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Contents **Page No.**

Bus franchises for new airport and Tung Chung awarded 1

CEDAW extended to HK 2

Second chance for ex-offenders urged 3

Appointments to Civil Service Standing Commission 5

Government's response towards sewage tunnels report 6

Draft guidelines on extra-curricula activities 6

Demographic trends in Hong Kong 7

Value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in August 8

Data on business firms available for public retrieval 10

Water storage figure 11

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results 11

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations 12

Bus franchises for new airport and Tung Chung awarded

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Following consultation with the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group, the Governor-in-Council has approved the grant of new bus franchises to Citybus Limited (Citybus) and Long Win Holdings Limited (Long Win) to operate 25 public bus routes to the new airport at Chek Lap Kok and Tung Chung New Town.

Of these routes, 12 will be operated by Long Win, a wholly owned subsidiary of Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB), and Citybus will run the other 13 routes.

The consultants for the Transport Study for the New Airport (TRANSNA) have recommended the provision of a network of bus services (composed of 25 routes) to serve the new airport at Chek Lap Kok and North Lantau.

To introduce more competition and to promote the development of high quality bus services to meet the rising expectations, the Government tendered out these 25 routes in two packages, which include airbuses, external services from North Lantau to urban areas, internal shuttle services and overnight services to serve the new airport and Tung Chung New Town.

The Government received a total of six tenders from three companies.

A Government spokesman said: "In evaluating the tenders, the Government have taken into account the quality of service and fare levels proposed by the tenderers, their management and financial capability, and experience in operating bus services."

"Citybus and Long Win will deploy new air-conditioned, low-floor double-deck buses with luggage compartments to run these services. Both operators will introduce special customer services such as luggage handling assistance and on-bus equipment to facilitate ease of access by passengers with luggage and people with a disability. Concessionary fares will be offered for passengers aged 65 or above. There will be no separate charges for luggage."

"The fare for each route will range from $17 to $45 for airbus services, from $10 to $18 for external services, from $3 to $7 for internal shuttle services and from $20 to $35 for overnight services. Concessionary fares will be offered for passengers aged 65 or above."

Seven routes, including an overnight external service, will start operation in mid-1997 to tie in with the first population intake in Tung Chung New Town and the build-up of airport employees. The entire bus network will be in full operation upon the opening of the new airport in 1998.

The spokesman said: "The two bus franchises are for six years from June 1, 1997. No profit control scheme will be applied.

"The franchise provisions are similar to those in the latest franchises awarded to other bus franchisees.

"To cater for the operating needs of the new airport, Long Win and Citybus are additionally required to provide a customer service centre to assist passengers at the airport and to provide a control centre to ensure direct communication links with the Airport Authority."

End

CEDAW extended to HK

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A Government spokesman announced today (Tuesday) that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has just been advised by the United Nations Treaty Section that the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was extended to Hong Kong on October 14, 1996.

The news was welcomed as a further development in the protection of human rights in Hong Kong.

"The significance of the extension of the Convention is that it places Hong Kong under continuing international obligations to protect the rights of women, eradicate discrimination and provide for their interests," the spokesman said.

"The Chinese Government has been consulted and has agreed to the extension of this Convention and its continued application to Hong Kong after 1997.

"Under the Convention, states parties are obliged to respect and promote the rights of women as set out in the Convention, such as to ensure the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and to ensure the eradication of all forms of discrimination on ground of sex," he said.

"With the enactment of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance last year, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the ground of sex, marital status or pregnancy, or to sexually harass a person, Hong Kong is well positioned to meet the objectives of the Convention.

"The extension of the Convention does not necessitate any further legislative changes," the spokesman said.

"In extending the Convention the United Kingdom (UK) has entered a few reservations for Hong Kong. One of the general reservations seeks to preserve the position in respect of rent concession under Annex III to the Joint Declaration and the small house policy," the spokesman pointed out.

"Other reservations include those to ensure that Hong Kong is allowed to maintain its existing customs, policies and practices. For example, reservations are required to allow for the continuation of practices which provide for women to be treated more favourably than men as provided for under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance.

"Reservations are also entered to ensure that the affairs of religious denominations and orders in Hong Kong should not be affected and that the Hong Kong Government has the right to continue to apply immigration law."

