



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
GARDEN ROAD, 5th-8th FLOORS, MURRAY BUILDING,
HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Friday, November 22, 1996

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Financial Secretary's transcript

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Following is the transcript of the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, who spoke to the media this (Friday) afternoon before attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Economic Leaders Meeting:

Question: Mr Tsang, this will be the last meeting before the handover, will there be any special issues to raise and also can you comment on China's entry into WTO ...?

Financial Secretary: No, the main purpose of the meeting of this occasion is to discuss the individual action plan for trade liberalisation, that will be my main focus and I am sure there will be further discussion on new membership as well and layout the plan for the next Leaders Meeting in Canada, we'll push this Meeting forward. China's accession to the WTO is not on the agenda at the moment. This is certain not something which will be discussed by the leaders at large. But if this matter comes up in any conversation between myself and President Jiang, of course, my point of view, we are wholly supportive of China's application to accede to the WTO, which is important in that China is a very large trading entity and it would be quite wrong for it not to be included in the trade treaty.

Question: ... Hong Kong is slow in the deregulation ...?

Financial Secretary: Deregulation in telecommunication ... in Hong Kong ...?

Question: Yes, in Hong Kong ...

Financial Secretary: Well, Hong Kong telecom market is one of the freest in the world. You are talking about one little franchise which is now in the hands of the Hong Kong Telecom which we all know we are bound until 2006. Before that, it is not a matter for Hong Kong government to override that contract or that franchise. But of course, if the franchisee wishes to discuss with us ways in which we are able to make it more liberal we will certainly be interested.

Question: What else are in your agenda?

Financial Secretary: My agenda is quite clearly to focus on what we are going to do and what others are going to do in the comprehensive action plan for trade liberalisation. That will be my main mission. I want to make sure that our trading environment will be free, both of trading goods and trading services and our investment. That was important to us.

End

Judgement on AECS's appeal against localisation

* * * * *

The Court of Appeal handed down this morning (Friday) the judgment on the appeal by the Association of Expatriate Civil Servants (AECS) and the cross appeal by the Government against some of the decisions in the judgment made by the High Court in October 1995 on the Government's localisation policy.

The judgment concerns 13 matters under appeal by AECS and two matters under cross appeal by the Government.

Commenting on the judgement, the Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service, Ms Sandra Lee said the Government would need some time to consider the implications of the judgment.

"The decisions under challenge were measures taken by the Government to implement its localisation policy. These measures were taken after very careful consideration, taking into account the interests of different groups of officers," she said.

The Court of Appeal has upheld the Opening Up Arrangements currently in place for renewal of agreements and transfer of overseas agreement officers who are permanent residents to locally modelled conditions of service.

"The main thrust of the current localisation policy has remained intact. While ruling seven Government decisions as unlawful, the Court of Appeal has acknowledged that the Government acted in good faith throughout." said Ms Lee.

"We need to study the details of the judgment of the Court of Appeal very carefully and discuss its implications with our legal adviser before formulating and proposing the next course of action."

"There is no suggestion that localisation is in itself unlawful," said Ms Lee quoting the judgment. "We remain committed to the localisation policy of the civil service. As we have done before, we will carefully consider the interest of different groups of officers in proposing any course of action."

End

Three MOUs signed with Canada

* * * * *

Hong Kong and Canada today (Friday) announced that they have reached an understanding to accept the return of their residents who have been determined to be inadmissible to the other place and to help combat illegal immigration.

Commenting on three Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) which were signed today, a Government spokesman said: "We have been informed by the Canadian government that they consider these as an important milestone before they render a decision on whether to offer visa-free access to Canada for qualified residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region."

Detailing a uniform set of procedures and practices, two MOUs codify already existing practices under which the Immigration Department of Hong Kong will accept the return of any Hong Kong resident who has been determined to be inadmissible to Canada. In turn, Canada will provide the same courtesy to Hong Kong.

"Under the third MOU, Hong Kong and Canada will further their co-operation in investigating and prosecuting immigrant smugglers and dealers in fraudulent documents," the spokesman said.

"In addition, they will guard against, and thoroughly investigate any abuse of their respective passports and immigration documents, and exchange information on illegal migration and smuggling activities."

The MOUs come into effect immediately.

End

Sino-British Land Commission to meet on Monday

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The two sides of the Sino-British Land Commission have agreed that the Commission's thirty-third meeting will be held on November 25, 1996. The meeting will review the 1996/97 Land Disposal Programme and discuss the 1996/97 average cost of land production.

End

STI makes proposals at Manila APEC Ministerial Meeting

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The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue told the Manila Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Ministerial Meeting this (Friday) afternoon that Hong Kong was delighted that the Individual Action Plans (IAP) submitted by all 18 member economies contained concrete deliverables on trade liberalisation and business facilitation.

