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## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Government welcomes UN observations on children's rights

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The Government today (Friday) welcomes the advice and suggestions in the Concluding observations released by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child after an examination on October 2 and 3 of the initial report in respect of Hong Kong under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"The observations will be carefully considered by the concerned policy branches," a government spokesman said.

The Committee highlighted a number of positive aspects in Hong Kong's implementation of the Convention. These included the enactment of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, the improvements to the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme, the five research projects on children's welfare and child abuse being undertaken by universities and funded by the Government, and the enactment of the Parent and Child Ordinance in 1993, which removed the legal disadvantages previously suffered by illegitimate children.

The spokesman said the Government was glad that its efforts were recognised by the Committee.

"We note that the Committee has also expressed appreciation for our measures to promote awareness of common adolescent health problems, the Student Health Ambassador scheme for secondary school students, the launching of the new Student Health Service, the establishment of a Health Care and Promotion Fund and measures to make hospitals more baby and child friendly," he said.

In response to the Committee's comment on the continued application of the Convention to Hong Kong, the spokesman said: "It has been agreed in the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group (JLG) that the Convention will continue to apply to Hong Kong after June 30, 1997.

"Matters relating to reservations and declarations as well as reporting arrangements are being discussed in the JLG. It should be noted, though, that these reservations and declarations entered in 1994 took into account certain circumstances in Hong Kong which still exist now.

"Other matters relating to the legislative and administrative measures to implement the Convention are for the Hong Kong Government - and after June 30, 1997, for the SAR Government - to act upon."

In response to the concern on the problem of child abuse, the spokesman said the Government took the matter seriously.

"An inter-departmental working group on child abuse was re-convened in June 1993 to tackle the problem. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the Police established a Child Protection Special Investigation Team in December 1995 to conduct joint investigation into suspected abuse cases and conduct video-recorded interviews of child witnesses.

"The Child Protective Services Unit and the Clinical Psychological Unit of SWD have been provided with additional social workers and clinical psychologists to strengthen protection and treatment for the abuse victims.

"We are providing specialised training for the concerned professionals in handling child abuse cases.

"Following the publicity campaign on early reporting of child abuse cases in 1995, a campaign on prevention of child sexual abuse targeting both children and parents was launched in April 1996.

"More multi-disciplinary district committees on child abuse will be set up so that every SWD district will have such a committee by late 1996," said the spokesman.

The spokesman also referred to a recommendation in the observations that an independent body be established to monitor the implementation of the Convention within Hong Kong.

He said: "The Convention covers a large number of policy areas and the Government believes the appropriate arrangement is for Policy Secretaries to be responsible for the implementation of the Convention in their respective areas. They are assisted in discharging this responsibility by advisory boards and committees with members including NGO representatives.

"This administrative structure suitably caters for our needs and has served Hong Kong well. The Government's performance is already closely monitored by the Legislative Council, the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints and the press.

"The Convention does not require the setting up of a monitoring body. It is for the government concerned to decide on the appropriate administrative structure to implement the Convention."

As regards human rights education, the spokesman highlighted a number of measures to promote human rights education and to increase awareness of children's rights.

"These include incorporating human rights topics into the school curriculum and into the Education Department's Civic Education Guidelines," he said..

"Publicity efforts are made by the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education to heighten public awareness of human rights.

"To evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts, we shall consider including questions on human rights in the Opinion Survey on Civic Education, which is conducted every two years with the next one in early 1998."

On the Committee's comment that the Bill of Rights Ordinance (BORO) does not make specific reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the spokesman said: "The purpose of the BORO is to provide for the incorporation into the law of Hong Kong of the provision of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as applied to Hong Kong.

"Moreover, at the time of the enactment of the BORO, the Convention did not apply to Hong Kong."

The Committee recommends that measures be taken to protect Vietnamese children in detention. The spokesman said: "The situation of Vietnamese children in camps is under close monitoring of the Government and their interests are high on our agenda.

"We have no intention to detain the Vietnamese migrants (VMs) at all. In the interests of the VMs themselves as well as their children, they are repeatedly urged to join voluntary repatriation to return to Vietnam which is their home.