With regard to follow-up action, the spokesman said copies of the Convention would be widely disseminated and its provisions fully published as part of the Government's enhanced human rights publicity strategy.

"We will also ensure that all parts of the Government are fully aware of the need to take due account of the Convention's provisions in implementing programmes and formulating policies," he added.

End

Second chance for ex-offenders urged

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The community would benefit, both financially and socially, if a person who has committed a crime could be converted into a useful member of society, the Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Raymond Lai Ming-kee, said today (Tuesday).

Speaking at a meeting of the Rotary Club of Peninsula, Mr Lai said he disagreed with the sentiment that people who have committed crimes were likely to offend again and that it was a waste of time and money trying to reform them.

"Quite apart from the uncharitable nature of condemning people just because they have offended, it is also not beneficial to society, either in terms of cost or benefit," said Mr Lai.

"It is in society's interest that we have as much success (in aftercare) as possible, and society can do its part to help," he added.

The Commissioner said finding jobs for offenders about to be discharged is never easy: "I can understand why employers would hesitate to consider 'ex-cons', but I would ask people with job vacancies to keep an open mind."

Mr Lai said any programme was only as good as the result it achieved, and in today's concept of performance by objectives, the hard eye of value for money was often turned on aftercare.

"We find ourselves frequently having to justify expenditure on an area where performance measurement is difficult.

"We are proud of our success rates. Over 67 per cent of young inmates under 21, and 65 per cent of drug addicts complete the one-year supervision under the aftercare programme without relapse into drug-taking or crime; and over 90 per cent do so for detention centres," said the Commissioner.

However, fluctuations in those rates did not necessarily reflect oscillations in the programme performance, Mr Lai pointed out.

"We are only one element in a complex web of personal, social and societal factors, all of which act upon the individual and interact with each other.

"A decline in success rates could, therefore, be ascribed to any one of a number, or indeed, any several, different causes. There is no way of identifying the discrete elements and measuring their effect, because there are no discrete elements," he added.

"One thing which we can say with reasonable certainty is that the present difficulties facing the aftercare programme are not helping matters.

"In 1991, we had a caseload of 5,201, amounting to about 91 cases per team of two aftercare officers. Now we have 6,031 active cases, or almost 109 cases per team.

"Although the officers are putting in many extra hours, inevitably the strain shows. There are only 24 hours a day.

"Like almost all aspects of our work, overcrowding places a burden on the service we provide. In aftercare, which is both labour intensive and numbers intensive, this is even more so," said Mr Lai.

The Commissioner said the business of corrections was attempting to help a person see how his or her behaviour had led to crime, and to help the inmate correct this behaviour.

"The idea behind this is that everyone deserves a second chance and if that person can learn from mistakes, and thereby not repeat the mistakes, then that second chance is taken," he added.

"Those who measure performance solely by the dollar would argue that in providing aftercare to all, we are wasting money on certain individuals for whom it will not work.

"True, there will always be those who re-offend, just as there will be those who will never re-offend.

"But who among us will be prepared to sit inn judgement on candidates for aftercare, condemning those deemed 'a waste' to a life of crime because no-one is prepared even to consider giving them the opportunity to take a second chance," said Mr Lai.

End

Appointments to Civil Service Standing Commission

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The Governor has appointed Mr Pang Yuk-wing and Professor Chan Yuk-shee as members of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service for a term of two years with effect from October 1, 1996.

Mr Pang Yuk-wing is the Executive Director and Deputy Chief Executive of the Bank of East Asia and Professor Chan Yuk-shee is the Dean of Business and Management of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

The Standing Commission, chaired by Sir Sidney Gordon, advises the Government on principles and practices governing the pay and conditions of service of the non-directorate civil service other than the disciplined services.

Other members on the Commission are Dr Wilfred Chan Siu-yuen, Mr Nicholas Chiu Sai-chuen, Mr David A Morris, Mr David W Gairns, Mrs Janie Kaung Lai-chun, Mr Simon Ip and Mr Tam Yiu-chung.

