



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Statement on establishment of the Preparatory Committee

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Commenting on the establishment of the Preparatory Committee, a government spokesman today (Thursday) said: "We look forward to co-operating with the Preparatory Committee to work for a successful transition.

"The Preparatory Committee will play an important role in the establishment of the SAR Government. It is therefore in Hong Kong's interest that we should co-operate with it.

"We have made it clear that the Hong Kong Government will offer assistance to the Preparatory Committee to enable it to carry out its work.

"The co-operation we provide will be guided by the basic principles set out in the Governor's Policy Address to the Legislative Council last October, namely:

- The arrangements for co-operation are fully consistent with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law and are in the interests of Hong Kong;
- The authority and credibility of the Hong Kong Government are not compromised; and
- The morale and confidence of the civil service are not affected and that civil servants are not subjected to conflicting loyalties."

The spokesman said: "A HK Government Liaison Office will be the focal point of contact for providing assistance to the Preparatory Committee. We look forward to regular contact between the PC Secretariat and our Liaison Office."

End

Transcript of CS's media session

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The following is the transcript of the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan's media session after attending the opening ceremony of the HK International Salon of Photography Exhibition at City Hall today (Thursday):

Question: What will the Government be prepared to offer to the Preparatory Committee?

Chief Secretary: We would hope to co-operate with the Preparatory Committee in every way that we can. Of course, the details how the Preparatory Committee will go about its work still needs discussions with the Chinese. But as you know, we are setting up a Liaison Office which will be a focal point of contact between the Secretariat of the Preparatory Committee and the Government. The Liaison Office will be staffed with a small team of officials. Most of the work, in fact, will be done by the individual Branches depending on the information that the Preparatory Committee requires. But details still need discussing with the Chinese.

Question: How should they operate in order to win their credibility ?

CS: How should they operate? I don't think it is for me to suggest. I am sure that the Preparatory Committee and all members of the Preparatory Committee will wish to as fully as possible reflect the views of the Hong Kong people and that they, like us, would wish to work for a smooth transition and to ensure Hong Kong's continuous prosperity and stability.

End

Governor to have week-long holiday with family

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, will leave Hong Kong on Saturday (December 30) to spend a week-long holiday in the Philippines with his family. He will return to Hong Kong on January 6.

During his absence, the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, will be Deputy to the Governor.

End

Appointments to the Consumer Council

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A government spokesman announced today (Thursday) that the Financial Secretary has appointed 17 members to the Consumer Council for a period of one to two years with effect from January 1, 1996.

Five existing members have been re-appointed to the Consumer Council for a period of two years. They are Mr William Francis Archambaud Chao, Dr John Ho Dit-sang, Prof Joseph Lai Ki-leuk, Dr Albert Leung Wing-nang and Mr Tim Lui Tim-leung.

Another four members have been re-appointed for a period of one year. They are Mr Chan Yan-leung, Dr Sarah Liao Sau-tung, Mr Herman To Yung-sing and Mr Peter Wong Tung-shun.

Eight new members have been appointed to the Consumer Council for a period of one year. They are Mr Cheng Shu-ming, Mr Lester Kwok Chi-hang, Mrs Katherine Shum Ou Fai-kuen, Dr So Kai-ming, Dr Tsang Shu-ki, Mr Wong Kwok-kei, Mr William Wu Shu-cherk and Mr Benjamin Yu, QC.

Mr Cheng is the general manager of an insurance agency. He was a member of the Yuen Long District Board from 1991 to 1994 and has been the Chairman of the Yuen Long District Fight Crime Committee since 1991.

Mr Kwok is a managing director in a retailing business.

Mrs Shum is a housewife and is active in arts, culture and education.

Dr So is a medical practitioner and solicitor. He is the Vice-president of the Hong Kong Medical Association.

Mr Yu is a barrister and an Hon Lecturer in the University of Hong Kong.

Dr Tsang is an economist and an Associate Professor in Economics in the Hong Kong Baptist University.

Mr Wong is a social worker and also an elected member of the Yau Tsim Mong District Board.

Mr Wu is a marine engineer and the managing director of a company in international maritime.

Retiring from the Council are Ms Audrey Eu Yuet-mee, QC, Ms Sara Ho Suk-ching, Dr Law Cheung-kwok, Mr Lee Kam-hung, Mr Man Mo-leung, Dr Anthony Ng Sung-man, Mr Clement Tao Kwok-lau and Mrs Yuen Chan Po-hing.

"We are grateful to these retired members for the devotion of their precious time and effort to a highly regarded public service. Their contribution to the work of the Consumer Council has been most useful in promoting consumer interests," the spokesman said.

