



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES  
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Monday, February 12, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Increase transparency sought from gas company .....	1
Govt Flying Service's reponse on hill fire incident .....	3
Hongkong Electric's proposal still being studied .....	4
Land and building committee discusses development procedures .....	5
\$3 million grant to Oxfam approved .....	6
Emergency relief given to hill fire victims' families .....	7
HK's external trade statistics by country and commodity .....	8
Container throughput averages at one million per month .....	18
Border crossing opening hours during Lunar New Year .....	19
Special clinic services for Lunar New Year holidays .....	20
First nomination received for Siu Hei constituency by-election .....	20
Water storage figure .....	21
Air Quality Report for January .....	21
Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results .....	23
Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations .....	24

Increase transparency sought from gas company

\* \* \* \* \*

Proposals for the Hong Kong and China Gas Company to be more transparent with its justification for tariff increases and for a new Energy Advisory Committee are contained in a report published by the Government today (Monday).

These proposals are made in response to the Consumer Council's study on the competition in the domestic water heating and cooking fuel market.

Explaining the proposals before the LegCo Economic Services Panel this afternoon, Deputy Secretary for Economic Services, Mr Leo Kwan, said: "The Government's response has been prepared on the basis of a detailed analysis of the Consumer Council's Report and public comments on it.

"The Government is fully committed to the promotion of fair trade and competition and subscribes to the view that market forces and minimum Government intervention is the best formula for enhancing competition on the one hand and keeping costs and prices down on the other.

"However, where necessary, the Government will use appropriate and pragmatic measures to rectify any unfair business practices, safeguard competition and protect consumer interests and this approach has been adopted by the Government response to the gas report."

In its report, the Consumer Council proposed that the Hong Kong and China Gas Company should be subject to some form of regulatory control.

The Government's analysis concludes that, over the past decade, the gas company has achieved high profitability and that its market share has grown significantly.

Over the same period, the price of towngas has been higher than that of piped LPG but less than that of electricity and cylinder LPG, indicating that the company is operating in a competitive environment, with electricity tariffs acting as a check on towngas tariffs.

The Government's response concludes that regulation of the company is unnecessary as its rates of return are broadly in line with the two power companies (which operate under Schemes of Control) and there is no evidence that it is abusing its dominant position in the domestic gas market.

However, the Government notes that it is likely the company will increase its dominance of the domestic gas market and that this could generate further unease in the community.

The Government therefore wants a formal agreement with the company to increase transparency of its tariff-setting mechanism and justification for tariff increases through special consultation arrangements.

"The gas company has indicated support in principle to this proposal and has volunteered to consult the Government on its tariff increases in future and to brief members of the LegCo Economic Services Panel," Mr Kwan said.

On the recommendation that a co-ordinated energy policy be formulated and an Energy Commission be established to co-ordinate, monitor and regulate the energy industry and advise the Government on energy policy, the Administration considers that immediate creation of an Energy Commission is not warranted.

Instead, the Government proposes that an Energy Advisory Committee be set up this year to advise the Administration on energy policy and other related matters referred to it by the Government and that the new committee will absorb the functions of the existing Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee.

The Government's response also addresses other recommendations made by the Consumer Council in its report.

One of them was that the gas distribution network should be opened up for the use of different gas suppliers through a "common carrier" system, so as to increase competition in the market.

The idea is that different suppliers of the same type of gas can supply customers through a shared distribution network, possibly through licensed gas retailers.

Noting that the system is used overseas for industrial consumers, the Government said it was untried for domestic consumers but the United Kingdom would start a pilot project soon and the Government would study the feasibility of introducing a common carrier system in Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, the Government also expresses support for the idea that industry players should be encouraged to bring natural gas to Hong Kong and will study any such proposals by the private sector.

Security of supply and potential benefits to consumers and the economy would be key factors to consider in examining any proposal, the Government's response said.