"Sadly, many VMs did not choose to do so. This important decision lies in the hands of the VM parents concerned."

The Committee also expressed concern over split families who await reunification. In response, the spokesman stated that the daily one-way permit quota was raised from 105 to 150 in 1995.

"Thirty of the 45 additional places are allocated to children who will have the right of abode in HK after 1997", he said.

Another issue raised by the UN Committee was the minimum age of criminal responsibility, which is currently set at seven. The spokesman stated that although the Government had carefully considered this issue in the past, it would reconsider it in the light of the Committee's observations.

The Committee recommends that the UK Government prepares a progress report on measures taken to give effect to the suggestions and recommendations contained in the Concluding Observations by the end of May 1997.

"Matters relating to reporting are for the UK Government to consider. We shall put our views to them," the spokesman said.

End

#### Judge Caird seeking early retirement confirmed

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A government spokesman today (Friday) confirmed that the Governor had received a letter from Judge Caird seeking leave to retire early on medical grounds.

The Governor is now considering this request.

End

#### Vast opportunities ahead, it's business as usual: acting FS

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Hong Kong would continue its work to ensure that it would stay ahead of the game and maximise the vast business opportunities that were on offer throughout the Asia-Pacific region, the acting Financial Secretary, Mr Rafael Hui, said today (Friday).

Addressing the opening of the Regional Conference of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants, Mr Hui said Hong Kong was at the centre of an increasingly dynamic and competitive region and there were countless examples to demonstrate that its people were all working for the future and not resting on their laurels.

Mr Hui said: "1997 will have been, well gone, and we shall all find that what follows after 1997 is in fact 1998 and business as usual in Hong Kong.

"We shall continue to have our own fiscal and monetary policies and systems, maintain our own reserves, our own legal system, our independent and low taxation system, our free trade policy, the Hong Kong dollar will remain freely convertible.

"All these, and much more, are enshrined in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, the international agreement and the constitution established to protect Hong Kong's unique status and high degree of autonomy after 1997 under the "one country, two systems" concept."

He said the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, after all, would have complete autonomy in economic matters.

"It is entirely in China's national interest that Hong Kong continues to be successful as an international commercial and financial centre," he said.

Mr Hui pointed out that one area which Hong Kong attached great importance to was the building up of its international connections and continuing its involvement and participation, on its own and as a separate entity, in international bodies related to trade and finance.

He told the audience that Hong Kong had long enjoyed a close and still-strengthening relationship with Australia and Australians.

"Both Hong Kong and Australia have a constructive role to play in building bridges between communities within the region and between this region and the world trading community," he said Mr Hui.

End

#### Suspected plague case proved negative

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In response to media enquiries on the suspected plague case last (Thursday) night, a spokesman for the Department of Health said today (Friday) that the hospital had confirmed that it is not a case of plague.

End

## Hong Kong signs new air services agreement with India

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The Government yesterday (Thursday) signed an air services agreement with the Government of the Republic of India.

The Secretary for Economic Services, Mr Stephen Ip, signed the Agreement on behalf of the Administration while acting Commissioner for India, Mr D K Mallik, signed on behalf of the Government of the Republic of India.

Mr Ip noted the long historical and growing link between Hong Kong and India and the demand for air transport generated.

He considered it important for both Governments and airlines of the two places to work together to ensure that air services between Hong Kong and India will meet the growing demand.

He said the Hong Kong/India Air Services Agreement would provide a firm legal and regulatory framework for the development of air services between Hong Kong and India through to and beyond 1997.

He looked forward to closer ties and the continued expansion of aviation links between the two places in the years to come.

Mr Mallik said the Air Services Agreement would strengthen and develop the air bridge between India and Hong Kong beyond next June.

He expressed confidence that Hong Kong would remain an important business and financial centre of the world in the years to come. In particular, he referred to the efficient communication systems in the territory and Hong Kong's favourable location in one of the most rapidly growing economic regions of the world.

Mr Mallik said the Agreement would facilitate increased involvement of Hong Kong in India's modernisation and liberalisation programme which has begun to gather steam.