However, she said that it remained imperative for member economies to refine and improve their IAPs progressively over time until the ultimate goal of free and open trade and investment was attained.

"Continuous improvements to and effective implementation of our IAPs are the only means to demonstrate to the world that APEC can really deliver.

"The steps we take may not be big and drastic all the time, but they must be continuous and progressive," she said.

Referring to the requirement for annual reviews of implementation of IAPs, Miss Yue made a proposal at the meeting for APEC Ministers' consideration.

"I propose we instruct our Senior Officials to devise an annual review mechanism with, wherever possible, clear and measurable yardsticks to monitor implementation of our commitments in the IAPs over time.

"This mechanism should be transparent and should facilitate the comparability of IAPs," she said.

Miss Yue further proposed that Senior Officials should solicit input from the business communities and other pertinent private sectors in the review process.

"I look forward to receiving positive review reports from our Senior Officials next year," she added.

End

First nomination received for DB by-election

* * * * *

One nomination was received today (Friday) for the Wong Tai Sin District Board by-election in respect of San Po Kong constituency to be held on January 5, 97.

The nomination was submitted by Mr MAK Hoi-wah, a 45-year-old lecturer.

This is the first nomination received for the by-election as the nomination period started today (Friday).

Mr Mak can be contacted on 2788 8981 (daytime) and 2712 0195 (night time).

Nomination will last until December 5 (Thursday).

End

Legislation to safeguard health and safety of all employees

* * * * *

The Government is introducing new legislation to extend the protection of health and safety at the workplace to all employees.

The Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joseph W P Wong said today (Friday) that the proposed legislation - the Occupational Safety and Health Bill - was a milestone move to give greater protection to non-industrial employees who were currently not covered by existing laws.

At present, there are some 3.1 million workers in Hong Kong. Of these, about 800,000 who are employed in manufacturing, construction and catering industries are protected by the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance. However, most of the remaining 2.3 million employees in the non-industrial sectors are not so covered.

"There have been calls in recent years to extend the scope of safety and health legislation to cover all employees. Given the predominance of the service industries in Hong Kong's economy, it is logical that the occupational safety and health of the non-industrial employees should also be protected by law," he said.

The Bill, however, will not cover those employed in land, sea or air transport, as well as maritime operations as they are already covered by other ordinances. Also excluded will be those employees in domestic services, as it is not intended to intrude into the private life of individual households. Self-employed persons will be exempted too as there is no employer/employee relationship.

Subsidiary regulations will be made under the Bill to set out specific standards for the working environment in general and regulate certain hazardous processes, equipment and substances under six broad categories :

- (a) safety, health and welfare of the workplace (including ventilation, lighting and fire precautions);
- (b) manual handling operations;
- (c) personal protective equipment at work;
- (d) dangerous substances and their labelling, handling, storage, etc.;
- (e) health and safety aspects in the use of visual display equipment; and
- (f) use of machinery and equipment.

The Government intends to implement the regulations in three stages. As the first stage, the Occupational Safety and Health Regulation will cover the general safety, health and welfare aspects of the workplace and manual handling operations. There will be provisions to cover lighting, ventilation, washroom facilities, first-aid, drinking water, fire precautions, etc.

"In effect, this will mean extending protection to all non-industrial employees upfront. Manual handling operations are included in the first stage because of the relatively large number of occupational injuries arising from such operations," Mr. Wong said.

The Secretary explained that in many ways, the Bill and the Regulation sought to enshrine in a consolidated piece of legislation most of the existing safety and health standards in a workplace which the average employers follow at present.

"Most of the proposed provisions in the Regulation, for example, those on fire precaution and fire escapes are based on standards adopted in existing legislation and, as such, should not be onerous for employers," he said.

Mr Wong said the potential financial burden on employers should not be significant and would be minimised by the phased approach to be taken by the Government.

"We propose also to exempt small business from some of the provisions. For instance, those employing less than 150 employees will be exempted from the requirement to have at least one employee who is trained in first-aid," he said.

The proposed new legislation is part of the recommendations of the Consultation Paper on the Review of Industrial Safety in Hong Kong published last year. The recommendations in the Report received wide public support.

Mr Wong pointed out that the provisions of the Bill and Regulation would be brought into operation one year after enactment. "This will allow time for launching public education and promotion programmes, and for employers and occupiers of affected premises to become familiar with the legislation and to make the necessary preparations."

Mr Wong said that in line with the new strategy on promoting industrial safety, the Administration's approach to occupational safety and health in the non-industrial sectors would be "preventive rather than curative; and promotional and educational rather than prosecution-oriented".