Turning to the point of encouraging developers to install three-phase electricity supply in new housing developments, so that consumers could choose between gas and electric instantaneous water heating and vice versa, the Government's response said households would pay more to switch from towngas water heaters to instantaneous electric water heaters as additional costs would be involved.

The Government sees no need to intervene in developers' choice of energy supply for new developments, as developers build and equip flats taking into account market demand.

End

#### Govt Flying Service's response on hill fire incident

\* \* \* \* \*

In response to press enquiries on the rescue operation in Pat Sin Range, the Government Flying Service issued the following statement:

"The rescue operation was undertaken under very difficult circumstances given the steepness of the terrain and the advancing flames.

"On arrival, the crew spotted a group of children who were panicking seeing the flames and the heavy smoke. The scene was in a state of confusion.

"Two children were immediately winched up to safety into the helicopter but the second attempt was less fortunate and two children fell as the helicopter tried to move the group to a place of safety away from the flames.

"The crewman was then lowered again to continue with the rescue operation and picked up two other children. By that time, the crewman was burnt and in much pain. Notwithstanding this, he went down to pick up a further child who was one of the two children who had fallen.

"The helicopter then quickly flew to the nearby base to load off the casualties and returned immediately with a replacement crewman.

"On return to the scene, the crew spotted two children. Both children were then winched aboard and the winch operator asked them if either was the one who had fallen off the strops.

"One replied in the affirmative and both children were taken to Plover Cove.

"Based on this information, the crew believed they had recovered all casualties from that area.

"There was no positive way of establishing how many children were on the hillside at that time due to the flames and the heavy smoke plus a great deal of understandable panic and confusion amongst the children."

End

#### Hongkong Electric's proposal still being studied

\* \* \* \* \*

The Government is still studying the proposal by the Hongkong Electric Company to build additional generating capacity to meet demand in the early part of the next decade, a spokesman for the Economic Services Branch said today (Monday).

He was referring to a report in a Chinese newspaper on HEC's proposal.

"Consultants have been appointed to assist the Government in assessing the proposal.

"All factors relevant to the assessment will be taken into consideration in the consultants' study.

"It is too early to speculate on the outcome of the assessment," he said.

End

## Land and building committee discusses development procedures

\* \* \* \* \*

The Land and Building Advisory Committee (LBAC) today (Monday) discussed the procedures a development proposal had to go through and the time required for each procedure.

Members were of the view that the processing of simple and minor applications by the Town Planning Board should be simplified and expedited. They also expressed concern about the time taken by the departments to comment on building plans under Buildings Department's Centralised Processing System.

Members were briefed on Part 1 and Part 2 of the Final Technical Report on Territorial Development Strategy Review-1995 (TDSR).

The primary goal of TDSR was to establish a broad, long term land use-transport-environmental planning framework to enable Hong Kong to continue to grow as a regional and international city and become a better place in which to live and work.

Part 1 of the Report was the culmination of a series of inter-connected studies to provide an overview of development trends in the wider region, the hub functions of Hong Kong and key issues that call for ongoing debate and examination.

Within this context, Part 2 covered:

- (a) the general review processes,
- (b) explanations of the generation of development scenarios,
- (c) assessment of sectoral land use demands,
- (d) analyses of environmental conditions and transport systems,
- (e) an estimation of strategic development needs,
- (f) the identification of potential solution spaces,
- (g) the steps involved in formulating and evaluating strategic development options, and
- (h) the setting out of principles for formulating and testing of a series of Preferred Options.

The Preferred Options would be assessed in Part 3 of the Review which would be made available at a later stage.

Members were also briefed by the Lands Department on the property market in the second half of 1995. They noted that price cutting sales tactics by developers predominated during the third quarter of 1995 with a number of developments being marked at prices below prevailing secondary market.

Such price cutting for new developments had inevitably led to a slowdown in sales and further price falls in the secondary market.

