



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of CS's media session

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Following is the transcript of the remarks (English) to the media by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, after attending the International Women's Day Luncheon this (Friday) afternoon:

Question: Do you think it is appropriate for civil servants to sit on the selection committee which would choose the future chief executive?

CS: I think the selection committee, the way in which the selection committee will be organised is clearly laid down in the Basic Law. On the part of the Hong Kong Government, we have said that we fully intend to co-operate with the Preparatory Committee. The exact modality for co-operation is a matter that remains to be discussed with our side and the Chinese side. In the meantime of course, as you know, we have set up the liaison office and we are ready at anytime to discuss actual proposals for co-operation with the Chinese side.

Question: Some people are still not satisfied with the budget, among them seems to be the elderly, the unemployed and the disabled. Do you think they have a case?

CS: I think that the Financial Secretary will be extremely surprised if he doesn't receive some criticisms on his budget. But I think that to a very large extent he has met the needs and the wishes of different sectors of the community, bearing in mind that our resources are limited and it is not possible in fact to meet the demands of every sector. I think this is an extremely good budget. It does take into account the needs of different sectors. It on the one hand not only improves social services, particularly social security payments for the elderly which is a matter that is of great concern to the community, but at the same time it enables Hong Kong to maintain our competitive business environment so that we can continue to enjoy the economic growth that enables us to improve our services across a wide range.

End

Transcript of the Financial Secretary's media session

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Following is a transcript of the media session by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, after briefing Legislative Council members on the 1996-97 Budget this (Friday) morning:

Question: There have been calls from many groups that there should be further spending on welfare, such as the CSSA. Are you prepared to make concessions and give out more?

FS: We have done what we believe to be possible within our expenditure guideline and there is an overriding aim of mine and my colleagues that we should try to aim to balance the budget for 1996-97. I think in respect of social spending we have done the right thing. We have allowed it to increase in terms of expenditure in real terms - 14.7 per cent in the coming year. I think it is a right balance. But if Members feel that it is not adequate they have to consider in what way we can compensate, what is the additional expenditure, we must give to this. Up to now I still believe it is a right balance, a right provision, for Hong Kong.

End

Transcript of SFS's opening statement at post-budge PC

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Following is a transcript of the opening statement made by the Secretary for Financial Services, Mr Rafael Hui, at a post-budget press conference today (Friday):

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon. In his Budget Speech, the Financial Secretary has underlined the importance of maintaining Hong Kong as an international financial centre into the next century and beyond. Being an international financial centre could indeed help build a prosperous future for Hong Kong. Before my colleagues go into the details of how the financial services sector, in particular the private sector, would assist in furthering the vision of the Financial Secretary, let me make a few general remarks by way of introduction.

First, the importance of financial services in Hong Kong. Financial services include banking, insurance and retirement protection, financial markets and fund management services. Between them, they account for over 10% [10.8%] of Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product in 1994, employing over 155,000 people.

The Government is committed to supporting Hong Kong's development as a major international financial centre. The Joint-Declaration stipulates that "The Hong Kong SAR will retain the status of an international financial centre, and its markets for foreign exchange, gold, securities and futures will continue. There will be free flow of capital. The Hong Kong dollar will continue to circulate and remain freely convertible." The concept is further developed in the Basic Law, and Article 109 stipulates that "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall provide an appropriate economic and legal environment for the maintenance of the status of Hong Kong as an international financial centre".

The Government believes in market forces. Our economy has always been and will continue to be led by the market. We simply strive to provide an environment and the infrastructure that will be most conducive to business and commerce. We lay down the ground rules and continue to improve them in the interests of Hong Kong and in order to maintain our competitiveness vis-à-vis other financial markets. We seek to provide a level playing field for everyone. There are no restrictions for overseas investors, and similarly we do not seek to prevent local investment moving offshore.

Hong Kong's importance in the regional and international scene will continue to grow as the partnership between Hong Kong and China intensifies. Realised direct investment by Hong Kong companies in China has increased by more than 20 times in the past decade. On a cumulative basis, our realised direct investment in China is now estimated at US\$60 billion, or 60% of China's total. On the other hand, direct investment in Hong Kong by China has doubled from an estimated US\$10 billion at the end of 1990 to over US\$20 billion at the end of 1994. The investments are predominantly in the service sectors - trade-related services, hotels and tourism, real estate, banking and finance, and major infrastructural projects.