"The overall emphasis would be to encourage employers and occupiers of workplaces to identify risks and hazards, and to take steps to control or minimise them.

"The Administration, in collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC), would develop proposals for promoting general awareness of occupational safety and health among employers and employees in the non-industrial sectors.

"The Labour Department will also advise employers and employees about the new legislation, enforcement and compliance standards, approved codes of practice etc."

"The enforcement of the new legislation, together with the enhanced publicity and promotional activities by Government and organisations such as OSHC, should in the long run raise the safety and health awareness of both employers and employees in all sectors.

"This should help reduce the number of occupational injuries and diseases in the non-industrial sectors in Hong Kong," he said.

The Bill will be introduced to the Legislative Council on December 4, 1996.

Following is a summary of the main features of the Bill:

- (a) Part I specifies the title of the Bill and defines certain terms used in it.

- (b) Part II prescribes the general responsibilities of employers and occupiers of premises. The employers are responsible for ensuring the safety and health of their employees at work. Occupiers of premises where persons working there are not their employees, are also responsible for ensuring the safety and health of those employees.
(For example, in the case of a department store, the occupier has a duty for the safety and health, including general facilities and amenities, of all persons working therein, but the safety and health of employees who are posted by a franchised company to work in a sales booth in the department store is the responsibility of the company, while such employees are working within the company's booth)
- (c) Part III enables the Commissioner for Labour to issue improvement notices and suspension notices, the latter against any activity at the workplaces which creates, or is likely to create, an imminent risk of death or serious bodily injury to the employees. It also confers a right of appeal by the employers or occupiers, against the issue of suspension notice, to the Commissioner for Labour and the Administrative Appeals Board. Failure to comply with an improvement notice or a suspension notice constitutes an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$200,000 and \$500,000 respectively, and imprisonment for up to 12 months.
- (d) Part IV provides for the reporting of accidents resulting in death or incapacity, and dangerous occurrences at the workplaces, by the proprietors, the notification by medical practitioners of cases of occupational disease, and the holding of informal and formal inquiries into accidents by the Commissioner for Labour.
- (e) Part V provides for the appointment and functions of public officers to administer the Bill's provisions.
- (f) Part VI prescribes miscellaneous offences, such as the disclosure of the identities of complainants; interference with or misuse of equipment for safety and health at the workplace; prevention, obstruction or delay in the provision of aid to an employee who has sustained an injury or illness in a workplace, etc.
- (g) Part VII sets out the procedure for prosecuting offences under the Bill.
- (h) Part VIII empowers the Commissioner for Labour to make regulations to supplement the Bill's provisions, to issue, amend and revoke workplace codes of practice, and to amend schedules to the Bill.
- (i) Part IX provides for the provisions of the Bill to prevail over any possible inconsistent provisions of the Ordinance, and makes consequential amendments to the Administrative Appeals Board Ordinance.

The Occupational Safety and Health Regulation contains the following main provisions :

- (a) Part I provides for the commencement of the Regulation and defines certain expressions used in it.
- (b) Part II contains provisions to prevent accidents in the workplace - such as the guarding of the dangerous part of plant; and the fencing of platform, pits or openings and vessels containing dangerous substance.
- (c) Part III outlines the special fire prevention measures to be taken on premises where workplaces are located - such as keeping fire escape route in a safe condition and free of obstruction; and the provision of illuminated exit signs at egress doorways etc.
- (d) Part IV contains provisions to enhance workplace environment - such as the provision of adequate ventilation and lighting etc.
- (e) Part V contains provisions to enhance hygiene and amenity standards in workplaces - such as lavatories and washing facilities; clean drinking water etc.
- (f) Part VI specifies requirements with respect to the provision of first-aid facilities in the workplace - such as a first-aid box for every 100 employees; and for a workplace employing 150 or more employees, at least one out of every 150 employees in the workplace is trained in first-aid.
- (g) Part VII imposes on employers and occupiers of premises requirements with respect to manual handling operations in workplaces under their control. These include the making of a general assessment to identify such operations, avoidance of hazardous operations, and reducing the risk of injury by automating or mechanising the process. This Part also imposes miscellaneous responsibilities on employers, including responsibilities with respect to training and the provision of information, as well as certain responsibilities on employees to take care of other employees and co-operate with their employers.

End

\$408-million contract for Tung Chung development awarded

The \$408-million main contract for Tung Chung Development Phase IIB will provide land for developing residential and community facilities as well as roads and drainage system to serve a population of 35,000.

The Project Manager (Hong Kong Island and Islands) of the Territory Development Department, Mr Pang Ho-che, said this after signing the contract with a representative of Sun Fook Kong (Civil) Limited at the Tung Chung work site today (Friday).