The Hong Kong/India Agreement is the fifteenth air services agreement signed by Hong Kong. The others were signed with the Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, Brunei, France, New Zealand, Malaysia, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Australia, Germany, Korea, Singapore and Italy.

Currently, Cathay Pacific and Air India together operate nine return services per week between Hong Kong and India.

End

## External trade statistics by country and commodity

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Detailed statistics on external trade with breakdown by country/territory and commodity for August 1996 was released by the Census and Statistics Department today (Friday).

In August 1996, the value of re-exports grew by 6% over a year earlier to \$106.7 billion, while the value of domestic exports decreased by 11% to \$18.2 billion. Meanwhile, imports increased marginally by 0.7% to \$132.1 billion.

Changes in the value of Hong Kong's re-exports to 10 main destinations are shown in Table 1.

Comparing August 1996 with August 1995, increases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Japan (+13%), the Netherlands (+10%), South Korea (+10%), the United States (+9.4%), China (+7.4%), France (+7.3%), the United Kingdom (+5.5%) and Germany (+4%).

However, the value of re-exports to Taiwan and Singapore decreased by 9.9% and 0.7% respectively.

Comparing the first eight months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of re-exports to most main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes: Japan (+22%), the United Kingdom (+14%), France (+12%), the Netherlands (+8.7%), China (+8.7%), Germany (+8%), South Korea (+6.5%), Singapore (+5.7%) and the United States (+2.8%).

However, the value of re-exports to Taiwan decreased by 4.8%.

Taking all destinations together, the value of re-exports in the first eight months of 1996 was \$768.6 billion, 7.4% higher than that in the same period in 1995.

Table 2 shows changes in the value of re-exports of 10 principal commodity divisions.

Comparing the first eight months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of re-exports of most principal commodity divisions rose.

More notable increases were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$8.2 billion or 23%); clothing (by \$6.9 billion or 12%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$6.8 billion or 9.4%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$5.7 billion or 6.4%); footwear (by \$3.9 billion or 9.8%); and photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$3.9 billion or 12%).

Over the same period, a decrease in the value of re-exports was registered for telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$1.6 billion or 2.1%).

Changes in the value of domestic exports to 10 main destinations are shown in Table 3.

Comparing August 1996 with August 1995, the value of domestic exports to all main destinations showed decreases of various magnitudes: Taiwan (-37%), Singapore (-29%), the United States (-15%), the United Kingdom (-9.6%), Japan (-8.5%), Canada (-8.4%), the Netherlands (-6.9%), France (-6.3%), Germany (-5.8%) and China (-4.9%).

Comparing the first eight months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of domestic exports to all main destinations showed decreases of various magnitudes: Singapore (-14%), Taiwan (-13%), the United States (-12%), Canada (-9.6%), the Netherlands (-9.1%), France (-8.3%), Germany (-7.3%), China (-5%), Japan (-2.8%) and the United Kingdom (-0.4%).

Taking all destinations together, the value of domestic exports in the first eight months of 1996, at \$138.2 billion, decreased by 8.3% over the same period in 1995.

Table 4 shows changes in the value of domestic exports of 10 principal commodity divisions.

Comparing the first eight months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, more significant decreases in the value of domestic exports were recorded for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$3.4 billion or 28%); clothing (by \$3.2 billion or 6.9%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$1.5 billion or 21%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares (by \$1.3 billion or 10%); and photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$927 million or 8.5%).

Over the same period, increases in the value of domestic exports were registered for professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus (by \$186 million or 9.8%); and electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$102 million or 0.5%)

Changes in the value of imports from 10 main suppliers are shown in Table 5.

Comparing August 1996 with August 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from Malaysia (+23%), Italy (+10%), the United States (+9.5%) and China (+9%).

However, the value of imports from Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Germany and the United Kingdom decreased by 22%, 13%, 9.2%, 7.9%, 5.3% and 2.8% respectively.

Comparing the first eight months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from Malaysia (+18%), Italy (+18%), the United Kingdom (+9.7%), the United States (+6.9%), Singapore (+6%), China (+6%) and Germany (+1.2%).