At the start of the fourth quarter, however, there were signs that the market had stabilised. Prices for later phases of developments were higher than earlier releases. There were reports that in some areas prices in the secondary market started to rise slightly.

Regarding the office market, companies in general seemed to have been looking to cutting costs. This had resulted in a continuing trend to decentralise, either all office operations or at least those functions which did not require central locations.

In general, prices appeared to have dropped 30 to 40 per cent from the peak in mid 1994.

However, the outlook of the property market was better than six months ago.

LBAC was chaired by Mr Cheng Hon-kwan.

End

\$3 million grant to Oxfam approved

\* \* \* \* \*

The Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee has today (Monday) approved a grant of \$3 million to Oxfam Hong Kong as a contribution to Oxfam's emergency relief programme for the earthquake victims in Lijiang and Zhongdian, Yunnan, China.

This is the second grant for the purpose from the Disaster Relief Fund. The first being a grant of \$4.195 million to Hong Kong Red Cross.

To ensure that the money will be used for the designated purpose, the Hong Kong Government will require Oxfam to submit an evaluation report and an audited account on the use of the grant.

"Organisations receiving grant from the Disaster Relief Fund for the same purpose will also be required to liaise with each other to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts in their relief projects," a government spokesman said.

"The Committee is happy to hear that relief materials begin to reach the people there."

The Advisory Committee is chaired by the Chief Secretary. Other members are Dr Raymond Ch'ien, Mr J D McGregor, Mr Cheung Hon-chung, Mr Lau Chin-shek, the Secretary for Health and Welfare, and the Secretary for the Treasury.

End

#### Emergency relief given to hill fire victims' families

\* \* \* \* \*

Families of the injured and the deceased in the Pat Sin Leng Country Park hill fire tragedy have each been given \$5,000 in emergency relief from the General Chinese Charities Fund by the Sha Tin and Tai Po district offices this (Monday) afternoon.

Giving out the cash relief at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Sha Tin District Officer, Miss M L Wong, said staff of her office and other concerned government departments would keep close contact with the victims' families to see if further assistance was needed.

She said a working group comprising representatives from the Hospital Authority, the Home Affairs, Social Welfare, Education departments and a representative from Fung Yiu King Memorial Secondary School has been formed to help the victims and their families.

End

## HK's external trade statistics by country and commodity

\* \* \* \* \*

Detailed statistics on external trade with breakdown by country/territory and commodity for December and the whole year of 1995 was released by the Census and Statistics Department today (Monday).

The value of re-exports continued to increase, by 16% over a year earlier to \$95.2 billion in December 1995.

Comparing December 1995 with December 1994, the value of re-exports to all of the main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes: Japan (+34%), China (+25%), South Korea (+25%), France (+21%), Singapore (+18%), Taiwan (+16%), the United Kingdom (+15%), the Netherlands (+14%), Germany (+12%) and the United States (+2.9%).

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

The value of re-exports for the whole year of 1995 was \$1,112.5 billion, 17% higher than that in 1994.

Comparing the year 1995 with the year 1994, the value of re-exports to all main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes: Japan (+28%), Singapore (+28%), France (+28%), Taiwan (+24%), the Netherlands (+23%), China (+19%), the United Kingdom (+18%), South Korea (+17%), Germany (+10%) and the United States (+10%).

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

Comparing the year 1995 with the year 1994, increases of various magnitudes were recorded in the value of re-exports of most principal commodity divisions.

More notable increases were registered for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$30.9 billion or 37%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$20.3 billion or 55%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$19.5 billion or 20%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$19 billion or 15%); textiles (by \$10.7 billion or 13%); and plastics in primary forms (by \$9.9 billion or 47%).

Over the same period, re-exports of clothing fell by \$1.4 billion, representing a decrease of 1.5% over a year earlier.

The value of domestic exports in December 1995, at \$20.2 billion, increased marginally by 0.2% over a year earlier.