End

Provisional statistics of retail sales for October

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According to the provisional figures released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department, the value of total retail sales in October 1995, estimated at \$17.7 billion, increased by 3% when compared with October 1994. After discounting the effect of price changes over the period, total retail sales dropped by 2% in volume.

Sales of motor vehicles continued to decline significantly, by 35% in value and 38% in volume. Sales of fuels and consumer durable goods (other than motor vehicles) also went down, by 3% and 2% in value respectively. In terms of volume, they decreased by 9% and 6% respectively.

Meanwhile, sales in supermarkets and department stores rose by 6% and 2% in value but went down by 2% and 7% in volume respectively. Concurrently, sales of food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco recorded virtually no change in value but a decrease of 7% in volume.

Nevertheless, there were still increases in sales of clothing and footwear (13% in value and 3% in volume); jewellery, watches and clocks and valuable gifts (12% in value and 11% in volume) and miscellaneous consumer goods (10% in value and 5% in volume).

Compared with September 1995 (but bearing in mind that this comparison may be affected by seasonal factors), total retail sales in October 1995 increased by 2% in value and 1% in volume.

Comparing the period from January to October 1995 with the same period in 1994, total retail sales rose by 5% in value, but dropped by 1% in volume.

The volume of retail sales is derived from the value of retail sales after adjusting for price changes. The relevant components of the Consumer Price Index are used as deflators.

Table 1 presents the revised total retail sales figure for September 1995 and the provisional figure for October 1995.

Table 2 shows the value and volume indices of retail sales in October 1994, September and October 1995 for all retail outlets and by type of retail outlet, with average retail sales from October 1989 to September 1990 taken as 100. Comparisons of the October 1995 results with those for September 1995 and those for October 1994, as well as comparisons of retail sales in the period from January to October 1995 with the same period in 1994 are also given.

The report containing the analysis of the October 1995 results is now on sale at \$4 per copy at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, ground floor, Low Block, 66 Queensway; and the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, 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 RETAIL SALES

Total Retail Sales for October 1995 (Provisional Figure) = HK\$17,686.1 million
 for September 1995 (Revised Figure) = HK\$17,347.8 million

TABLE 2 : VALUE AND VOLUME INDICES OF RETAIL SALES FOR OCTOBER 1994, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 1995

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

Type of Outlet	Type of Index	Index Number			% Change		
		October 1994 (Revised figures)	September 1995 (Revised figures)	October 1995 (Provisional figures)	Oct 1995 compared with Sep 1995	Oct 1995 compared with Oct 1994	Jan - Oct 1995 compared with Jan - Oct 1994
		(Point)	(Point)	(Point)	(%)	(%)	(%)
(A) <u>FOR ALL RETAIL OUTLETS</u>	Value	182.4	184.7	188.3	+2.0	+3.2	+4.7
	Volume	139.9	136.0	136.9	+0.7	-2.1	-1.5
(B) <u>BY TYPE OF RETAIL OUTLETS</u>							
Food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (other than supermarkets)	Value	140.4	148.1	140.8	-4.9	+0.3	+3.8
	Volume	106.3	100.4	98.7	-1.7	-7.1	-3.2
Supermarkets ϕ	Value	151.9	184.9	161.3	-12.8	+6.2	+8.0
	Volume	106.0	120.1	104.2	-13.2	-1.8	+0.1
Fuels	Value	166.3	168.7	161.0	-4.6	-3.2	+5.6
	Volume	114.5	109.1	104.0	-4.6	-9.1	-1.5
Clothing, footwear and allied products	Value	259.4	269.1	293.8	+9.2	+13.3	+13.4
	Volume	173.4	176.3	179.1	+1.6	+3.3	+3.0
Consumer durable goods	Value	176.6	174.0	147.2	-15.4	-16.6	-11.5
	Volume	142.8	139.3	117.0	-16.0	-18.0	-14.8
- Motor vehicles and parts	Value	181.8	134.2	117.3	-12.6	-35.5	-26.7
	Volume	125.7	88.9	77.5	-12.9	-38.4	-33.0
- Consumer durable goods other than motor vehicles and parts	Value	172.8	202.7	168.8	-16.7	-2.3	#
	Volume	155.1	175.8	145.7	-17.2	-6.1	-3.9
Department stores	Value	143.1	138.5	145.6	+5.1	+1.7	+3.7
	Volume	101.5	94.7	94.6	-0.1	-6.7	-4.8
Jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts	Value	169.6	164.7	190.3	+15.6	+12.2	+5.7
	Volume	158.5	151.9	175.6	+15.6	+10.8	+3.8
Other consumer goods not elsewhere classified	Value	254.4	243.7	279.5	+14.7	+9.9	+13.9
	Volume	197.5	181.3	206.7	+14.0	+4.7	+8.5

NOTE : ϕ Not including supermarkets operating in department stores.
 # denotes a figure within ± 0.05
 The underlined figures were rounded up to 5.

