. Also tabulated are comparisons of the results of the fourth quarter of 1995 with those of the third quarter of 1995 and the fourth quarter of 1994; comparisons of total receipts in 1995 with 1994 are also given.

The Report on the Quarterly Survey of Restaurant Receipts and Purchases for the fourth quarter of 1995 is now on sale at \$4 per copy at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, 66 Queensway; and the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be directed to the Wholesale and Retail Trade Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2802 1258.

TABLE 1 : TOTAL RESTAURANT RECEIPTS AND PURCHASES

		3rd Qtr 1995 (Revised figures)	4th Qtr 1995 (Provisional figures)
Total restaurant receipts	(HK\$ million)	13 243.4	13 368.5
Total purchases by restaurants	(HK\$ million)	4 774.0	4 825.3

TABLE 2 : VALUE AND VOLUME INDICES OF RESTAURANT RECEIPTS FOR 4TH QUARTER 1994, 3RD QUARTER AND 4TH QUARTER 1995

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

Type of Restaurant	Type of Index	Index Number			% Change		
		4th Quarter 1994 (Revised figures)	3rd Quarter 1995 (Revised figures)	4th Quarter 1995 (Provisional figures)	4th Qtr 1995 compared with 3rd Qtr 1995	4th Qtr 1995 compared with 4th Qtr 1994	1st-4th Qtr 1995 compared with 1st-4th Qtr 1994
		(Point)	(Point)	(Point)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Chinese restaurants	Value	125.4	132.3	<u>133.1</u>	+0.6	+6.2	+2.6
	Volume	79.3	79.9	<u>79.8</u>	-0.1	+0.7	-3.7
Non-Chinese restaurants	Value	171.3	170.0	<u>176.0</u>	+3.5	+2.8	+5.3
	Volume	111.2	103.7	<u>106.8</u>	+3.0	-4.0	-2.3
Fast food shops	Value	229.1	251.4	<u>248.9</u>	-1.0	+8.6	+10.3
	Volume	159.7	163.5	<u>160.3</u>	-1.9	+0.4	+2.7
Bars	Value	229.1	256.7	<u>250.2</u>	-2.6	+9.2	+13.1
	Volume	137.1	151.6	<u>143.1</u>	-5.6	+4.4	+7.8
Other eating and drinking places	Value	275.1	244.6	<u>256.1</u>	+4.7	-6.9	+13.8
	Volume	174.5	146.3	<u>152.4</u>	+4.2	-12.7	+4.6
All restaurant types	Value	147.2	154.1	<u>155.6</u>	+0.9	+5.7	+4.7
	Volume	94.9	94.3	<u>94.5</u>	+0.2	-0.5	-2.1

Note : The underlined figure was rounded up to 5.

End

1996 voter registration

* * * * *

Voter registration work for 1996 has started.

It will cover the updating of the voter register and registration of new electors.

A spokesman for the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) said today (Thursday) inquiries were being made in relation to some 46,000 electoral records which had been identified as possibly outdated.

The REO has earlier this month sent vetting letters by registered mail to the last known residential address of these electors and their business address where applicable, seeking updated information.

The spokesman said if they did not respond within one month, their names would, in accordance with the law, be included in the proposed omission list in the Provisional Register to be published before June 22.

Their names will be excluded from the 1996 Final Register to be published before August 8 unless they raise a successful claim with the Revising Officer in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures.

The REO will also update the voter register based on information received direct from the electors or based on information provided by the Registration of Persons Offices of the Immigration Department and the Housing Department.

"Updating of our voter register relies, to a large extent, on the co-operation of the electors themselves. Registered electors are requested to report to the REO promptly any change of their particulars," he added.

On the registration of new electors, the spokesman said voter registration forms would be available at many outlets including district offices, housing estate offices, post offices, and the REO on the 10th floor of Harbour Centre, Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

To cater for eligible voters aged between 18 and 21, registration forms will also be sent to tertiary education institutions, secondary schools, and youth centres.

The deadline for registration in the 1996 register is June 1.

End

Ching Ming Festival a statutory labour holiday

* * * * *

The Labour Department today (Thursday) reminded employers that the Ching Ming Festival on April 4 (Thursday) is one of the 11 statutory holidays for employees.

Under the Employment Ordinance, all employees, irrespective of their wage levels, are entitled to statutory holidays and must be paid for the day off if they have worked continuously for the same employer for three months or longer before the statutory holiday.

Holiday pay should be equivalent to an employee's earnings on a full working day and should include basic wages as well as allowances that can be expressed in money terms such as meals and cost of living allowances.

Where the earnings vary from day to day, holiday pay should be the average daily earnings during every complete wage period, which could be between 28 and 31 days, preceding the holiday.

If an employee is required to work on a statutory holiday, he must be given an alternative day off within 60 days before or after the holiday.

Enquiries about statutory holidays may be made at the Labour Department's General Enquiry Telephone Service on 2717 1771.

End

Road Safety Council to launch pedestrian safety campaign

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A major publicity campaign on pedestrian safety will soon be launched to educate pedestrian on road safety, it was decided by the Road Safety Council yesterday (Wednesday).

Speaking after a meeting held at Police Headquarters in Wan Chai, a spokesman for the Council said the publicity drive was necessary in view of the high casualty figures involving pedestrian particularly the elderly and children.

"We hope with the publicity drive it would help the public to know more about road safety. Everyday, thousands of people are risking their lives by not observing the road safety codes," the spokesman said.

"Last year we had launched an immensely successful publicity drive on drink driving, this year we see a need to direct our messages towards a new target audience, the pedestrian."

However, the spokesman stressed, although pedestrian safety would be the main theme, the Council would still continue its publicity efforts on drink driving.

The Council also announced the enforcement of rear seat belt legislation with effect from June 1.

As from the date onwards, the spokesman said, all rear seat passengers in private cars are required to wear rear seat belt if one is fitted. Failure to comply will result in a maximum fine of \$5,000 and three months imprisonment.

"All private cars registered on or after the commencing date of the legislation must be fitted with rear seat belt," the spokesman said.

To publicise the use of rear seat belt, a series of publicity will be mounted on televisions and radios together with posters and leaflets detailing the legislation.

The Council is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner of Police and its membership included the Transport Branch, Transport Department, Information Services, Home Affairs, Education and Highways department, British Forces (Hong Kong), Road Safety Association, Institute of Advanced Motorists, and Hong Kong Automobile Association.

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	2,729	0930	+71
Closing balance in the account	2,483	1000	+71
Change attributable to :		1100	+71
Money market activity	+54	1200	+72
LAF today	- 300	1500	+72
		1600	+54

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.7 *+0.0* 28.3.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.21	2 years	2802	5.16	98.47	6.12
1 month	5.12	3 years	3901	5.57	98.36	6.30
3 months	5.15	5 years	5103	6.75	100.20	6.81
6 months	5.26	7 years	7302	6.02	94.82	7.10
12 months	5.58	5 years	M502	7.30	101.35	7.07

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$21,751 million

Closed March 28, 1996

End