Comparing December 1995 with December 1994, increases were recorded in the value of domestic exports to Taiwan (+28%), China (+8.4%) and the Netherlands (+0.1%).

However, the value of domestic exports to Canada, France, Singapore, Germany, the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom decreased by 15%, 7.8%, 5.8%, 4.8%, 4.7%, 2.2% and 2.2% respectively.

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

Comparing the year 1995 with the year 1994, increases were recorded in the value of domestic exports to Taiwan (+31%), Japan (+14%), France (+13%), the Netherlands (+7.9%), the United Kingdom (+6.3%), China (+4.2%), Canada (+3.6%) and Singapore (+0.1%).

However, the value of domestic exports to Germany and the United States decreased by 4.9% and 0.3% respectively.

Taking all destinations together, the value of domestic exports in the year 1995, at \$231.7 billion, increased by 4.3% over the same period in 1994.

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

Comparing the year 1995 with the year 1994, increases in the value of domestic exports were registered for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$7.1 billion or 29%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$884 million or 5.5%); clothing (by \$715 million or 1%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares (by \$604 million or 3.1%); and plastics in primary forms (by \$557 million or 14%).

Over the same period, decreases in the value of domestic exports were recorded for telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$1 billion or 8.9%); and textiles (by \$1 billion or 6.7%).

The value of imports continued to increase, by 14% over a year earlier to \$127.7 billion in December 1995.

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

Comparing December 1995 with December 1994, the value of imports from all main suppliers showed increases of various magnitudes: France (+130%), Malaysia (+32%), the United States (+30%), South Korea (+19%), the United Kingdom (+16%), Taiwan (+11%), Singapore (+11%), Germany (+9.0%), Japan (+8.6%) and China (+7.4%).

Comparing the year 1995 with the year 1994, the value of imports from all main suppliers showed increases of various magnitudes: France (+88%), Malaysia (+43%), the United States (+29%), South Korea (+27%), Singapore (+26%), Taiwan (+20%), the United Kingdom (+20%), China (+15%), Japan (+13%) and Germany (+12%).

The value of imports in the year 1995, at \$1,491.1 billion, increased by 19% over the same period in 1994.

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

Comparing the year 1995 with the year 1994, increases were recorded in the value of imports of most principal commodity divisions.

More notable increases were registered for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$47.1 billion or 34%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$25.4 billion or 21%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$20.3 billion or 42%); plastics in primary forms (by \$15.6 billion or 55%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$13.1 billion or 14%); and textiles (by \$12.2 billion or 10%).

Over the same period, a decrease in the value of imports was recorded for road vehicles (by \$5.3 billion or 10%).

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 December 1995 will be released in early March.

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

The December 1995 issue of the Hong Kong External Trade with detailed analyses on the performance of Hong Kong's external trade in December and the whole year of 1995 will be on sale at \$122 per copy around February 27.

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.

-----

TABLE 1 : RE-EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 95 OVER DEC 94 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 95 OVER JAN-DEC 94 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	35,581	+ 25.1	384,043	+ 19.0
UNITED STATES	16,629	+ 2.9	230,997	+ 10.0
JAPAN	6,266	+ 34.0	70,081	+ 28.0
GERMANY	4,366	+ 12.4	45,770	+ 10.0
UNITED KINGDOM	2,729	+ 15.5	32,257	+ 18.1
TAIWAN	2,350	+ 16.2	27,758	+ 23.8
SINGAPORE	2,232	+ 18.4	26,011	+ 27.8
SOUTH KOREA	1,705	+ 24.9	19,292	+ 17.0
FRANCE	1,617	+ 20.7	17,452	+ 27.7
NETHERLANDS	1,547	+ 14.0	16,702	+ 23.3