"Advanced work for the site formation of village resite area started in late 1994 and is substantially complete," he said.

"The main contract comprises the formation of about 26 hectares of land for residential and community facilities development, construction of about two kilometres of dual two-way carriageway, local roads, footpath, cycle track, two pedestrian and cycle bridges, stormwater and sewerage channels, three sewage pumping stations, river training, laying of watermains and landscape works."

Works will commence next week for completion in mid-2000.

"Meanwhile, public housing construction in Phase IIB area has commenced for completion in late 2000 to accommodate a population of 35,000," Mr Pang said.

Tung Chung Development Phase II, which is designed for a population of 64,000 and will involve formation of a total of 65 hectares of land, is part of the Government's programme to develop Tung Chung as the territory's ninth new town on North Lantau.

Phase I of the development was being launched as one of the 10 projects on the Airport Core Programme, said Mr Pang.

"It is designed to serve an initial community of about 20,000 people to support the operation of the new airport.

"Reclamation and site formation commenced in April 1992 and was completed in May 1994 in which 67 hectares of land has been formed.

"Construction works in progress include the second sea channel bridge crossing to the new airport at Chek Lap Kok, local roads and associated storm water drainage and sewerage system, a footbridge, four subways, public transport interchange facilities, water mains and other utilities.

"These are scheduled for completion in January next year," he said.

End

Counselling session for fire victims

The Social Welfare Department will run a counselling session tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon for all those affected by the Yau Ma Tei No 5 Alarm fire to overcome their stress problems.

The session will take place at the conference hall on the first floor of Henry G Leong Yau Ma Tei Community Centre, 60 Public Square Street, Kowloon, from 2 pm to 6 pm.

More than 10 departmental clinical psychologists will be deployed to provide critical incident stress debriefing to victims and family members distressed by the fire.

Members of the public who witnessed the tragedy or have any distress problems resulted from the disaster are also welcome to attend the session.

Meanwhile, the department's caseworkers will continue to contact and outreach family members of the deceased and injured to offer help.

Affected family members who want to enquire about welfare services may contact the Medical Social Work Unit of Queen Elizabeth Hospital on telephone 2958 7078.

End

Twelve per cent growth recorded in insurance industry

The insurance industry as a whole grew by 12 per cent in 1995 in terms of premium income, with long term business contributed most to the overall growth.

According to provisional statistics on the Hong Kong Insurance Market released today (Friday) by Commissioner of Insurance, Mr Alan Wong, total income of general business and long term business amounted to \$43.8 billion in 1995 which represented about four per cent of the Hong Kong Gross Domestic Product.

Growth in the general business sector had slowed down considerably. Gross premiums of general business registered only a marginal growth of two per cent to \$20.1 billion in 1995, compared with an increase of 16 per cent in 1994. Direct business and reinsurance business recorded \$15.2 billion and \$4.9 billion respectively.

Except for goods in transit business, most major classes of general business experienced much slower growth in gross premiums in 1995 than those in 1994. General liability and accident and health business premiums grew by three per cent and 11 per cent respectively in 1995, compared with 46 per cent and 21 per cent in 1994.

On the other hand, motor vehicle business premiums continued to show a decline of 10 per cent in 1995.

Property damage business remained the largest contributor to general business premiums, accounting for 30 per cent of total gross premiums in 1995. As a result of the decline in motor vehicle business premiums, general liability business replaced motor vehicle business as the second largest class with a market share of 20 per cent which is marginally higher than that of motor vehicle business of 19 per cent.

Compared with the growth of gross premiums, net premiums rose by a relatively higher rate of seven per cent to \$13.3 billion in 1995. This can be explained by the increase of retention ratio from 63 per cent in 1994 to 66 per cent in 1995.

Total claims paid of general business was \$7.8 billion. After deducting reinsurance recoveries of \$ 2.7 billion, total net claims paid amounted to \$5.1 billion.

The overall net claims incurred ratio, i.e. net claims incurred to net earned premiums, deteriorated from 52 per cent in 1994 to 54 per cent in 1995.

As regards underwriting performance, Mr Wong pointed out that the general insurance industry continued to enjoy a profit for the third consecutive year in 1995. An overall underwriting profit of \$0.7 billion was made, which represented five per cent of net earned premiums.

In the long term business sector, Mr Wong said the total office premiums in force amounted to \$23.7 billion in 1995, representing a growth of 22 per cent.

Major contribution continued to come from individual life business with office premiums in force amounting to \$16.6 billion at the end of 1995, representing premium per capita of about \$2,630. The number of individual life policies in force exceeded 2.8 million which covered about 45 per cent of the Hong Kong population, compared with 41 per cent in 1994. Net liabilities for these policies increased by 25 per cent to \$32.6 billion in 1995.