Meanwhile, many economies in the Region are now making extra efforts to liberalise, promote and upgrade their own service sectors. While this would give rise to greater competition in the Region, liberalisation has also opened up more opportunities for trade in services. With GDP in the region projected to continue to grow strongly, at an average annual rate of around 7% to probably US\$10 trillion by the year 2000; the value-added contribution of the services sector in this region can reach almost US\$6 trillion. Assuming that imports of services in various economies in the Region will increase at the same pace as their GDP, the size of the regional market for imports of services can grow to over US\$400 billion in the year 2000.

Hong Kong is well-placed to play a big role in the anticipated rapid growth in the Region's trade in services. We are the freest and one of the most competitive economies in the world; we already have developed strong trade links and close investment relations with neighbouring economies; we have an unbeatable location; a critical mass of financial institutions; the necessary infrastructure in transport and communications; sound and rigorous supervisory framework; ample supply of experienced professionals in all fields of commerce; a skilful and diligent work-force; a community spirit and tradition of enterprise and a long history of doing business with China. All these attributes make us a pretty good place to be a major trading, financial and business services centre for the region generally and for China in particular.

The Addendum on Promotion of Services which accompanies the FS's Budget Speech has outlined how we have been developing policies to encourage and facilitate participation of the private sector and the markets. I should stress that this is not central planning. We have never practised central planning of the economy and we never will.

As far as financial services are concerned, the addendum is meant to stimulate discussion on how Hong Kong can best promote, develop and improve the range of financial services. It does not and should not stop there. It certainly is not exclusive. Any new ideas and proposals are welcome, in particular when they come from the financial markets. Indeed I am aware that both the Stock Exchange and the Futures Exchange have developed work-plans geared to maintaining Hong Kong as a leading financial centre in the region, and we all look forward to hearing their separate announcements in the very near future.

Finally, let me stress that the FS' vision to carry Hong Kong into the 21st Century through promotion of services is an on-going process. Our mission is to ensure that the process will continue so that Hong Kong will always be a leading international financial centre and so that Hong Kong will have a more prosperous future.

I would now invite Dr Edgar Cheng, Mr Joseph Yam and Mrs Lessie Wei to talk about specific items as listed in the Addendum, starting with Dr Edgar Cheng.

End

Major improvements to CSSA Scheme recommended

* * * * *

Single parents, family carers and adults in ill-health who are currently receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) payments are to benefit most under a basket of recommendations made by the Steering Group set up to review the scheme in March 1995.

Unveiling details of the Review at a press conference today (Friday), the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, reaffirmed the validity of the Government's underlying policy on social security - to provide financial assistance to those who needed it to bring their income up to a level where their basic and special needs could be met.

She said: "This policy goal is easier said than met. But it is important that we bear this policy objective in mind."

She said social security was not a form of retirement protection. It cannot and should not be used, for example, to guarantee a certain type of lifestyle for the elderly - a function more appropriate for a retirement protection or pension scheme to which beneficiaries are normally expected to contribute.

"It is not, therefore, fair to test the new levels of CSSA payments recommended in the Review against such criteria. The test should rather be whether the payments are fair and whether they meet adequately basic needs," Mrs Fok said.

The recommendations of the Steering Group which was chaired by the Director of Social Welfare, will require a total cost of \$508 million to implement, including the \$300 million already pledged by the Governor in his Policy Address last October.

If the funds are approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, the recommendations will come into effect on April 1.

Of the total, \$317 million will be used to increase CSSA standard rates; \$46 million to increase the maximum rent allowance to CSSA rent paying households living in private housing; \$45 million to meet new special grants for the elderly; \$41 million to meet a flat-rate grant for school related expenses; and \$59 million to meet additional staffing costs to improve customer service.

Methodology

During the year-long review, the Group compared the expenditures of the CSSA group and the lowest five per cent income group shown in the 1994-95 Household Expenditure Survey (HES) with the standard rates plus the monthly apportionment of the annual long term supplement (Modified Standard Rates or MSR's).

The full 12-month HES data showed that MSR's exceeded the expenditure of the lowest five per cent income group except for the able-bodied adult category.

When further compared with the expenditure levels of the lowest 10, 15 and 20 per cent income groups, the results were broadly the same, that is, MSR's exceeded these expenditure levels except for able-bodied adults and elderly persons living in a family.

The Group further constructed basic baskets of commodities and services representing the basic needs for food and non-food household expenditure for various categories of CSSA customers.