TABLE 2 : RE-EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 95 OVER DEC 94 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 95 OVER JAN-DEC 94 (% CHANGE)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	10,345	+ 8.6	142,223	+ 15.4
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	9,440	- 2.1	119,009	+ 19.5
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	10,145	+ 29.9	114,628	+ 36.8
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	7,467	+ 4.0	92,840	+ 13.0
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	7,533	+ 0.9	90,951	- 1.5
FOOTWEAR	5,213	+ 16.0	60,167	+ 12.9
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	5,792	+ 40.2	57,347	+ 54.8
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	4,760	+ 22.6	50,767	+ 21.3
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	2,812	+ 13.3	35,010	+ 14.1
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	2,902	+ 55.7	30,636	+ 47.5

TABLE 3 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 95 OVER DEC 94 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 95 OVER JAN-DEC 94 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	5,275	+ 8.4	63,555	+ 4.2
UNITED STATES	5,307	- 4.7	61,250	- 0.3
SINGAPORE	981	- 5.8	12,236	+ 0.1
GERMANY	1,320	- 4.8	12,178	- 4.9
JAPAN	978	- 2.2	11,877	+ 13.6
UNITED KINGDOM	1,079	- 2.2	10,941	+ 6.3
TAIWAN	626	+ 27.6	7,971	+ 31.2
NETHERLANDS	595	+ 0.1	5,152	+ 7.9
CANADA	387	- 15.3	4,324	+ 3.6
FRANCE	304	- 7.8	3,174	+ 12.9

TABLE 4 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 95 OVER DEC 94 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 95 OVER JAN-DEC 94 (% CHANGE)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	7,111	- 6.9	73,801	+ 1.0
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	3,054	+ 44.1	31,889	+ 28.5
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WARES)	1,485	+ 3.2	19,876	+ 3.1
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	1,359	- 14.8	17,866	+ 1.4
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	1,426	- 7.7	17,091	+ 5.5
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,072	- 11.8	14,030	- 6.7
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	787	- 10.7	10,587	- 8.9
MANUFACTURES OF METALS	454	+ 32.9	4,689	+ 2.1
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	356	+ 9.3	4,506	+ 14.1
PAPER, PAPERBOARD, AND ARTICLES OF PAPER PULP, OF PAPER OR OF PAPERBOARD	222	- 0.5	2,940	+ 1.0

TABLE 5 : IMPORTS FROM TEN MAIN SUPPLIERS

SUPPLIER	DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 95 OVER DEC 94 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 95 OVER JAN-DEC 94 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	45,164	+ 7.4	539,480	+ 14.6
JAPAN	18,590	+ 8.6	221,254	+ 13.4
TAIWAN	10,979	+ 11.4	129,266	+ 20.5
UNITED STATES	10,050	+ 30.2	115,078	+ 28.8
SINGAPORE	6,347	+ 10.5	78,027	+ 25.9
SOUTH KOREA	5,916	+ 18.6	73,268	+ 27.3
GERMANY	2,810	+ 9.0	32,038	+ 11.8
UNITED KINGDOM	2,680	+ 15.8	30,448	+ 19.9
FRANCE	3,382	+129.6	28,930	+ 88.3
MALAYSIA	2,648	+ 31.8	28,797	+ 42.9

TABLE 6 : IMPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	DEC 95 OVER DEC 94 (% CHANGE)	JAN-DEC 1995 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-DEC 95 OVER JAN-DEC 94 (% CHANGE)
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	15,703	+ 16.2	185,943	+ 33.9
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	12,609	+ 16.5	145,976	+ 21.0
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	10,385	+ 0.2	130,422	+ 10.3
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	7,665	+ 0.1	104,051	+ 14.4
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	8,478	+ 2.7	97,886	+ 1.7
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	6,765	+ 32.8	68,737	+ 41.8
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,119	+ 1.8	62,759	+ 15.5
FOOTWEAR	4,690	+ 11.3	52,715	+ 11.9
ROAD VEHICLES	3,726	- 3.6	46,163	- 10.2
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	3,847	+ 41.1	44,078	+ 55.0

End

Container throughput averages at one million per month

\*\*\*\*\*

Hong Kong had handled more than 10 million twenty-foot-equivalent (TEU) container boxes in the first 10 months of 1995, averaging about one million TEUs a month, the Deputy Director of Marine, Mr S Y Tsui, said today (Monday).