However, the value of imports from Japan, Taiwan and South Korea decreased by 8%, 3.9% and 0.5% respectively.

Taking all sources together, the value of imports in the first eight months of 1996, at \$1,004.5 billion, increased by 2.9% over the same period in 1995.

Table 6 shows changes in the value of imports of 10 principal commodity divisions.

Comparing the first eight months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, more notable increases in the value of imports were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$7.9 billion or 18%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$7.6 billion or 6.3%); clothing (by \$4.6 billion or 7.5%); footwear (by \$3 billion or 8.6%); and miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$3 billion or 4.5%).

Over the same period, decreases in the value of imports were recorded for textiles (by \$2.1 billion or 2.4%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$1.7 billion or 1.8%); and non-metallic mineral manufactures (by \$627 million or 2.2%).

All the trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and no account has been taken of changes in prices between the periods of comparison.

A separate analysis of the volume and price movements of external trade for August 1996 will be released in early November 1996.

Detailed trade statistics analysed by commodity and by country/territory are published in trade statistics reports.

The August issue of the Hong Kong External Trade with detailed analyses on the performance of Hong Kong's external trade in August 1996 will be on sale at \$129 per copy around October 22.

The report can be purchased at either the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, or the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Enquiries regarding regular subscription to this report may be directed to the Publications (Sales) Office, 28th Floor, Siu On Centre, 188 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, Tel 2598 8194; and enquiries on trade statistics to the Census and Statistics Department, Tel 2582 4915.

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TABLE 1 : RE-EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	AUG 96 OVER AUG 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-AUG 96 OVER JAN-AUG 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	34,410	+ 7.4	271,419	+ 8.7
UNITED STATES	25,217	+ 9.4	154,829	+ 2.8
JAPAN	7,324	+ 12.7	51,767	+ 22.4
GERMANY	4,376	+ 4.0	31,273	+ 8.0
UNITED KINGDOM	3,444	+ 5.5	22,578	+ 14.1
SINGAPORE	2,342	- 0.7	17,747	+ 5.7
TAIWAN	2,088	- 9.9	17,164	- 4.8
SOUTH KOREA	1,799	+ 10.0	13,434	+ 6.5
FRANCE	1,724	+ 7.3	12,340	+ 11.8
NETHERLANDS	1,649	+ 10.4	11,725	+ 8.7

TABLE 2 : RE-EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	AUG 96 OVER AUG 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-AUG 96 OVER JAN-AUG 95 (% CHANGE)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	16,212	+ 5.0	94,914	+ 6.4
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	10,241	- 3.6	79,336	+ 9.4
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	10,240	- 7.9	74,404	- 2.1
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	10,897	+ 18.5	64,837	+ 11.9
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	8,397	+ 10.6	63,662	+ 2.7
FOOTWEAR	6,106	+ 15.6	44,114	+ 9.8
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	5,657	+ 15.8	43,952	+ 22.9
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	4,777	+ 8.2	35,637	+ 12.2
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	3,433	+ 9.7	24,269	+ 3.5
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	2,066	+ 5.2	20,973	+ 9.0

TABLE 3 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	AUG 96 OVER AUG 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-AUG 96 OVER JAN-AUG 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	5,285	- 4.9	39,832	- 5.0
UNITED STATES	4,697	- 15.2	33,915	- 11.7
JAPAN	963	- 8.5	7,737	- 2.8
GERMANY	1,012	- 5.8	7,454	- 7.3
SINGAPORE	736	- 29.4	7,059	- 14.1
UNITED KINGDOM	984	- 9.6	6,917	- 0.4
TAIWAN	458	- 37.0	4,371	- 13.5
NETHERLANDS	435	- 6.9	3,187	- 9.1
CANADA	342	- 8.4	2,591	- 9.6
FRANCE	290	- 6.3	1,933	- 8.3

