



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Views on Trade Effluent Surcharge Review invited

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The Government is seeking views from relevant trades and industries, which are or may be affected by the Trade Effluent Surcharge (TES), on the outcome of the consultancy review of the TES Scheme which commenced in October 1996.

A letter, containing an executive summary of the consultant's Final Report, was issued by the Planning, Environment and Lands Branch today (Tuesday) to organisations representing these trades and industries to invite their views.

A Government spokesman said when introducing the sewage charging scheme in April 1995, the Government gave an undertaking that the TES scheme would be reviewed after implementation and in the light of experience of the initial scheme.

In May 1996, the Government announced its plan to review the TES scheme and sent letters to relevant trade associations to invite comments on the review exercise.

"Subsequently, meetings on the objectives and scope of the review were also held by the Administration with representatives of trades," the spokesman said.

The consultant, commissioned by the Government, conducted a consultation by holding meetings with trade associations affected by the TES scheme and concerned political parties and staging a public forum. The views expressed at these meetings and the forum have been considered in the review.

The review makes a number of suggestions and options for possible changes. Among other things, it suggests that the current system based on generic COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand) values should be retained at least for the short term, with a move towards individual measurements and a link with licensed discharge values under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

The use of an additional measurement parameter, Suspended Solid, should also be considered.

In the meantime, the "appeal" system should be simplified and turned into a "reassessment" exercise between the Government and the trader. The validity of the reassessment result should be extended.

The review also shows that of the 210,000 businesses estimated to be operating in Hong Kong, only some 12,000 or less than six per cent are included in the current TES scheme.

"Most of the remainder are offices or premises not discharging wastewater any stronger than domestic sewage," explained the spokesman.

"However, it is likely that some other trades discharging effluent exceeding the basic domestic strength have not been included in the TES scheme to date.

"The Review suggests that the coverage of the TES scheme should be expanded to include all such trades to ensure that they pay their fair share for processing the pollution which they produce. In this regard, the Consultant has proposed that consideration be given to including trades such as printing, garages, tobacco manufacturing and possibly some others into the TES scheme," he added.

On April 18, 1997, the consultant released the Final Report. The spokesman said that the Final Report is available for public inspection at Environmental Protection Department Library, 26th Floor, Southorn Centre, Hong Kong.

As a six-week consultation has just started, he urged those who wish to make a submission should write to send their comments to the Environment Division of the Planning, Environment and Lands Branch, 9th Floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong before June 10, 1997.

End

Turtles seized by AFD

The Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) seized a quantity of freshwater turtles in an operation in Wan Chai this (Tuesday) morning.

Acting on information, AFD officers raided a residential flat in Morrison Hill Road and seized from the balcony 10 temple terrapins, weighing between 70 and 120 pounds each.

A 35-year-old man was taken for further enquiries.

The investigations began last week when the department's regulatory section received reports of Kowloon Tong homes being approached for the sale of aged terrapins. Price tags of \$8,000 to \$12,000 per turtle was said to be fetched.

An AFD veterinary officer, Dr Howard Wong, said although temple terrapins are not endangered animals, they are on the IUCN Red Data Book and being closely monitored on their numbers.

Dr Wong pointed out that there is no suitable habitat in Hong Kong for these freshwater turtles.

He added that keeping these animals in an unsuitable environment may constitute a breach of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance.

Dr Wong took the opportunity to remind the public not to buy these terrapins for release into the wild or the sea as the act could breach a number of legislation. In addition, the release of these turtles into the wild would almost certainly result in their death.

End

New measure for recruiting Government temporary staff

The Labour Department today (Tuesday) announced that starting from May 1 (Thursday), a pilot test of drawing lots will be introduced in shortlisting applicants for job interviews in the recruitment of Government temporary junior clerical posts.

"An enormous number of students approach the offices of the Local Employment Services (LES) for these posts such as temporary clerical assistants, temporary typists and temporary computer operators during every summer.