End

Government's response towards sewage tunnels report

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Commenting on a Chinese newspaper report today (Tuesday), a Government spokesman said: "Discussions are in progress with the contractors of the sewage tunnels of the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme's High Priority Programme with a view to solving the technical problems concerning the inflow of underground water.

"It is grossly untrue to suggest that the problems are related to inadequate feasibility studies. Nor is there any truth in the statement that the remedial work for the sewage tunnel project would cost $5 billion - $10 billion more."

The spokesman said the High Priority Programme of the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme is being built at a total cost of $9.4 billion. Of the 41 contracts under the programme, 12 have been completed, another 25 are on schedule for completion before July 1997. Work on the two remaining minor works contracts will commence in 1998.

End

Draft guidelines on extra-curricula activities

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The Education Department has issued draft Guidelines on Extra-curricula Activities in Schools for consultation with the education sector prior to the formal issue of the finalised Guidelines around January 1997.

The draft Guidelines, in English and Chinese versions, are being sent to schools for consultation until December 4, 1996.

The Guidelines are the work of a special task force, the Working Group on Guidelines on Extra-curricula Activities in Schools, which was set up in January 1996 under the chairmanship of a Principal Inspector of the Education Department.

The working group comprised representatives from the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors, as well as the Hong Kong Extra-curricula Co-ordinators' Association.

The group set out to compile guidelines on the planning and implementation of extra-curricula activities in schools to enhance teachers' understanding of these activities from a broad perspective.

Comments and suggestions on the draft Guidelines are welcome and should be sent to the School Activities Section, Advisory Inspectorate Division, Education Department at Room 934, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai on or before December 4, 1996.

It is expected that the finalised Guidelines could be ready for issue to schools in January 1997.

While the draft Guidelines give a comprehensive account of the organisation of extra-curricula activities in schools, more information on safety aspects of outdoor activities can be found in the Guidelines on Outdoor Activities which were issued to schools on September 25, 1996.

Meanwhile, the Education Department will organise three seminars on November 5 and 8, 1996 on the two sets of Guidelines so school heads and teachers can exchange views and share experiences.

End

Demographic trends in Hong Kong

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A feature article entitled "Demographic trends in Hong Kong 1986-1995" was published in the October 1996 issue of the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics, which is now available on sale.

The feature highlighted the salient features of the population growth and structure as well as the trends in fertility, mortality and nuptiality in Hong Kong during the period 1986-1995.

The article noted the increase in population of Hong Kong from 5.53 million in 1986 by some 0.63 million to 6.16 million in 1995 and new developments in the demongraphic trends concomitant with this population growth, including:

* Aging of the population continued with the fertility rate remained at a very low level in recent years;

* Mortality situation continued to improve with the expectation of life at birth gradually edging up in Hong Kong, which, by international standards, is now one of the lowest mortality territories.

* Delay in marriage still prevailed -- marriage rates of bachelors and spinsters had decreased but the re-marriage rates of divorced or widowed persons had increased.

The October 1996 issue of the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics is now on sale at $50 a copy.

Apart from the feature on demographic trends, the publication also carried two special articles giving in-depth analysis respectively on river trade cargo statistics and the various improvements in living environment for public rental housing residents.

Purchase of this publication can be made at the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong. The publication is also available for sales at the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Regular subscription can also be arranged with the Publications (Sales) Office of the Information Services Department on 2598 8196.

End

Value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in August

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The value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand for local production in August 1996 decreased by 9% over a year earlier, according to the provisional results of a monthly survey released today (Tuesday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

This was in line with the generally weak domestic export performance.

Comparing August 1996 with August 1995, the value of orders in the fabricated metal products industry increased by 6%.

On the other hand, decreases in the value of orders were recorded in the electronic products industry (-16%), the printing and publishing industry (-14%), the plastic products industry (-12%), the electrical products industry (-4%), the wearing apparel industry (-4%) and the textiles industry (-3%).

Compared with July 1996, and bearing in mind that this comparison may be affected by seasonal factors, the value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in August 1996 decreased by 4%.

The monthly survey of orders-on-hand covers a sample of some 300 manufacturing firms engaging 50 or more workers.

Manufacturers' orders-on-hand refer to orders and parts of orders received earlier by manufacturers for local production which remain unfilled as at the end of the reference month.