TABLE 4 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	AUG 96 OVER AUG 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-AUG 96 OVER JAN-AUG 95 (% CHANGE)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	6,557	- 6.6	43,519	- 6.9
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	2,323	- 22.8	20,285	+ 0.5
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WARES)	1,533	- 12.5	11,727	- 10.1
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	1,248	- 10.8	9,988	- 8.5
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,199	+ 3.0	9,095	- 3.2
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	1,030	- 23.9	8,776	- 27.8
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	737	- 22.5	5,625	- 20.6
MANUFACTURES OF METALS	343	- 16.6	2,811	- 9.8
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	306	- 14.7	2,581	- 12.6
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CONTROLLING INSTRUMENTS AND APPARATUS	284	+ 3.9	2,088	+ 9.8

TABLE 5 : IMPORTS FROM TEN MAIN SUPPLIERS

SUPPLIER	AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	AUG 96 OVER AUG 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-AUG 96 OVER JAN-AUG 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	54,025	+ 9.0	369,013	+ 6.0
JAPAN	16,091	- 13.0	135,871	- 8.0
TAIWAN	10,076	- 7.9	81,319	- 3.9
UNITED STATES	10,813	+ 9.5	80,387	+ 6.9
SINGAPORE	6,304	- 21.8	54,542	+ 6.0
SOUTH KOREA	5,547	- 9.2	48,945	- 0.5
GERMANY	2,874	- 5.3	22,223	+ 1.2
MALAYSIA	2,839	+ 23.2	21,950	+ 18.4
UNITED KINGDOM	2,793	- 2.8	21,536	+ 9.7
ITALY	2,858	+ 10.1	20,681	+ 17.8

TABLE 6 : IMPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	AUG 96 OVER AUG 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-AUG 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-AUG 96 OVER JAN-AUG 95 (% CHANGE)
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	16,145	- 7.5	126,957	+ 6.3
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	12,114	- 8.0	91,635	- 1.8
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	10,517	+ 9.8	85,908	- 2.4
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	10,766	+ 5.1	70,022	+ 4.5
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	10,900	+ 15.4	66,753	+ 7.5
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	6,559	+ 7.3	51,567	+ 18.2
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,277	+ 1.0	41,229	+ 0.1
FOOTWEAR	5,315	+ 16.4	38,001	+ 8.6
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	2,740	- 12.6	31,624	+ 6.5
NON-METALLIC MINERAL MANUFACTURES	3,402	+ 6.4	28,481	- 2.2

End

Occupational Deafness Compensation Scheme

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The Government proposes to extend by one year the application deadline for claimants under the Occupational Deafness Compensation Scheme (ODCS) who had left their noisy occupations within six years before the commencement of the Scheme in July last year.

The proposed amendment was presented in the Occupational Deafness (Compensation) (Amendment) Bill gazetted today (Friday).

Explaining the bill, a spokesman from the Education and Manpower Branch said the extension would enable those who had inadvertently missed the deadline to submit their applications for a period until June 30 next year.

Under the existing ordinance, a person who suffers noise-induced deafness by reason of their occupation is entitled to apply for compensation if he has had at least 10 years of employment in any of the 17 specified noisy occupations.

"However, he has to satisfy the requirement of having been employed under a continuous contract in a noisy occupation within six years before the commencement of ODCS in July 1995; or within one year preceding his application for compensation," the spokesman said.

"For those who have left their noisy occupations for up to six years before the scheme commenced, they were required to submit their applications before July 1 this year. This was a necessary means to avoid possible abuses of the provisions.

"The underlying concern is that a person's hearing loss may deteriorate with age and the longer he has left his noisy occupation, the more difficult it will be to establish medically the extent to which his hearing loss has been caused by his employment in a noisy occupation."

The spokesman said when the scheme was being drawn up in 1995, it was estimated that there would be 1,000 successful claimants eligible for compensation payment including those who had left their noisy occupations within 72 months before the Scheme commenced.

"However, at the close of the 12-month application period, only 652 applications were received.

"It is possible that some employees might have missed the application deadline," the spokesman said.

The proposed amendment was endorsed by the Labour Advisory Board on June 6 this year.

The bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on October 23.

End

Govt Laboratory awarded for quality management services

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The Government Laboratory was today (Friday) presented double awards for its quality management systems, including the accreditation by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) for the full range of its forensic science services.

The Laboratory is one of the first few laboratories outside the US to have been so accredited thus far.