During the year, 604,613 new individual life policies were sold, of which more than 97 per cent were non-linked policies. Office premiums for these new policies amounted to \$4.7 billion, an increase of eight per cent over those of the previous year. About three quarters of these premiums came from non-linked business and one quarter from linked business which attracted a significant amount of single premiums. Whole life insurance remained the main product sold, which accounted for about half of total office premiums for new individual life policies.

In 1995, retirement schemes business managed by insurance companies registered phenomenal growth. Both total number of retirement scheme policies and contributions arising therefrom increased by 30 per cent to 14,414 and \$6.4 billion respectively. Net liability grew by 25 per cent to \$27.9 billion.

Other business like group life insurance, annuity and permanent health insurance also recorded growth in 1995.

As at October 31, 1996, there were 221 authorised insurers. Among them, there were 158 general insurers, 44 long term insurers and 19 composite insurers. As regards insurance intermediaries, there were 311 insurance brokers and 31,088 insurance agents.

End

Salary indices for managerial and professional employees

* * * * *

The average salary rate for middle-level managerial and professional employees, as measured by the overall Nominal Salary Index (A), increased by 7.9% between June 1996 and June 1995.

The overall Nominal Salary Index (B), which measures changes in the average salary rate only for those middle-level managerial and professional employees who remained in the same occupation and in the same company in both 1995 and 1996, rose by 10.1% over the same period.

The above results are based on the findings of the 1996 Survey of Salaries and Employee Benefits - Managerial and Professional Employees (Excluding Top Management) released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Both Salary Indices (A) and (B) are designed for the purpose of measuring changes in salary rates for middle-level managerial and professional employees of the companies covered by the survey.

As the Salary Index (B) covers only those employees who remained in the same occupation and in the same company in 1995 and 1996, it only accounts for salary changes due to general increment, meritorious increase and gain in seniority. On the other hand, the Salary Index (A) takes into account the effects of labour mobility as well.

The rate of increase of the Salary Index (B) is usually higher than that of the Salary Index (A) because the latter includes the salaries of newly recruited and newly promoted employees, who tend to be paid comparatively lower salaries than those already in the same rank.

Year-on-year changes in the Nominal Salary Index (A) and Nominal Salary Index (B) for June 1996 in respect of major economic sectors are shown in the table below.

By deflating the Nominal Salary Indices by the Hang Seng Consumer Price Index, the Real Salary Indices are obtained to measure changes in the purchasing power of the amount of money earned. Comparing June 1996 with the same month in 1995, the overall Real Salary Indices (A) and (B) registered increases of 1.2% and 3.3% respectively.

Among the middle-level managerial and professional employees covered in the survey, 73% of them were entitled to profit-sharing bonus, 42% to housing benefits of some kind and 89% to provident/retirement fund or pension. It was also found that 98% of them were entitled to guaranteed year-end extra pay.

The Census and Statistics Department has been conducting the Annual Survey of Salaries and Employee Benefits - Managerial and Professional Employee (Excluding Top Management) since 1984 to measure changes in salary rates for middle-level managerial and professional employees.

A sample of about 200 companies is selected for the survey in 1996. One hundred and eighty companies were successfully enumerated, involving 5,754 employees covered by the survey.

In the survey, the salary rate is defined to include, in addition to basic salaries, cost-of-living allowance, guaranteed year-end extra pay, commission and tips, and other guaranteed and regular bonuses and allowances. Apart from salary payment, fringe benefits also constitute an important element of pay package for employees at middle-level managerial and professional levels.

As there are practical difficulties in expressing fringe benefits in money terms, statistics on fringe benefits are expressed in terms of percentages of employees entitled to them.

Details of the salary movement, average salary rate for major occupations, and statistics on employee entitlement to various fringe benefits, together with a description of the survey methodology, are published in the 1996 Report of Salary and Employee Benefits - Managerial and Professional Employees (Excluding Top Management).

The report is available at \$25 per copy (exclusive of postage) at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong and the Publications Unit of Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Enquiries concerning the salary indices can be directed to the Wages and Labour Costs Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2582 4746 or 2582 5595.

Year-on-year changes in
Nominal Salary Indices (A) and (B) for June 1996
in respect of major economic sectors

<u>Selected major economic sector</u>	% change for June 1996 over June 1995	
	<u>Nominal Salary Index (A)</u>	<u>Nominal Salary Index (B)</u>
Manufacturing, electricity and gas	+6.8	+11.0
Building and construction and related trades	+8.3	+ 9.4
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades	+8.4	+10.2
Transport, storage and communications	+8.5	+10.3
Financial institutions and insurance	+6.7	+10.3
<hr/>		
All sectors above	+7.9	+10.1

End

Value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in September

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The value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand for local production in September 1996 decreased by 11% over a year earlier, according to the provisional results of a monthly survey released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

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

Comparing September 1996 with September 1995, increases in the value of orders were recorded in the fabricated metal products industry (+3%) and the electrical products industry (+1%).