Orders received by traders not engaged in production are included if such orders are further placed to manufacturers for production locally. However, orders placed to manufacturing firms for production in China and other places outside Hong Kong are not included in this series of orders-on-hand statistics.

A spokesman of the department pointed out that caution should be exercised in interpreting the manufacturers' orders-on-hand figures in a single month. Instead, the trend movement of the series as displayed over a wider span of time points should be looked at.

The survey report for August 1996, at $7 a copy, is now on sale at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway; and at the Census and Statistics Department Publications Unit, 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be made to the Industrial Production Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6441.

The following table shows the year-on-year percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in different manufacturing industries.

	Percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in	
	July 1996 over July 1995 (Revised)	August 1996 over August 1995 (Provisional)
All industries covered in the survey	-7	-9
* Wearing apparel	-3	-4
* Textiles	-8	-3
* Electronic products	-14	-16
* Electrical products	-5	-4
* Fabricated metal products	+23	+6
* Plastic products	-14	-12
* Printing and publishing	+7	-14

End

Data on business firms available for public retrieval

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A comprehensive database containing up-to-date particulars of about 350,000 active business establishments in Hong Kong is available for retrieval by members of the public from the central register of establishments of the Census and Statistics Department.

The register serves mainly as the sampling frame for various economic surveys conducted by the department. A sample listing containing 20 per cent of non-confidential records randomly selected from the Register is accessible by prospective users.

The records of the Register is now widely used by many government departments and private organisations in their publicity, business promotion, survey and research work.

Application for the supply of information such as the name, address, major type of business activity and employment size class of all or part of the listed records can be made to the Central Register of Establishments Section of the department. Records kept in the Register is updated on a quarterly basis and information for the second quarter of 1996 is now available.

Information can be supplied in the form of photocopies or specially-run magnetic tapes with a service charge to be levied at the following rates:

* $5.6 per page of photocopy for the first 20 pages and $1.3 for each additional page thereafter; or

* a charge of about $1,000 for a job requiring special computer run (exact amount depending on the complexity of the job concerned); and

* if the information is required on magnetic tapes, he magnetic tape can be provided by the applicant, r by the department at a charge of $143 per tape.

Further details can be obtained from the Central Register of Establishments Section on 2582 4760.

End

Water storage figure

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Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Tuesday) stood at 96.5 per cent of capacity or 565.716 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 580.630 million cubic metres of water, representing 99.1 per cent of capacity.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

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Tender date	22 Oct 96	22 Oct 96
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q643	H676
Issue date	23 Oct 96	23 Oct 96
Maturity date	22 Jan 97	23 Apr 97
Coupon	-	-
Amount applied	HK$5,720 MN	HK$3,270 MN
Amount allotted	HK$1,500 MN	HK$800 MN
Average yield accepted	4.98 PCT	5.06 PCT
Highest yield accepted	4.98 PCT	5.07 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 52 PCT	About 41 PCT
Average tender yield	4.99 PCT	5.08 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning October 28, 1996 -

Tender date	28 Oct 96	29 Oct 96	29 Oct 96
Paper on offer	EF Notes	EF Bills	EF Bills
Issue number	1610	Q644	Y695
Issue date	29 Oct 96	30 Oct 96	30 Oct 96
Maturity date	30 Oct 2006	29 Jan 1997	29 Oct 1997
Tenor	10 years	91 days	364 days
Amount on offer	HK$500+100 MN	HK$1,500+300 MN	HK$500+150 MN
Coupon	7.37 PCT		

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	2,098	0930	+159
Closing balance in the account	2,246	1000	+159
Change attributable to:		1100	+159
Money market activity	+148	1200	+162
LAF today	Nil	1500	+162
		1600	+148

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.9 *+0.0* 22.10.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.82	2 years	2808	6.00	100.33	5.88
1 month	4.87	3 years	3910	6.28	100.03	6.37
3 months	5.00	5 years	5109	7.32	102.01	6.94
6 months	5.07	7 years	7308	7.24	100.40	7.29
12 months	5.32	5 years	M503	7.35	100.91	7.25

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - $7,025 million

Closed October 22, 1996

End