In addition, the Laboratory was also honoured with the certification by the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) for compliance with ISO 9001 registration requirements for its Analytical and Advisory Services Division.

At a ceremony attended this (Friday) afternoon by government officials and representatives of other institutions in the field, the two awards were presented to the Government Chemist, Mr Lee Nam-sang, respectively by the Chairman of HKQAA, Dr John Lo, and Mr Clifton Vander Ark of ASCLD

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Lee said over the years the Laboratory's customer base had been continuously widened with its contribution to the protection of consumer interests, the environment and public health through the provision of scientific support and the regular testing of food, pharmaceuticals and other traded commodities as well as environmental samples.

Moreover, the Laboratory also plays an increasingly important role in the local criminal justice system by undertaking a wide range of forensic science investigations from drugs and toxicology to questioned documents, traffic accident reconstruction, DNA profiling and trace contact evidence.

Mr Lee said the successful and timely implementation of sound quality systems was an important factor contributing to the continuous and considerable efforts to enhance the quality of the Laboratory's discrete activities.

He said the two awards represented a timely recognition to the challenging tasks which demanded sustained input from staff of the Government Laboratory over a period of nearly two years.

In paying tribute to the contribution by his staff, Mr Lee said: "The Government Laboratory is now in the fortunate position of having third-party recognition for quality systems applicable to leading analytical laboratories which function like ours worldwide."

Immediately after the presentation ceremony, Mr Lee and two Assistant Government Chemists, Dr B N Dailly and Mr Chan Chi-kin, conducted a meet-the-media session to give an up-to-date account of the work of the Government Laboratory in the past years.

End

#### Arch SD staff to walk up 47 floors for charity

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Over 200 staff of the Architectural Services Department (Arch SD) will walk up the 47-storey Queensway Government Offices tomorrow (Saturday) for charity.

Entitled 'Arch SD Charity Staircase Walk', the event, comprising two parts: an inter-branches relay race and a charity walk by individuals, aims at raising some \$100,000 for the Hong Kong Community Chest.

After a start-off ceremony to be officiated by the acting Director of Arch SD, Mr Pau Shiu-hung, six teams formed by staff from different branches of the department will start the competition.

The first three winning teams will be presented with trophies and it will be followed by an individual walk to raise fund for the needy.

The event is part of a series of functions being organised to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Arch SD. Other activities so far included seminars, conferences and a roving exhibition.

End

### The weather of September

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September 1996 was wetter than normal. The total monthly rainfall of 604 millimetres - the sixth highest for the month - was more than twice the normal figure of 299.7 millimetres, and the cumulative rainfall since January 1 of 2,200.8 millimetres was 10 per cent above the normal for the same period.

Two tropical cyclones, namely Sally and Willie, necessitated the hoisting of Tropical Cyclone Warning Signals.

The month started fine and winds were light on September 1. It was hazy in the morning the next day, but the weather became cloudy with isolated thunderstorms in the afternoon.

Winds turned easterly on September 3 and isolated thunderstorms continued to affect the territory until the early morning of September 5. The weather became fine and sunny later that morning.

Generally sunny weather prevailed for the next couple of days and the temperature went up to 33 degrees on September 8, the highest in the month.

A fast moving Typhoon Sally traversed the northern part of the South China Sea later that day, bringing thundery and frequent squally showers to the territory. Gale force winds affected the more exposed areas early on September 9.

During the passage of Sally, scaffoldings collapsed, trees toppled and two persons were killed. As Sally moved away, the weather improved rapidly and generally fine weather prevailed on September 10 and 11.

Easterly winds freshened later on September 11 as an area of low pressure developed over the northern part of the South China Sea. It turned cloudy with isolated showers on September 12 and showers became frequent, heavy and thundery the next day.

The daily total rainfall on September 14 amounted to 227 millimetres, the third highest for September. Temperatures dropped to 23.6 degrees, the lowest in the month, during the heavy downpour.

A landslide occurred in Tai Hang Road where 43 residents had to be evacuated. Seven other landslides and 24 cases of flooding were reported across the territory. Winds subsided on September 16 and the weather became generally fine.