"To scramble for the limited vacancies, some of them even queue up early in the morning at the entrances to the LES offices. This has adversely affected the services rendered to other normal job seekers," a spokesman for the Labour Department said.

To tackle the problem, the Labour Department will adopt a drawing lots system in handling the recruitment of these posts from May 1 to July 31. A total of six draws will be held during this period.

"With this special measure, applicants applying for these posts are not required to queue up at the LES offices," the spokesman said.

"Instead, they will only be required to complete the specified application forms which are available at all LES offices and return the forms on or before the deadline to the Central Recruitment Unit of the Labour Department at Rooms 500-508 Citylink Plaza, No 1 Sha Tin Station Circuit, Sha Tin, for drawing.

"Information on temporary Government vacancies will be posted in the LES offices. Job-seekers can easily distinguish those posts which will be recruited by the drawing system.

"Applicants applying for Government temporary junior clerical posts can submit only one application form in each draw. They are allowed to choose up to five posts on each form submitted," he added.

The results will be displayed at the LES offices after each draw. Successful applicants will receive written notifications and they have to bring the relevant documents to the respective LES office for registrations and referrals of job interviews.

This special arrangement will only apply to Government temporary junior clerical posts. For the other Government temporary posts, job-seekers still have to apply at LES offices on a first-come-first-served basis.

End

External trade figures for March 1997

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In March 1997, the value of Hong Kong's re-exports showed a notable increase over a year earlier while that of domestic exports rose modestly. The value of imports continued to rise on a year-on-year basis.

These are shown in the external trade figures for March 1997 released today (Tuesday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The value of total exports (comprising re-exports and domestic exports) in March 1997 increased by 9.1% over a year earlier to \$105.5 billion. Within total exports, the value of re-exports increased by 10.2% to \$90.7 billion while the value of domestic exports increased by 2.9% to \$14.8 billion.

The value of imports increased by 6.0% in March 1997 over a year earlier to \$128.1 billion.

As the value of total exports in March 1997 was smaller than that of total imports, a visible trade deficit of \$22.6 billion, equivalent to 18% of the value of imports, was recorded. This was smaller than the corresponding deficit of \$24.1 billion, equivalent to 20% of the value of imports, in March 1996.

In the first quarter of 1997, the value of total exports increased by 2.2% over the same quarter last year. Amongst this, the value of re-exports rose by 3.7% while that of domestic exports decreased by 6.1%. The value of imports showed an increase of 4.3%. Over the same period, a visible trade deficit of \$48.2 billion, equivalent to 13% of the value of imports, was recorded. This was larger than the deficit of \$39.8 billion, equivalent to 11% of the value of imports, recorded in the first quarter of 1996.

Commenting on the latest trade statistics, a Government Secretariat spokesman said that exports registered a better performance in March. In particular, re-exports showed a markedly accelerated increase than in January and February while domestic exports rebounded to positive growth after declining continuously in the past 10 months. However, this distinct pick-up was related in part to a low base of comparison in March 1996. Meanwhile, retained imports recorded a faster growth in the first quarter of 1997, by 5.4% in value terms over a year earlier. This was in line with the more intensive domestic demand.

A more detailed analysis of Hong Kong's external trade for March 1997, by commodity and country, will be released in mid-May 1997.