Investigation into foundering of local pleasure craft

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The Director of Marine, Mr Ian Dale, in accordance with the powers granted under section 58 of the Shipping and Port Control Ordinance, today (Thursday) appointed Surveyor of Ships (Nautical), Captain Y K Li, to investigate the circumstances surrounding the foundering of the locally licensed pleasure (Licence No PV4477) which occurred in the area between the Brothers and Chek Lap Kok at about 12.50 am on December 25, 1995.

End

OCs empowered to maintain effective building management

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The Government encourages effective building management and the Building Management Ordinance has provided a legal framework for owners and property managers to work towards this goal, an Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Patrick Lin, said today (Thursday).

Mr Lin said at an Eastern District Board meeting that the ordinance was enacted in 1993 to facilitate the formation of owners' corporations (OCs) and to provide for the management of buildings.

"Sections 14 and 18(1) of the ordinance provide OCs with the power to make resolutions for the control, management and administration of buildings, and to maintain the common parts and the property of the corporation in a state of good and serviceable repair and clean condition," he said.

"When passing resolutions, OCs should have regard to these provisions and the terms of their Deeds of Mutual Covenant. Legal advice should be sought as appropriate."

Responding to some members' concerns over the ramification of the Supreme Court judgement on the Bayview Mansion case, Mr Lin said the judgement was only a single case and had not affected the duties and powers of OCs under sections 14 and 18(1) of the ordinance.

"Owners' corporations should continue to exercise these duties and powers as stipulated in the ordinance to maintain their buildings in a state of good and serviceable repair and clean condition," he stressed.

"The Attorney General's Chambers had studied the judgement and the Government is considering proposing amendments to the ordinance to clarify that renovation and decorative works are covered by sections 14 and 18(1) of the ordinance."

End

10 language projects receive funding

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The acting Director of Education and Trustee of the Language Fund, Mr Kwan Ting-fai, today (Thursday) approved funds totalling \$3.423 million to 10 language improvement projects recommended by the Language Fund Advisory Committee.

Of the 10 successful applications which are aimed at improving language proficiency of students, teachers and members of the public, seven are Chinese language (including Putonghua) projects, two English language projects and one concerning improving proficiency in both Chinese and English.

A spokesman for the Language Fund Secretariat said: "There is a good combination of research, teaching and learning materials, courses, reading award projects as well as day camps for secondary students.

"All the projects meet the stringent criteria set by the Language Fund Advisory Committee and should be a great help in raising language proficiency and improving motivation for language learning."

He noted that among the successful bidders two projects were on the production of a TV series on the correct usage of Chinese and video tapes on "Cantonese Programme" for primary and secondary schools.

There are also two research projects on the development of students' grammatical competence and language standards and assessment for student teachers.

"Endorsement of these projects shows the Language Fund's support for projects enhancing language proficiency at the community/workforce level," the spokesman said.

The Language Fund was set up in May last year. It was a trust fund held under the Director of Education Incorporation Ordinance with an initial allocation of \$300 million.

The main objective of the Fund is to support proposals and initiatives which will raise the standards in Chinese (including Putonghua) and English, enhance existing efforts and meet temporary shortfalls in language teaching resources. In addition, it also designs to encourage research into problem areas and initiation of new approaches.

Chinese Language (Including Putonghua) Projects

Project	Organisation/ Co-ordinator	Amount of Grant and Duration of Project
Organisation of Parent-Child Reading Programme for primary 1 and primary 2 students in 1996	YCH Ho Sik Nam Primary School	\$0.017 million over 4 months
Production of "Cantonese Programme" in the form of VHS videos for primary and secondary schools in 1996	Radio Television Hong Kong	\$0.32 million over 6 months
Production of TV series on the correct usage of Chinese to be broadcast in 1996	Radio Television Hong Kong	\$1.5 million over 6 months
Organisation of Journals Writing and Reports Reading Programme in the school in 1995-96	Lee Chi Tat Memorial School	\$0.03 million over 1 academic year
Conducting a pilot project on the use of a computerized note-book as a communication aid for children with severe speech disorders starting in 1996	Hong Kong Red Cross John F. Kennedy Centre	\$0.1 million over 2 years
Running of Putonghua courses for parents and children to learn together in 1996-97	Christian Family Service Centre	\$0.016 million over 1 year
Production of Putonghua radio programmes in the form of cassette tapes for distribution to all secondary schools, youth centres and public libraries in 1996	Radio Television Hong Kong	\$0.2 million over 4 months