On the other hand, decreases in the value of orders were recorded in the electronic products industry (-21%), the plastic products industry (-16%), the printing & publishing industry (-9%), the textiles industry (-3%) and the wearing apparel industry (-2%).

Compared with August 1996, and bearing in mind that this comparison may be affected by seasonal factors, the value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in September 1996 decreased by 7%.

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 for 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 September 1996, at \$7 a copy, is now available for sale at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway and 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	
	August 1996 <u>over August 95</u> (Revised)	September 1996 <u>over September 95</u> (Provisional)
All industries covered in the survey	- 9	-11
* Wearing apparel	- 2	- 2
* Textiles	- 3	- 3
* Electronic products	-17	-21
* Electrical products	- 3	+ 1
* Fabricated metal products	+ 5	+ 3
* Plastic products	-12	-16
* Printing and publishing	-15	- 9

End

Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park designated

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Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau has been designated as the third marine park in the territory following the approval of the draft map by the Executive Council last month.

A spokesman for the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) said today (Friday) that the designation of the marine park would enable this ecologically important marine area to be protected under the Marine Parks Ordinance.

It would help the conservation of marine environment and promotion of biodiversity of the area, he said.

He added that the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, as the Country and Marine Parks Authority, will manage this newly-designated marine park for the purposes of conservation, education, research and environmental enhancement.

The Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park is situated in the western part of Hong Kong waters and covers a sea area of about 1,200 hectares.

The area supports a variety of fish and other organisms. It is also where the Indo-Pacific Humpbacked Dolphins (commonly known as Chinese White Dolphins) are often seen.

An order designating the area shown on the approved map on Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park, was published in the Government Gazette today.

Copies of the map are now available for public inspection at the AFD headquarters, the Land Registry, Tuen Mun New Territories Land Registry, Yuen Long New Territories Land Registry, Tsuen Wan New Territories Land Registry, Islands New Territories Land Registry and the Marine Department headquarters.

End

Minor amendments to Miscellaneous Ordinances proposed

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A Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions and Minor Amendments) Bill 1966 is published in the gazette today (Friday) for introduction to the Legislative Council at its session on December 4.

A government spokesman explained that the Bill makes minor, technical and largely non-controversial amendments to the Laws of Hong Kong. Among the proposed changes are:

Transfer of powers to make subsidiary legislation:

Certain powers to make regulations or orders which are not considered important enough to merit the attention of the Governor in Council are to be transferred to a Branch Secretary, a Departmental head or a statutory board or committee, depending on the circumstances.

Amendments relating to the age of majority:

The definitions of "child" and "infant" in the Domestic Violence Ordinance and the Adoption Ordinance are to be amended to reflect the reduction of the age of majority from 21 to 18 in 1990. Furthermore, a distinction between male and female "infants" in a provision in the Adoption Ordinance will be removed.

Consent to marriage:

A section of the Marriage Ordinance which allows the father to give consent to the marriage of a child under 21 years of age, but the mother only if the father is dead or insane will be amended to place either parent in the same position.

Amendments to the Post Office Ordinance:

The Post Office Ordinance and regulations under it will be amended to replace the 'On Her Majesty's Service' mark on government envelopes with "On Government Service" to ensure that government mail bearing this new mark will enjoy the same protection and privileges.

Taxation of foreign lawyers' bills of costs:

Provision under the Legal Practitioners Ordinance for the "taxation" of a solicitor's bill, that is for an application to be made to the court for the court to determine what the appropriate charge should be, will be amended to cover foreign lawyers' bills.

References to ex officio and official members of the Legislative Council:

References to 'official' and 'ex officio' members of the Legislative Council that still appear in the Legislative Council Commission Ordinance, the Po Leung Kuk Ordinance and the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Ordinance will be removed.

Certain registers to be kept in non-legible form:

The Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance and the Marriage Ordinance will be amended to legalise the storage of marriage records by microfilming, and the storage of births and deaths records in both microfilm and computerised forms.

Maintenance of illegitimate children:

The Affiliation Proceedings Ordinance will be repealed. Its provisions will be covered by the Guardianship of Minors Ordinance which requires some amendment to achieve that purpose.

Plugging loopholes in the Crimes Ordinance:

A loophole arising from the definition of "currency notes" in the Crimes Ordinance will be plugged so that counterfeit bank notes will include currency notes issued in another country that are no longer in circulation but are still legal tender. The definition of 'defective' is also to be brought into line with the definition of 'mental disorder' in the Mental Health Ordinance to cover mental disorders such as schizophrenia.