Releasing the container statistics for October 1995, Mr Tsui said based on the trend from January to October last year, it was estimated that Hong Kong had probably handled more than 12 million TEUs in 1995.

"The figures underline the need for the further development of Hong Kong container facilities and also our capabilities to meet current demand," he said.

The total container throughput from January to October last year was 10,414,737 TEUs, an increase at 13.6 per cent over the same period of 1994.

In the first 10 months of 1995, the operators at container terminals in Kwai Chung and Stonecutters Island had handled 6,892,414 TEUs, representing an increase of 14.1 per cent; the stream operators 2,433,055 TEUs, an increase of 2.8 per cent; and river trader operators 1,089,268 TEUs, a 43.4 per cent increase.

"With Government and private sectors putting together a number of measures to enhance the productivity at the container terminals and for the stream and river operations, our handling capability is expected to meet the demand up to 1998," Mr Tsui said.

He urged the consortiums involved in container terminal operation to reach an agreement over the berthing arrangements in Kwai Chung and on Stonecutter Island as early as possible.

"In line with Marine Department's objective to better serve the community, the monthly figures on container throughput compiled by the department are now available at the department's homepage on the Internet," Mr Tsui said.

The address for Marine Department homepage on the Internet is <http://www.info.gov.hk/mardep/>

The comparative container statistics in TEUs are:

	<u>First 10 months of 1995</u>	<u>First 10 months of 1994</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>
Kwai Chung/Stonecutters	6,892,414	6,038,830	14.1
Stream and Elsewhere	2,433,055	2,367,275	2.8
River Trade	1,089,268	759,393	4.3
Total	10,414,737	9,165,498	13.6

End

#### Border crossing opening hours during Lunar New Year

\* \* \* \* \*

The Hong Kong Government and the relevant authorities of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government announced today (Monday) that the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang 24-hour border crossing will only be open from 7 am to 10 pm daily for 10 days over the Lunar New Year period from February 18 to 27.

The 24-hour service will be resumed at 7 am on February 28 (10th day of the Lunar New Year).

A Hong Kong Government spokesman explained that cross border traffic was expected to be very low during the Lunar New Year period.

This was the case last year when there were only 200 to 6,000 vehicles a day from the first day to the ninth day of the Lunar New Year, compared with the daily average of over 10,000 on a normal day, he said.

For the overnight facility (10 pm to 7 am), the number of vehicles had dropped from the normal level of around 1,000 to 180 - 400 from the nights of the sixth day to the ninth day of the Lunar New Year, he added.

End

Special clinic services for Lunar New Year holidays

\* \* \* \* \*

The Department of Health today (Monday) announced special arrangements of general out-patient services for the coming Lunar New Year holidays.

Eight will be open between 9 am and 1 pm on February 18 (Lunar New Year's Eve) and February 21 (third day of Lunar New Year).

They are the Violet Peel Health Centre and Shau Kei Wan Jockey Club Clinic on Hong Kong Island; the Kwun Tong Jockey Club Health Centre, the Robert Black Health Centre and Yau Ma Tei Jockey Club Clinic in Kowloon; and the Lady Trench Polyclinic, Shek Wu Hui Jockey Club Clinic and Yuen Long Jockey Club Health Centre in the New Territories.

There will be no clinic service on February 19 and 20 (Lunar New Year's Day and the second day of Lunar New Year).

The evening clinic service will also be suspended between February 19 and 21.

End

First nomination received for Siu Hei constituency by-election

\* \* \* \* \*

One nomination was received today (Monday) for the Tuen Mun District Board by-election in respect of Siu Hei constituency to be held on March 24.

The nomination was submitted by Mr Yim Tin-sang, a 43-year-old Regional Councillor.