The weather turned cloudy on September 18 as Willie formed near Hainan. From September 19 until September 22, heavy and thundery showers associated with the outer rainbands of Willie affected the territory.

It remained generally cloudy with some showers on September 23. Strong easterly winds affected offshore areas on September 24. Some isolated heavy showers occurred over the Hong Kong Island early on September 27. The weather turned fine and sunny the next day as winds turned more northerly under the influence of a northeast monsoon.

Fine weather prevailed until the end of the month apart from some brief showers on the last day.

Eight tropical cyclones occurred in the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in the month.

Details of the issuance/hoisting and cancellation/lowering of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1.1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal of September are tabulated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Warnings and Signals in September 1996

Warnings/Signals	Effective date and time	
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Tropical Cyclone Warning Signals		
Name of T C	Signal No	
Sally	1	8 Sep 0500 - 8 Sep 1700
	3	8 Sep 1700 - 9 Sep 0215
	8 SE	9 Sep 0215 - 9 Sep 0540
	3	9 Sep 0540 - 9 Sep 1015
Willie	1	18 Sep 2315 - 20 Sep 0900
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Strong Monsoon Signals	24 Sep 0700 - 24 Sep 1020	
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Landslip Warning

14 Sep 1700 - 15 Sep 1725

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Flood Warnings

9 Sep 0300 - 9 Sep 0710  
14 Sep 1330 - 15 Sep 0950  
21 Sep 1035 - 21 Sep 1650  
22 Sep 0215 - 22 Sep 0435

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Thunderstorm Warnings

2 Sep 1350 - 2 Sep 1550  
3 Sep 1040 - 3 Sep 1540  
4 Sep 0035 - 4 Sep 0635  
4 Sep 1330 - 4 Sep 1530  
5 Sep 0200 - 5 Sep 0700  
7 Sep 1915 - 7 Sep 2120  
13 Sep 0005 - 13 Sep 0905  
13 Sep 2045 - 14 Sep 0700  
14 Sep 1155 - 14 Sep 1955  
19 Sep 1200 - 19 Sep 1400  
19 Sep 1445 - 19 Sep 1845  
20 Sep 1030 - 20 Sep 1230  
21 Sep 0625 - 21 Sep 0825  
21 Sep 1020 - 21 Sep 1830  
22 Sep 0250 - 22 Sep 0650

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Fire Danger Warnings

Yellow

28 Sep 1130 - 29 Sep 0600

Red

29 Sep 0600 - 30 Sep 1630

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Table 1.2 Figures and Departures from Normal--September 1996

Total Bright Sunshine	154.8 hours; 26.9 hours below normal
Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation	14.04 MJ/SQM; 2.45 MJ/SQM below normal
Total Rainfall	604.0 mm; 304.3 mm above normal
Mean Cloud Amount	68%; 5% above normal
Mean Relative Humidity	80%; 2% above normal
Mean Daily Maximum Temperature	29.9 Degrees Celsius; 0.4 Degree Celsius below normal
Mean Air Temperature	27.7 Degrees Celsius; 0.1 Degree Celsius above normal
Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	25.7 Degrees Celsius; 0.2 Degree Celsius above normal
Mean Dew Point	23.8 Degrees Celsius; 0.5 Degree Celsius above normal
Total Evaporation	116.3 mm; 34.0 mm below normal

Remarks: All measurements were made at the Royal Observatory except sunshine, solar radiation and evaporation which were recorded at King's Park.

End

Widening of Kennedy Town Praya proposed

\* \* \* \* \*

The Highways Department proposes to widen Kennedy Town Praya at Belcher Bay from Queen's Road West to Sands Street by adding one eastbound lane and to carry out associated footpath and drainage works.

Details of the proposal were published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

A plan showing the proposed works can be inspected during normal office hours at:

- \* Public Enquiry Service Centre, Central and Western District Office, ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong; and
- \* District Lands Office, Hong Kong West, 19th floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, should write to the Secretary for Transport, second floor, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong, not later than December 10.

End

New roads planned for Tseung Kwan O Area 137

\* \* \* \* \*

The Civil Engineering Department has proposed to construct roads in Tseung Kwan O Area 137 which will be developed for deep waterfront industries and potentially hazardous material storage facilities.