End

Kwai Tsing arts festival promises to be an instant hit

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Organisers of the 10th Kwai Tsing District Arts Festival are confident that the festival, which will feature some of the hottest names in the local pop scene, will be an instant hit with residents when it is launched tomorrow (Saturday).

Apart from the traditional cultural fare of Chinese opera, dance and instrumental music performances and exhibition of Chinese paintings, one of the highlights of the festival programme will be a concert featuring pop stars - Miss Joyce Lee, Miss Karen Tong and Mr Ray Chan and the popular band, the Zen.

Admission tickets for the festival's events, except those for the pop concert on January 4, have already been distributed on a first-come-first-served basis at the Kwai Tsing Public Enquiry Service Centre and its sub-offices. Tickets for the pop concert will be on sale at all ORBTIX offices on December 4.

The Chairperson of the Kwai Tsing Festival District Arts Festival Committee, Mrs Suen Lo Wai-lan, said: "We believe the rich variety of cultural events, both traditional and modern, will satisfy residents' varied tastes.

"By enriching their lives with a wide variety of recreational and cultural activities, we hope the festival will help engender in them a sense of belonging and promote harmony in the community."

The festival is jointly organised by the 10th Kwai Tsing Arts Festival Committee and Kwai Tsing District Board with the assistance of the Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi District Culture and Arts Co-ordinating Association Limited, Kwai Tsing District Office and Kwai Tsing area committees.

It is estimated to cost \$1 million and will be paid for by local donations and sponsorship from the Kwai Tsing District Board and the Regional Council.

End

New measures to deter use of duty-not-paid hydrocarbon oil

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Customs officers of the Diesel Oil Enforcement Division of the Marine and Land Enforcement Command today (Friday) cracked down a smuggling venture which used cross-border dump trucks to deliver duty-exempted diesel oil from China.

The smuggled diesel oil was for distributing to illegal refuelling stations at an open ground in Sha Tau Kok Road near the border.

Three men were arrested and 2,500 litres of duty-exempted diesel oil worth \$16,900 and attracting a duty potential of \$7,225 was seized. Two cross-border dump trucks and one light goods vehicle were detained.

A spokesman for the Customs and Excise Department said that in view of the current rampant situation of illegal use of duty-not-paid hydrocarbon oil, the department was taking new measures to deter vehicle drivers and owners from using duty-not-paid hydrocarbon oil as fuel.

Two new measures will be implemented shortly. Firstly, a driver or owner of a vehicle who commits an offence of using duty-not-paid hydrocarbon oil as fuel will be fingerprinted by the Police and will therefore have a criminal record upon conviction. In sentencing an offender, the court may draw reference to his previous convictions. The criminal record might also have an adverse effect on the offender's future.

Secondly, Customs will detain and apply for forfeiture of vehicles which are found using contraband hydrocarbon oil twice within a six-month period.

The spokesman urged drivers not to use illicit hydrocarbon oil as fuel as the new measures would directly affect themselves. Vehicle owners will also cause themselves heavy financial losses instead of savings from using cheap contraband oil. The criminal record will also tarnish their status as good citizens.

End

Tenders invited for engineering works at treatment plants

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The Drainage Services Department is inviting tenders for two separate contracts for general engineering works and disposal of sludge and solid water at the department's various sewage treatment plants and pumping stations.

Both contracts will last for 24 months starting from April 1 next year.

One of the contracts is for the provision of services of general engineering works while the other is for the disposal of sludge and solid wastes.

Forms of tender and further particulars can be obtained from the office of the Contracts Section of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, 98 Caroline Hill Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

Tenders for the general engineering works must be addressed to the Chairman of the Public Works Tender Board and placed in the Public Works Tender Box at the lift lobby, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong on or before noon on Friday, December 20.

Tenders for the disposal of sludge and solid wastes must be addressed to the Chairman of the Central Tender Board and placed in the Government Secretariat Tender Box at the lift lobby, lower ground floor, Central Government Offices, East Wing, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong before noon on Friday, December 20.

Late tenders will not be accepted.

End

Tenders for improvements to village in Tsuen Wan invited

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The Territory Development Department is inviting tenders for improvements to San Tsuen Road and San Tsuen Village as part of the continuing programme for the development of Tsuen Wan new town.

The project will improve and extend the existing San Tsuen Road and form land for improving the living environment and accommodating San Tsuen Village expansion.

It will also include the installation of utilities and provision of open space and other amenities.

Work will start in January next year for completion in about 22 months.