This is the first nomination received for the by-election since the nomination period started last Friday.

Mr Yim can be contacted on 2459 6108 (daytime) and 2452 3605 (night time).

Nomination will last until February 23.

End

Water storage figure

\*\*\*\*\*

Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Monday) stood at 79.6 per cent of capacity or 466.416 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 408.288 million cubic metres of water, representing 69.7 per cent of capacity.

End

Air Quality Report for January

\*\*\*\*\*

The Environmental Protection Department today (Monday) released air quality information for January.

The purpose of the announcement is to keep the public informed of the air quality levels in the territory and to explain the measurements.

The announcement contains monitoring results from Mong Kok, Central/Western and Kwai Chung, which represent three important land use types in the territory:

- \* locations close to road traffic in built-up urban areas,
- \* combined commercial and residential districts, and
- \* districts close to industrial areas.

The reported air pollutants include sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), total suspended particulates (TSP) which comprise all sizes of dust particles, and the respirable fraction of the dust (RSP).

All these pollutants can affect respiratory health in sufficient concentration.

In January, there was one exceedance of the 24-hour Air Quality Objectives (AQO) and one measurement almost reaching the AQO limit at the three monitoring stations.

On January 3, NO<sub>2</sub> levels were high throughout the territory and those recorded at Mong Kok had breached the 24-hour limit.

The records at other monitoring stations also showed exceedances of the 24-hour NO<sub>2</sub> AQO at Kwun Tong and Sham Shui Po.

The high NO<sub>2</sub> levels were due to low windspeed, which provided a stable atmosphere for pollutants to accumulate. As there were fresher winds from the sea on January 4, pollutant levels therefore substantially decreased.

On January 25, a TSP level of 259 microgrammes per cubic metre was recorded at Mong Kok, almost reaching the 24-hour Objective TSP limit of 260 microgrammes per cubic metre.

The gases and particles described originated from various sources. SO<sub>2</sub> is mostly produced when fuels that contain sulphur are burned. NO<sub>2</sub> is formed during combustion by the combination of nitrogen and oxygen, and by the atmospheric oxidation of nitric oxide (NO), also a product of combustion.

Vehicle exhaust is an important source of NO and NO<sub>2</sub> in terms of impact on local air quality. It is also a major source of airborne particulate matter, especially the smaller respirable particles.

Diesel-engined vehicles such as taxis, public light buses, passenger coaches, franchised buses and light and heavy goods vehicles are the greatest contributor of particulate matter. Other sources include industry, furnaces and boilers, construction activities, the sea and the soil.

It is worth noting that while the weather and climate always affect the concentrations of pollutants in the air, the only sure way of reducing the levels is to reduce emissions from the man-made sources.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

\*\*\*\*\*

Tender date	12 Feb 1996
Paper on offer	EF notes
Issue number	2802
Issue date	13 Feb 1996
Maturity date	13 Feb 1998
Coupon	5.16 PCT
Amount applied	HK\$2,920 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$500 MN
Average price accepted (yield)	100.42 (5.00 PCT)
Lowest price accepted (yield)	100.41 (5.00 PCT)
Pro rata ratio	About 41 PCT
Average tender price (yield)	100.38 (5.01 PCT)
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	1,672	0930	+1,127
Closing balance in the account	2,775	1000	+1,127
Change attributable to :		1100	+1,133
Money market activity	+1,133	1200	+1,133
LAF today	-30	1500	+1,133
		1600	+1,133

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.6 \*+0.0\* 12.2.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.77	2 years	2711	5.60	101.14	4.97
1 month	4.81	3 years	3901	5.57	101.13	5.22
3 months	4.87	5 years	5012	6.38	102.70	5.81
6 months	4.88	7 years	7211	6.82	104.14	6.16
12 months	4.86	5 years	M502	7.30	105.21	6.11

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$15,032 million

Closed February 12, 1996

End