The works comprise construction of roads, footpaths and amenity areas.

Works will commence in September next year for completion in December 2000.

Details of the proposed works were published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

The plan and scheme of the proposed works are now available for public inspection at:

- \* Central and Western District Office  
Public Enquiry Service Centre  
ground floor, Harbour Building  
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong;
- \* Sai Kung District Lands Office  
third and fourth floors, Sai Kung Government Offices  
34 Chan Man Street  
Sai Kung  
New Territories; and
- \* Sai Kung District Office  
second floor, Sai Kung Government Offices  
34 Chan Man Street  
Sai Kung  
New Territories.

Any person who wishes to object to the proposed works should submit his objection in writing to the Secretary for Transport, Central Government Offices, East Wing, second floor, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong not later than December 10.

End

Radar and marine traffic control station at Mirs Bay

\* \* \* \* \*

The Architectural Services Department is inviting tenders for the construction of a radar and marine traffic control station at Mirs Bay, Ping Chau.

The works consists of the construction of a single storey station including associated drainage and external works comprising construction of retaining wall, aerial towers, helipad, underground fuel oil chamber, landscaping, paving and footpath.

Works will commence in January next year for completion in 12 months.

Forms of tender and further particulars can be obtained from the Architectural Services Department, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

The tender offer will close at noon on November 8.

End

#### Alert CSD staff help capture Vietnamese illegal immigrants

\* \* \* \* \*

Alert Correctional Services Department (CSD) staff have helped capture a number of suspected illegal immigrants from Vietnam in Stanley area over the past two months.

Between August 1 and October 10, CSD officers had apprehended a total of nine people and handed them over to the police for appropriate action.

A spokesman for CSD said officers on patrol exercise very high alert to any suspicious incidents within the Stanley Prison compound and its surrounding areas.

End

#### Fire services personnel praised

\* \* \* \* \*

Hong Kong Fire Services has earned its reputation not just in Hong Kong but around the world and people in distress could rely on the department to come to their rescue.

Speaking at a passing-out parade today (Thursday), Legislative Councillor, Mr Ronald Arculli, pointed out that fire fighting and rescue work involved far more than people could imagine.

"In the past, people thought the fire service do nothing more than putting out fires. They need little knowledge but a big heart," Mr Arculli said.

By now, he said, courage alone would not suffice but emphasis was placed on the academic attainment of individual officers, adding that universities around the world were now running degree course to train modern fire officers.

Noting that the tasks of saving lives and protecting properties facing the officers on parade would be daunting and formidable, Mr Arculli said he was confident that they would overcome whatever obstacles that might appear with the skills and knowledge they had learnt and their determination to apply them.

On parade today were eight Probation Station Officers and 39 Firemen who had completed their respective basic training courses and who would soon be posted out to various fire stations to gain more field experience.

End

Fresh water cut in Chai Wan

\* \* \* \* \*

The fresh water supply to some premises in Chai Wan will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on October 14 (Monday) to 6 am the following day for waste detection work on watermains.

The suspension will affect:

- \* all even number premises between Nos 2-4 A Kung Ngam Road,
- \* all even number premises between Nos 34-60 and all odd number premises between Nos 27-69 Chai Wan Road,
- \* No 200 Tai Tam Road,
- \* Chai Wan laundry and
- \* Chai Wan North No 2 Fresh Water Pumping Station.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

\*\*\*\*\*

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,212	0930	+46
Closing balance in the account	2,590	1000	+46
Change attributable to:		1100	+46
Money market activity	+42	1200	+48
LAF today	+336	1500	+48
		1600	+42

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.8 \*\*+0.0\* 11.10.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.84	2 years	2808	6.00	100.02	6.07
1 month	4.90	3 years	3907	6.80	101.12	6.45
3 months	5.13	5 years	5109	7.32	101.46	7.08
6 months	5.22	7 years	7308	7.24	99.69	7.43
12 months	5.50	5 years	M503	7.35	100.45	7.37

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$10,025 million

Closed October 11, 1996

End