Again, MSR's exceeded the basic needs budgets for all CSSA groups except for able-bodied adults and for 50 per cent disabled adults in a family.

While these findings showed clearly that rates for some categories were too low, especially in the case of adults, the statistics showed that others such as the single elderly rates were above even the spending levels of such people in the lowest 20 per cent income group.

New standard rates

Based on this analysis, the Group proposed to increase the monthly standard rate for an elderly person living in a family by \$180; an able-bodied adult unable and not expected to work by \$600; an adult able and expected to work by \$300; and a 50 per cent disabled adult living in a family by \$140.

About 54,000 people, including about 16,000 people newly drawn into the CSSA net as a result of the proposed increases, will benefit.

Together with the seven per cent inflation adjustments already announced for 1996-97, the new standard rates for these groups of recipients will be:

	<u>Current Rate</u> <u>(\$ per month)</u>	<u>New Rate</u> <u>From April 1996</u> <u>(\$ per month)</u>
Elderly person living in a family	1,505	1,805 (+20%)
Able-bodied adult		
Single	1,210	1,615 (+33%)
Single parent or family carer	1,045	1,760 (+68%)
Other adult living in a family	1,045	1,440 (+38%)
Adult in ill-health		
Single	1,210	1,935 (+60%)
Living in a family	1,045	1,760 (+68%)
50% disabled adult living in a family	1,505	1,760 (+17%)

Other recommendations

The Group also proposed the following:

Payment of CSSA to elderly persons retiring to China

The Group recommended that elderly recipients be given a new option of retiring permanently to China while continuing to receive their monthly CSSA standard rate payment and annual long term supplement.

The Group also recommended that if elderly recipients were to continue receiving CSSA while living permanently in mainland China, they must be permanent residents of Hong Kong and have resided in Hong Kong for at least seven years; and they must have been receiving CSSA continuously for a period of not less than three years before moving to mainland China.

The new option will be introduced once all the detailed procedures have been agreed.

Special grants

For elderly recipients, they will be given a \$200 "lai see" grant at Chinese New Year and a new special grant of \$320 a year, on a reimbursement basis, to participate in recreational and social activities. About 100,000 elderly recipients will benefit.

School children from pre-primary to upper secondary will be given an annual flat-rate grant for school related expenses, that is, books, stationery, school uniforms, meaning an average additional payment of about \$1,500 in most cases. About 28,000 school children will benefit.

Rent allowance

The current maximum rent allowance for CSSA households living in private housing will be increased by between 17 and 52 per cent, depending on household size. About 19,000 CSSA households will benefit.

For example, the maximum rent allowance for a three-person household will increase from \$2,265 to \$3,452, an increase of 52 per cent.

Asset limits

The existing two categories of assets will be simplified to one by excluding the category of real property not occupied by the family.

The limit for cash, savings and valuable possessions will be increased by between nine and 41 per cent, depending on household size. As a result, the asset limit for single person households would be set at \$33,000. An additional \$16,500 will be allowed for each eligible member of a household.

Disregarded earnings

The level of earnings which a CSSA recipient may retain without being offset against CSSA payments will continue to be set at an amount equivalent to the monthly standard rate for a single able-bodied adult.

As a result, it will increase from the current \$1,210 a month to \$1,615 a month with effect from April, up 33 per cent.

Staffing

To improve customer service, the Social Welfare Department's Social Security Field Units will be provided with an additional 211 posts. Following the increased staffing, CSSA applicants can expect to receive assistance more speedily and effectively.

The improvement will reduce the time span for processing cases and widen the dissemination of information to CSSA customers so that they know what assistance they would receive under the CSSA Scheme.

Average CSSA payments

As a result of the proposed improvements to CSSA and the annual inflation adjustments, the average monthly CSSA payment (i.e. standard rates, rent allowance and other special grants) will increase:

- * by 10% to \$2,980 for a single elderly person
- * by 18% to \$5,000 for an elderly couple
- * by 21% to \$7,960 for a three-member single parent family
- * by 19% to \$10,270 for a four-person household
- * by 45% to \$2,550 for a single adult in ill-health
- * by 28% to \$2,150 for a single unemployed adult

Pamphlet

A pamphlet, in Chinese and English, showing the main recommendations of the CSSA Review is available at all Social Security Field Units, District Social Welfare Offices and District Offices.

End

Govt set to strengthen elderly outreach services

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The Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, today (Friday) underlined the need for the Government, non-governmental organisations and the community as a whole to do more to reach out to elderly persons, particularly those living alone, and to encourage them to continue an active life in the community.