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

External Trade Figures for March 1997

一九九七年三月份對外貿易數字

(HK\$ Million)
百萬港元

MERCHANDISE TRADE VALUES for March 1997		一九九七年三月份商品貿易貨值		Change 變動	
		March 1997 一九九七年三月	March 1996 一九九六年三月	Value 貨值	% 百分率
Domestic Exports	港產品出口	14,799	14,379	+420	+2.9
Re-exports	轉口	90,726	82,304	+8,422	+10.2
Total Exports	整體出口	105,525	96,683	+8,842	+9.1
Imports	進口	128,104	120,808	+7,296	+6.0
Trade balance	貿易差額	-22,579	-24,125	+1,546	
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Current month compared with same month last year	本月與去年同期相比	March 1997 一九九七年三月	March 1996 一九九六年三月	Value 貨值	% 百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	14,799 (14.0%)	14,379 (14.9%)	+420	+2.9
Re-exports	轉口	90,726	82,304	+8,422	+10.2
Total Exports	整體出口	105,525	96,683	+8,842	+9.1
Imports	進口	128,104	120,808	+7,296	+6.0
Trade balance	貿易差額	-22,579	-24,125	+1,546	
Current month compared with last month	本月與上月相比	March 1997 一九九七年三月	February 1997 一九九七年二月	Value 貨值	% 百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	14,799 (14.0%)	12,594 (14.1%)	+2,205	+17.5
Re-exports	轉口	90,726	76,465	+14,261	+18.6
Total Exports	整體出口	105,525	89,059	+16,466	+18.5
Imports	進口	128,104	102,273	+25,831	+25.3
Trade balance	貿易差額	-22,579	-13,214	-9,365	
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	Jan 97 to Mar 97 九七年一月至三月	Jan 96 to Mar 96 九六年一月至三月	Value 貨值	% 百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	44,667 (14.2%)	47,564 (15.5%)	-2,897	-6.1
Re-exports	轉口	269,291	259,723	+9,568	+3.7
Total Exports	整體出口	313,957	307,287	+6,671	+2.2
Imports	進口	362,142	347,060	+15,082	+4.3
Trade balance	貿易差額	-48,185	-39,774	-8,411	
Last 12 months compared with same period 12 months earlier	最近十二個月與早十二個月同期相比	Apr 96 to Mar 97 九六年四月至九七年三月	Apr 95 to Mar 96 九五年四月至九六年三月	Value 貨值	% 百分率
Domestic Exports (% of Total Exports)	港產品出口 (佔整體出口百分比)	209,262 (14.9%)	228,634 (16.8%)	-19,371	-8.5
Re-exports	轉口	1,195,326	1,132,124	+63,201	+5.6
Total Exports	整體出口	1,404,588	1,360,758	+43,830	+3.2
Imports	進口	1,550,664	1,511,918	+38,746	+2.6
Trade balance	貿易差額	-146,076	-151,160	+5,084	

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

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

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。

本單張可以於下列地點免費索取：
香港政府統計處
貿易統計資料發布組
地址：香港灣仔港灣道十二號灣仔政府大樓十九樓
電話：2582 4915 傳真：2802 1101 4/97

Self-learning English packages for new arrival children

Schools are encouraged, for the benefits of new arrival children (NAC), to make use of a set of self-learning package on English language to be available by the end of next month (May).

A senior education officer of the Education Department, Mr Lee Che-cheung, said, "As one of the support services to help NAC in learning English, the department has produced a self-learning package at primary one to primary three levels.

"The aim is to provide additional resource material for the NAC who need to acquire basic knowledge of English within a fairly short period of time," Mr Lee said.

"Programmes in the package expose learners to basic communicative functions and language forms which are covered in P 1 to P 3.

"They offer practice on the skill of listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are complementary to classroom learning, and are meant to help learners to catch up with the regular lessons," he added.

The self-learning package include video and audio tapes, workbooks, assessment papers, a teacher/tutor's handbook and a learner's guide.

All primary schools will be given a set of the package. Those with high NAC intakes can request for at most two more sets, subject to availability.

Secondary schools which have admitted a large number of NAC will also be given one set of the packages for reference if they request.

The package will also sent to non-government organisations running induction and extension programmes for these children.

To facilitate the delivery of the packages, all primary schools and those secondary schools wishing to have a set of the package are requested to return completed reply slip to the Adult Education Section of the Education Department's Services Division, at Room 1106, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, or fax it to 2834 7350, on or before May 5.