Forms of tender and further particulars may be obtained from the consulting engineers, Messrs Ho Tin & Associates Consulting Engineers Limited, Room 1704, Leighton Centre, 77 Leighton Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

Tenders must be clearly marked and addressed to the Chairman of the Central Tender Board. They must be placed in the Government Secretariat Tender Box at the lift lobby, lower ground floor, Central Government Offices (East Wing), Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong, before noon on Friday, December 13.

Late tenders will not be accepted.

End

Tenders for building at Repulse Bay beach invited

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The Architectural Services Department is inviting tenders for the construction of a beach building at Repulse Bay in Southern District.

The project will include the demolition of five existing beach buildings, and construction of a new beach building with changing facilities, showers, toilets, store, offices, refuse collection point, look-out towers and other ancillary facilities.

Works will commence in February 1997 for completion in April 1998.

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

Tender offers will close at noon on Friday, December 13.

End

Applications for HCFCs free quota invited

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The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) invites applications for free quotas for imports for local consumption of 34 types of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) for 1997.

Applications are open to all companies which have registered under the Ozone Layer Protection Ordinance. Allocations will be on a need basis.

A Senior Environmental Protection Officer of EPD, Mr Perry Lai, said the quotas were used to control the local consumption of HCFCs, a requirement of the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer. Hong Kong's consumption of HCFCs would have to be reduced in phases to zero by the year 2030.

"According to the protocol, HCFC quotas for Hong Kong in 1997 should be no more than 2,526 tonnes. EPD will distribute 60 percent of the quotas to importers active in 1996 according to their records of imports. The remaining 40 percent will be allocated as free quotas," he said.

Mr Lai added that EPD would allocate the free quotas in two phases, each phase distributing half of the quotas.

Applications for the Phase 1 free quota should be made in person by December 20, 1996. For application forms or further details, please visit EPD's Air Management Group on 33rd Floor, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai or call 2594 6242.

End

Tenders invited for mainlaying in Southern District

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The Water Supplies Department is inviting tenders for mainlaying works in Southern District as part of the government's plans to provide a salt water flushing system and sewerage facilities for the area.

The contract will include the installation of about 8.8 kilometres of salt water mains with diameters ranging from 100 to 400 millimetres along Pokfulam Road, Mount Davies Road, Bisney Road and Sassoon Road together with 360 metres of sewer pipe of 300 millimetres diameters along Sassoon Road.

Works are expected to commence in February 1997 for completion in about 21 months.

Tender forms and further particulars can be obtained from the Water Supplies Department, 44th floor, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Tender offers will close at noon on Friday, December 13.

End

Proposed submarine cable transmission link to Shekou

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The China Light and Power Company Limited has proposed the laying of a 132 kV electricity cable within an area of about 150 millimetres in width and nine kilometres in length of foreshore and seabed at Deep Bay.

This is to reinforce the interconnection between the company and Shekou in China.

The work is scheduled to commence in the first quarter for completion in the second quarter of next year.

The extent of the area affected is described in a notice published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

Any person who considers that he has an interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and seabed involved may submit a written objection to the Director of Lands on or before January 22, 1997.

The objection should describe the interest, right or easement of the objector and the manner in which he alleges he will be affected.

The notice together with related plans can be seen on notice boards posted near the site.

The plan can also be seen at the Lands Department's Survey and Mapping Office, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong (where copies can be purchased on order) and at the Yuen Long District Office, ground floor, Yuen Long District Branch Offices Building, 269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long, New Territories.

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the transfer of Vietnamese migrants (VMs) selected for the Orderly Repatriation Programme from Sections 4 and 6 of the Whitehead Detention Centre yesterday (November 21) have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary this (Friday) morning.

The VMs were transferred to Whitehead Section 8 and Victoria Prison.

The four monitors comprised two non-official Justices of the Peace, Mr Yeung Po-kwan and Mr Luk Hing-too; and representatives from two non-government organisations, Mrs Anthea Strickland from Save the Children Fund and Mr Tik Chi-yuen from Oxfam.

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	2,899	0930	-3
Closing balance in the account	2,939	1000	-3
Change attributable to:		1100	-3
Money market activity	NIL	1200	-2
LAF today	+40	1500	NIL
		1600	NIL

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.2 *+0.0* 22.11.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.00	2 years	2811	5.72	100.11	5.74
1 month	4.92	3 years	3910	6.28	100.74	6.08
3 months	4.91	5 years	5109	7.32	103.29	6.61
6 months	4.99	7 years	7308	7.24	102.47	6.89
12 months	5.24	10 years	1610	7.37	102.42	7.15
		5 years	M503	7.35	102.11	6.93

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$15,199 million

Closed November 22, 1996

End