"Being more a part of the community, they will be less vulnerable in times of difficulty," she said.

Speaking at the press conference on the new health and welfare funding for 1996/97, Mrs Fok said the Government would launch two initiatives to achieve these objectives.

First, the 24 existing multi-service centres for the elderly and the six new ones due to come on stream in 1996/97 will be allocated over \$17 million under a two-year pilot project to organise new ways of reaching out to elderly people at risk.

Additional staff will be provided specifically to mobilise resources in the community to help contact and support vulnerable elderly people living in their respective districts. Running parallel to this, the Government will conduct a 15-month consultancy study on elderly needs.

"At the end of the study and the pilot project, we shall be well placed to review how best to take forward the development of elderly outreach services", Mrs Fok stated.

The second initiative seeks to foster social networking by co-ordinating, through District Social Welfare Officers, the resources of non-governmental organisations, the Home Affairs Department, Housing Department, district boards and other district-based organisations.

Local groups and organisations will now be invited by the Social Welfare Department annually to put forward new ideas and projects they have developed which will strengthen the links between the elderly themselves and between them and their local community.

On the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, Mrs Fok spoke at length explaining the various improvements recommended by the Steering Group set up to review the scheme in March 1995.

The recommendations will require a total of \$508 million to implement, including the \$300 million already pledged by the Governor in his Policy Address last October. Subject to approval of funds by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, the new CSSA proposals will come into effect on April 1 this year.

On the health front, the Secretary reiterated the increasing importance Government placed on disease prevention and the promotion of good health practices. Of the \$1.8 billion allocated to the Department of Health in 1996/97, over \$800 million would be spent in these areas of activities.

To instil in the younger generation a new culture of taking responsibility for their own health, the Student Health Service will be extended to cover an additional 443,000 children, bringing the total number of students covered under this scheme to some 900,000.

On the Hospital Authority side, the Secretary noted that apart from the opening of 830 new beds in the coming year, five additional teams will be set up to look after various types of patients and elderly people. These include two rehabilitation co-ordination teams, one community geriatric assessment team and three psychogeriatric teams.

In addition, a number of capital works projects to expand and develop some existing facilities will also be underway, these include the final phase of the Castle Peak Hospital redevelopment project at a cost of \$850 million; construction of the Lai King Hospital and West Kowloon Medical Rehabilitation Centre at \$1.03 billion; refurbishment of the Caritas Medical Centre at \$500 million, and the reprovision of the specialist clinics in Sai Ying Pun and South Kwai Chung at \$570 million.

End

Chinese delegation to visit Hong Kong

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A Chinese delegation led by the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Wang Guisheng, will visit Hong Kong from March 10 to 19, the Government announced today (Friday).

There will be seven other members in the delegation, who work in different departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A government spokesman said this was one in a series of sponsored visits between China and Hong Kong.

"The objective of the sponsored visit programme is to enhance mutual understanding of Chinese and Hong Kong Government officials on each other's systems," he said.

The delegation will be briefed by senior Hong Kong government officials on policies relating to matters such as infrastructure development, economic, trade, and the civil service.

End

1996 Population By-census to commence

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The 1996 Population By-census will be conducted from March 16 to 24 for the purpose of obtaining up-to-date information on the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the population.

About one-seventh of all households in Hong Kong will be selected for enumeration.

The Commissioner for Census and Statistics, Mr Frederick Ho, appealed to members of the public for co-operation and support, asking sampled households to provide accurate information at the interviews.

Other people could help in facilitating the enumerators' work, he added.

"Statistics compiled from the information collected in the by-census are vital to Government in planning, particularly in such fields as housing, education, transport, medical care and social services, and to the private sector in formulating business strategies," said Mr Ho.

"Through assisting the by-census, every member of the public directly or indirectly helps build a better Hong Kong."

He explained that a by-census differed from a census in that the former did not a complete head count of the population, but collected detailed information on the population from a sample, based on which the size and the characteristics of the entire population were estimated.

It differs from other sample surveys in that it has a much larger sample size, so that it can provide reliable population data on small geographical areas for local planning, and data on population sub-groups for the planning of government services for such groups.

About one-seventh of all quarters in Hong Kong have been selected according to a probability sampling scheme for enumerating all households living therein.

During the by-census operation period, enumerators will visit such households and the household members will be asked about their particulars, including year and month of birth, sex, place of birth, marital status, language, nationality, educational attainment, place of study/work, employment details, income, household rent and previous residence.