English Projects

Project	Organisation/ Co-ordinator	Amount of Grant and Duration of Project
Conducting a research project on the development of junior secondary students' grammatical competence in English starting in 1996	Mr. David Coniam	\$0.27 million over 3 1/2 years
Organisation of English-speaking day camps for secondary school students in 1996-97	Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union	\$0.28 million over 15 months

Cross Language Project

Project	Organisation/ Co-ordinator	Amount of Grant and Duration of Project
Conducting a research project on development of language standards and assessment in Chinese, English and Putonghua for student teachers in 1996	Hong Kong Institute of Education	\$0.69 million over 1 year

Language Fund Secretariat
December 1995

End

Hand-written Chinese Input Systems donated to schools

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The Education Department is providing a Hand-written Chinese Input System, PenPower Version 4, to about 1,300 primary and secondary schools with computer systems from December 1995.

The project was enabled by a more than \$2 million donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. About 1,000 primary and secondary schools will receive the systems within the next two to three months.

The Input System operates in conjunction with Chinese Windows and the School Administration and Management Systems (SAMS). It "recognises" the supplementary font library provided by the Education Department.

PenPower also allows users to alternate between using the mouse and manually inputting Chinese characters. Moreover, frequently used sentences can be assigned to a "vocabulary library" to simplify data entry.

In the past, inputting Chinese characters in computers required special training. As a result, school administrations often lacked personnel capable of doing the inputting. With the Hand-written Chinese Input System, virtually any staff can input Chinese characters easily and effectively.

The system enhances the efficiency in using SAMS.

End

Appointments to the Metrication Committee

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The Government will announce in the Government Gazette tomorrow (Friday) appointments to the Metrication Committee.

Mr K Y Tongson has been re-appointed Chairman of the Metrication Committee for one year with effect from January 1, 1996 and Mr Tommy Li Ying-sang appointed Vice-Chairman for two years with effect from the same date.

The following non-official members have been re-appointed for a period of two years from January 1, 1996: Mrs Alice Chan, Mr Chan Wing-kai, Mr Peter Cheung Yiu-tak, Mr Kwan Kon-wah, Mr Li Li-man and Mr Anthony Wan Hing-yuen.

Mr Chen Yee-mau and Mr Lee Kwong-lam have newly been appointed to serve as members of the committee for the same period.

The committee also comprises representatives from the Trade and Industry Branch, Home Affairs Department, Information Services Department and Customs and Excise Department.

"The focus of our promotional efforts in the coming two years will continue to be put on the retail sector. We will actively seek opportunities for co-operation with the retail sector in the promotion of metrication," a government spokesman said.

End

General Household Survey quarterly report published

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The report on the General Household Survey for July to September 1995 is now available. It contains statistics on employment, unemployment and underemployment for the quarter.

The quarterly report also contains detailed analysis of the characteristics of members of the labour force, including their age, sex, educational attainment, activity status, occupation, industry, hours worked per week and monthly employment earnings.

Data on reasons for unemployment and duration of unemployment for the unemployed are also presented in the report.

Copies of the report, at \$32 each, can be obtained from the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

End

Welfare payment arrangements for New Year holiday

Recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance under the bank payment system may receive their payments on Saturday (December 30) if their pay-day falls on the coming New Year's Day (January 1).

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department said today (Thursday) that special payment arrangements would also be made for recipients of Social Security Allowance whose pay-day fell on January 1.

Those who have bank accounts in Hong Kong Bank or Hang Seng Bank will receive their payments on Saturday whereas those with accounts in other banks will receive their payments next Tuesday (January 2).

In case of doubt, recipients are advised to contact their respective social security field units.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
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Opening balance in the account	2,260	0930	+42
Closing balance in the account	2,202	1000	+42
Change attributable to :		1100	+42
Money market activity	+42	1200	+42
LAF today	-100	1500	+42
		1600	+42

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 122.5 *-0.1* 28.12.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.95	2 years	2711	5.60	100.17	5.58
1 month	5.67	3 years	3810	6.15	101.12	5.79
3 months	5.56	5 years	5012	6.38	100.60	6.33
6 months	5.54	7 years	7211	6.82	101.39	6.67
12 months	5.52	5 years	M502	7.30	102.95	6.67

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$6,781 million

Closed December 28, 1995

End