Mr Lee also noted that the department will hold six half-day seminars in June to familiarise teachers with the components, organisation and use of the package.

Heads of primary and secondary schools wishing to nominate teachers to the seminars are requested to return completed form to the Adult Education Section at the above address or fax it to the above fax number on or before May 5.

Enquiries should be directed to the Section on 2892 6669 or 2892 6673.

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New government tunnel toll tickets for sale on Thursday

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The Transport Department today announces that three types of newly designed government tunnel toll tickets will be available for sale from May 1 (Thursday).

The colour of these toll tickets are slightly different from the existing ones while ticket size will remain unchanged.

The new toll tickets can be used at the four government tunnels, namely, Aberdeen Tunnel, Lion Rock Tunnel, Shing Mun Tunnel and Tseung Kwan O Tunnel.

Members of the public can purchase these new tickets at the following government car parks:

- (a) Garden Road Car Park;
- (b) Rumsey Street Car Park;
- (c) Shau Kei Wan Car Park;
- (d) Tin Hau Car Park;
- (e) Yau Ma Tei Car Park;
- (f) Sheung Fung Street Car Park; and
- (g) Tsuen Wan MTR Station Car Park.

However, apart from these seven government car parks, all other existing sale outlets for tunnel toll tickets will cease operation on the same day.

The \$3.0 tickets are for a single journey through Tseung Kwan O Tunnel, the \$5.0 tickets for use at Shing Mun Tunnel as well as the Aberdeen Tunnel and the \$6.0 tickets are for Lion Rock Tunnel.

The existing toll tickets can still be used but will not be available for sale after April 30.

All toll tickets are sold in a booklet of ten.

End

Naval artifacts to stay in Hong Kong

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Although a 156 year long association between Hong Kong and the Royal Navy officially ended last month with the decommissioning of HMS Tamar, plans are already under way to ensure that there will be a small area of Hong Kong which still has a Royal Navy connection.

Royal Navy artifacts uncovered by Mrs Janet Melson, wife of the Senior Naval Officer Commodore Peter Melson, earlier this year are to be handed over to the Hong Kong Museum of History in preparation for the assembly of a new Royal Navy time capsule thereby continuing a 95 year old tradition.

The time capsule is to be buried at the Military Museum, which is currently under construction at Lei Yue Mun, and the items are being handed over to Dr Joseph Ting ready for burial when the Museum is complete.

The items, to be handed over by Lieutenant Commander Cliff Squibb, last Commanding Officer of HMS Tamar and Lieutenant Nick Doyle, will also include the final Royal Navy Ensign to be hoisted over HMS Tamar, a collection of photographs of the recent history of the Navy in Hong Kong and newspapers depicting the closure of HMS Tamar on April 11, 1997.

End

Flushing water cut in Tuen Mun

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Flushing water supply to all premises in Tuen Mun will be suspended from 10 pm on Friday (May 2) to 6 am the following day for alteration work on watermains at the Tuen Mun Salt Water Pumping Station.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date : 29 April 1997
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q078
Issue date : 30 April 1997
Maturity date : 28 May 1997
Amount applied : HK\$10,780 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$5,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 5.34 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 5.35 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 34 PCT
Average tender yield : 5.35 PCT

Tender date : 29 April 1997
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q718
Issue date : 30 April 1997
Maturity date : 30 July 1997
Amount applied : HK\$5,978 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$2,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 5.45 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 5.45 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 64 PCT
Average tender yield : 5.46 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tender to be held in the week beginning - 5 May 97 :

Tender date : 6 May 1997
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q719
Issue date : 7 May 1997
Maturity date : 6 August 1997
Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$2,000 + 500 MN

Tender date : 6 May 1997
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H764
Issue date : 7 May 1997
Maturity date : 5 November 1997
Tenor : 182 days
Amount on offer : HK\$1,000 + 300 MN

End