The 1996 Population By-census would be targeted at the entire population of Hong Kong, including the land population and the marine population, said Mr Ho, adding that persons living in special types of quarters such as infirmaries and penal institutions would also be covered.

The Census and Statistics Department has despatched letters informing all sampled households of the visiting enumerator's name.

During the visit, each enumerator will identify himself /herself with a Census Officer Certificate of Identity issued by the department. If in doubt, households can verify the enumerator's identity on 2590 8000.

The visits will usually be carried out from 10 am to 10 pm on weekdays and from 9 am to 10 pm on Saturdays and Sundays during the nine-day operation period.

"This large scale project is estimated to cost \$185 million," Mr Ho said.

The 1996 Population By-census is conducted under the provisions of Section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance. Under this Ordinance, persons specified to give information are obliged to do so.

"Information on individual persons and households collected in the by-census will be used for statistical purposes only.

"The Census and Statistics Department is legally prohibited to allow access to this information by any other government departments or organisations.

"Enumerators are also required to keep the collected information regarding individual persons and households in strict confidence and not to disclose such information to any person not performing functions relating to the by-census.

"All questionnaires containing collected information will be destroyed within one year after the By-census operation," Mr Ho stressed.

End

New office rental allowance for DB members

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District Board (DB) members will receive an accountable office rental allowance of up to \$4,500 per month from April 1.

The allowance, to help DB members set up and maintain their ward offices, was approved by the Legislative Council's Finance Committee today (Friday).

A spokesman for the Home Affairs Department said the new allowance will be used to meet office rental, rates, management fees, charges for water, electricity and fixed telephone and/or fax lines installed in the DB members' offices.

"In view of the increasing need for DB members to set up their own ward offices to discharge their duties more effectively, we conducted a review in mid-1995," the spokesman said.

"As it was found that the current monthly honorarium of \$15,800 is insufficient to meet rental and related expenses of DB members' ward offices, we concluded that there was a case for introducing a new accountable office rental allowance for them.

"Using the median office size of 30 square metres as a yardstick, we consider an average rental of \$7,000 reasonable.

"Given that an element of rental allowance (equivalent to about \$2,500) has already been incorporated in the existing DB honorarium, the new allowance is therefore set at \$4,500 per month."

The spokesman pointed out that the allowance would be 100 per cent accountable, paid on a reimbursement basis on production of certified receipts, for expenses actually paid by DB members related to the running of their ward offices in the district.

"Claims for reimbursement will be made available for public inspection upon request," he said.

The allowance will be adjusted annually in October in accordance with the movement of the Hang Seng Consumer Price Index.

End

New HK Academy for Performing Arts Council member appointed

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The Governor has appointed Mr Clarence Chang Ching-po as a member of the Council of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts for the period from January 19 to December 31.

Mr Chang, the Deputy Chief Executive of Asia Television Limited, will replace Mrs Ng Young Tse-yu who has resigned from the Council for personal reasons, a government spokesman said today (Friday).

The Academy for Performing Arts is a statutory organisation to foster and provide for training, education and research in the performing arts and related technical arts.

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe yesterday's transfer of 210 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) selected for the Orderly Repatriation Programme from the High Island Detention Centre to Victoria Prison have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary today (Friday).

The four monitors comprised two non-official Justices of the Peace, Mr Lee Jark-pui and Professor Nelson Chow Wing-sun; and representatives from two non-governmental organisations - Ms Emily Liu from Christian Action and Mr Christopher Stokes from Medecins Sans Frontieres.

End

Volume and price movements of external trade

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In 1995, the volume of re-exports increased by 14% as compared to 1994, while the volume of domestic exports increased by 1.9%, according to the statistics released today (Friday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Taking re-exports and domestic exports together, the volume of total exports increased by 12%. Meanwhile, imports increased by 14% in volume.

The growth in the volume of trade is derived from the growth in trade values with the effect of price changes discounted.

As regards price changes over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 3.5% and 2.4% respectively. Import prices increased by 5%.

Price changes are reflected by changes in unit value indices, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, based on specific price data.

The terms of trade index, defined as the ratio of total export price index to import price index, decreased by 1.6% in 1995 as compared to 1994.

Comparing December 1995 with December 1994, the volume of re-exports increased by 15%, while that of domestic exports decreased by 1.4%. The volume of total exports and the volume of imports, on the other hand, both increased by 11%.

Over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports both increased by 1.7%. Import prices increased by 2.4%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of re-exports by end-use category are shown in Table 1.

Comparing December 1995 with December 1994, the volume of re-exports of all the end-use categories recorded increases of various magnitudes: capital goods (+32%), fuels (+24%), raw materials and semi-manufactures (+20%), consumer goods (+5.1%), and foodstuffs (+4.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases in the prices of re-exports were noted of most of the end-use categories: raw materials and semi-manufactures (+4%), fuels (+2.8%), foodstuffs (+1.4%), and consumer goods (+1.3%).

On the other hand, the re-export price of capital goods decreased marginally by 0.6%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of domestic exports by principal commodity group are shown in Table 2.

Comparing December 1995 with December 1994, commodity groups which recorded increases in the volume of domestic exports included radios of all kinds (+271%); and metal ores and scrap (+25%).

On the other hand, the volume of domestic exports of textile made-ups and related articles; and footwear decreased by 61% and 47% respectively.

Commodity groups which recorded increases in domestic export prices included metal manufactures (+7.9%); and metal ores and scrap (+7.8%).

On the other hand, the domestic export prices of electronic components and domestic electrical appliances decreased by 1.2% and 0.9% respectively.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of imports by end-use category are shown in Table 3.

The import volume of foodstuffs increased marginally by 0.5% in December 1995 compared with December 1994.

Significant increases in the import volume were noted of sugar; and wheat and flour. However, decreases in the import volume were noted of soya bean oil, peanut oil, vegetable oil and lard; and animals of the bovine species, live.

Over the same period of comparison, the import volume of consumer goods increased by 3%.

Significant increases in the import volume were noted of passenger motor cars; and footwear. However, decreases in the import volume were recorded in household-type electrical appliances; and alcoholic beverages.

The import volume of raw materials and semi-manufactures increased by 13% in December 1995 compared with December 1994.

Significant increases in the import volume were noted of iron and steel; and leather and dressed fur skins. However, the import volume of yarn of wool and mixtures; and silk fabrics declined.

Imports of fuels increased by 21% in volume in December 1995 compared with December 1994.

As regards capital goods, the import volume increased by 29% in December 1995 over December 1994.

Notable increases were recorded in the import volume of transport equipment; and construction machinery. The import volume of textile machinery however declined.

Comparing December 1995 with December 1994, the import prices of all the end-use categories increased: raw materials and semi-manufactures (+3.5%), consumer goods (+2.2%), foodstuffs (+2%), capital goods (+1%) and fuels (+0.4%).

Details of the above statistics are published in the December 1995 issue of the Hong Kong Trade Index Numbers.

The report will be on sale around March 12 at \$14 per copy at either the Government Publications Centre on the ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway; or the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department on the 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries regarding regular subscription to this report may be directed to the Publications (Sales) Office of the Information Services Department at 28th floor, Siu On Centre, 188 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, Tel 2598 8194; and enquiries on trade indices to the Census and Statistics Department, Tel 2582 4918.

Table 1 : Changes in re-exports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing DEC 1995 with DEC 1994			Comparing JAN-DEC 1995 with JAN-DEC 1994		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	4.7	1.4	4.3	14.2	1.9	13.3
Consumer goods	6.9	1.3	5.1	9.6	2.2	7.4
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	24.6	4.0	19.8	27.3	8.0	17.7
Fuels	27.4	2.8	23.7	53.8	0.4	52.6
Capital goods	28.8	-0.6	32.4	23.9	0.4	27.7
ALL COMMODITIES	16.0	1.7	14.5	17.3	3.5	14.3

Table 2 : Changes in domestic exports by principal commodity group

Commodity group	Comparing DEC 1995 with DEC 1994			Comparing JAN-DEC 1995 with JAN-DEC 1994		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Clothing	-6.9	1.5	-8.7	1.0	1.7	-0.2
Textile fabrics	-10.7	1.4	-14.3	-6.7	4.0	-11.4
Textile yarn and thread	4.8	3.2	2.1	-6.8	4.9	-11.6
Textile made-ups and related articles	-59.8	3.9	-61.1	-8.9	7.0	-15.0
Radios of all kinds	319.6	5.1	271.2	51.2	3.1	48.6
Electronic components	20.7	-1.2	21.1	19.9	4.1	17.1
Footwear	-48.7	-0.6	-47.3	-57.6	2.4	-59.9
Metal manufactures	26.7	7.9	16.4	4.3	4.0	*
Metal ores and scrap	23.7	7.8	24.5	28.9	6.7	22.6
Watches and clocks	-11.6	0.3	-11.4	3.1	1.6	0.9
Travel goods, handbags and similar articles	-12.4	0.7	-13.3	3.9	-0.9	5.8
Domestic electrical appliances	12.8	-0.9	10.4	-4.0	0.3	-4.4
ALL COMMODITIES	0.2	1.7	-1.4	4.4	2.4	1.9

* less than 0.05%

Table 3 : Changes in imports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing DEC 1995 with DEC 1994			Comparing JAN-DEC 1995 with JAN-DEC 1994		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	2.5	2.0	0.5	14.5	4.2	10.1
Consumer goods	5.3	2.2	3.0	9.4	3.5	5.9
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	17.2	3.5	13.3	25.8	7.9	16.6
Fuels	20.4	0.4	20.8	18.1	-1.4	20.2
Capital goods	31.4	1.0	28.6	30.2	3.5	26.1
ALL COMMODITIES	14.4	2.4	11.4	19.2	5.0	13.7

End

Nominations for Education Council invited

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Schools and educational bodies are reminded to send nominations to stand for election to the second term of the Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPCE) before next Wednesday (March 13).

All nominations should reach the Education Department by noon.

Education Officer (CPCE), Mr Lau Mun-lap, said today (Friday): "Each day school may nominate a regular full-time registered teacher including school head to stand for election to the Council.

"Teachers may also run for election as independent candidates if they have the support of 60 or more full-time teachers teaching in the same type of school.

"Eligible educational bodies have also been invited to make nominations. Other organisations intending to nominate a candidate or to vote in the election of the Council should first become registered with the Education Department," Mr Lau added.

To be eligible for registration, organisations must fulfil the following criteria:

- * They must have been registered with the Registry of Trade Unions, Societies Office or Companies Registry unless they are exempted from registration by the Companies Registry; and
- * At least 80 per cent of their members must be serving full-time teachers or registered teachers or teachers exempted from registration by the Director of Education.

The department appeals to teachers, schools and educational bodies to participate in the forthcoming election campaign and support the Council.

The Council was first set up in April 1994 following the recommendations of Education Commission Report No 5 and members were appointed to serve for two years.

The term of appointment of the serving Council members will expire on May 1 and new members will be appointed. The structure, terms of reference and method of formation of the Council all remain unchanged.

The Council has 28 members divided into three categories: organisation-nominated categories, teacher-nominated categories and the Director of Education nominated members.

Further enquires related to the election could be made on 2892 6302 or directed to Room 1025, 10th floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

End

Customs set up special lines to encourage crime reporting

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The Customs Investigation Branch of the Customs and Excise Department has set up two additional special telephone lines for the purpose of further encouraging the public to report and provide intelligence of any intellectual property violations and dangerous drug offences, respectively.

In addition to the department's existing hotline 25456182, the installation of the two new special lines, manned 24-hour a day, is an initiative taken by the Department to show its determination and commitment to the protection of intellectual property rights and the fight against dangerous drugs.

They are:

- * 2545 4546 - for direct report of any intellectual property right violations, such as copyright infringement, false labelling and counterfeiting crimes;
- * 2545 4542 - for dangerous drug offences and related information.

Like other crime reporting, all information provided will be kept in strict confidence. Information leading to seizures, arrests and successful prosecutions will be rewarded in accordance with the existing reward scale or system available.

End

Medical seminars on growing up

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Secondary school students, parents and teachers have been invited to attend three regional medical seminars on the common problems that children may face during growing up stage.

Over 1,000 students, parents and teachers will attend the talks.

The seminars, "I Have a Date with Doctors -- the Growing Hearts", are jointly organised by the Education Department and the Hong Kong Medical Association.

Medical practitioners will give short talks on two topics, self-destructive tendency and sex education, which are the common concerns of students, parents and teachers. They will also answer questions from the audience.

The first seminar will be held on Sunday (March 10) from 3 pm to 5 pm at the lecture hall, Hong Kong Science Museum, 2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East.

Another two seminars will be held at the theatre, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, 345 Queen's Road Central and the auditorium, North District Town Hall, 3 Lung Sum Avenue, Sheung Shui, respectively on the following Sundays (April 7 and April 28) from 3 pm to 5 pm.

End

Architectural design for school wins award

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Chan Nam Chong Memorial School, a school specially designed for moderately mentally handicapped children by the Architectural Services Department, has won the President's Prize in the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) Annual Awards 1995.

The project architect, Mr James Beveridge, received the award at the HKIA annual spring dinner and award presentation this (Friday) evening.

The school, which has ten classrooms covering over 2,000 square metres in floor area, is located in a densely populated area at 22 Wing Fong Road in Kwai Chung.

"To protect the school from noise and air pollution from the surrounding roads, we decided to use an inward looking courtyard design," Mr Beveridge said.

"The courtyard design allows all rooms and spaces to be easily observed facilitating supervision of the children. Balcony corridors around the courtyard with feature staircases at opposite corners also provides an easily understood circulation pattern for the children.

"The central court in particular acts as a focus for school activities and is a quiet green oasis in this otherwise hard urban environment.

"The structure is simple and small-scale with double pitched roofs over the first floors to provide a domestic appearance. Finishes are in standard 'low-tech', low budget materials with bright paint colours to create a welcoming, friendly atmosphere," he said.

The HKIA President's Prize is intended for a small size project not exceeding \$20 million in value.

End

Tenders invited for Pokfulam skills centre

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The Architectural Services Department is inviting tenders for the construction of a ten-storey skills centre building at Pokfulam Road in Hong Kong.

Works will also involve constructing a link bridge joining this new building to the adjacent Pokfulam Training Centre Complex, together with drainage and external works.

The skills centre, covering 9,800 square metres in total floor area, will provide vocational training and boarding facilities for the disabled.

Construction will commence in June this year and scheduled for completion in July next year.

When completed, the centre will have four workshops, four classrooms, four special rooms, an assembly hall cum gymnasium, 15 dormitories, a library, covered playground, car parking spaces and facilities for the disabled.

Details of the tender notice are contained in the Government Gazette published today (Friday).

Forms of tender and further particulars may be obtained from the Architectural Services Department, 34th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, 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, March 29.

Late tenders will not be accepted.

End

Proposed road works for Tseung Kwan O

The Government is proposing works to upgrade the existing haul road linking Lam Tin in East Kowloon with Tseung Kwan O.

The upgrading forms part of the Tseung Kwan O development works and provides vehicular access for a private residential development in the district.

Proposed works will involve upgrading of the existing haul road to form an access road with footpath linking Lam Tin and Tseung Kwan O.

It will also involve construction of a footbridge and footpath together with associated drainage and slope works.

During the construction period, necessary access will be maintained to minimise inconvenience to the public.

A notice concerning the proposed works is published in the Government Gazette today (Friday).

Plan and scheme showing the proposed works can be seen at the Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Central and Western District Office, on the ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Hong Kong; Sai Kung District Lands Office, third floor, Sai Kung Government Offices Building, 34 Chun Man Street, Sai Kung, New Territories and at Kwun Tong District Office, Kwun Tong District Branch Office Building, Tung Yan Street, ground floor, Kowloon.

Any person who wishes to object to the proposal is required to submit a written objection to the Secretary for Transport, Central Government Offices, East Wing, 2nd floor, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong not later than May 7.

End

Tenders for mainlaying works in Central Kowloon

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The Water Supplies Department is inviting tenders for mainlaying works to improve the salt water flushing system in Central Kowloon.

Works will involve the laying of 4.5 kilometres of salt water mains with diameters ranging from 450 to 900 millimetres from Kowloon City to Lok Fu Salt Water Service Reservoir and Diamond Hill Salt Water Service Reservoir.

Construction work will commence in June and scheduled for completion in 21 months.

Details of the tender invitation are contained in the Government Gazette published today (Friday).

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

Tenders must be clearly marked and addressed to the Chairman of the Central Tender Board and placed in the Government Secretariat Tender Box at the lower ground floor lift lobby, Central Government Offices (East Wing), Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong, before noon on Friday, April 12.

Late tenders will not be accepted.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,314	0930	+489
Closing balance in the account	1,922	1000	+489
Change attributable to :		1100	+489
Money market activity	+434	1200	+493
LAF today	-826	1500	+493
		1600	+434

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.5 *-0.1* 08.03.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.73	2 years	2802	5.16	99.21	5.67
1 month	4.94	3 years	3901	5.57	99.27	5.93
3 months	5.08	5 years	5012	6.38	100.25	6.42
6 months	5.18	7 years	7302	6.02	96.23	6.82
12 months	5.28	5 years	M502	7.30	102.74	6.71

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$26,454 million

Closed March 8, 1996

End