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Govt committed to intellectual property protection

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Hong Kong is fully committed to the protection of intellectual property in all its forms for the encouragement of its growing international trade in services as well as for the security of its position as a trusted trading partner.

Moreover, this is also because of the need to preserve its strong manufacturing base, and as a major exporter of creative works, Hong Kong has substantial intellectual property assets of its own to protect.

Addressing a luncheon meeting today (Thursday), the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said that in this pursuit the Government had a key role to play.

He said already Hong Kong was well equipped to protect intellectual property now, and after 1997 would continue to be equipped to the highest international standards.

The Governor noted that the present legal regime for intellectual property protection in Hong Kong was excellent.

"It is comparable with the standards in other developed economies and in some areas - for example, the protection of integrated circuit layouts - we are in advance of many countries," Mr Patten said.

He said much work was now under way to review intellectual property laws in the run-up to 1997 with new laws to protect patents, copyright and designs to be presented to the Legislative Council in the coming twelve months, together with a bill to modernise the trademarks law.

On another positive aspect, Mr Patten noted that the Chinese and British Governments had agreed on the basis for modernising and localising intellectual property laws in the territory as well as to the continued application of major international intellectual property treaties.

Mr Patten said that the Government was committed to backing up good intellectual property laws with effective enforcement despite the fact that enforcement of intellectual property laws throughout Asia was problematic with the extraordinarily rapid spread of technology that allows huge amounts of copyright material to be reproduced easily and illegally.

The Governor said the Government would try every effort to address these problems in order to ensure that HK would draw the full benefits that free trade and legally supported markets had to offer.

On the enforcement aspect, Mr Patten noted that the Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau of Customs and Excise Department had been trying every effort to combat piracy with the setting up of a dedicated copyright piracy hotline, enhancement of cooperation with counterparts in China, and linkage with the Police to gather intelligence and hard evidence.

"They have been doing a terrific job. Special operations in the first two weeks of this month have netted over 85,000 CD-ROMs and video discs with a value of \$5.88 million, while regular action in the last two months has pulled in over 37,000 more such articles valued at over \$2.2 million," the Governor added.

Mr Patten also noted that new provisions aimed at combating cross-border piracy were being discussed by LegCo to strengthen the enforcement capability.

"For Customs, the new provisions will make it an offence for anyone to procure, aid or abet any person, in Hong Kong or elsewhere, to manufacture outside Hong Kong or import into Hong Kong pirated copyright works," he said.

Whilst noting that the Government clearly had a key role to play, Mr Patten said increased public awareness was also an important means of protecting intellectual property and that a copyright owner had the responsibility to protect his own work.

Cooperation of copyright owners, the only one who can prove that the seized article has infringed copyright, was needed in combating piracy, he said.

End

Mis-interpreted news reports on JLG talk

There has been mis-interpreted news reports on the conclusion of the seventh meeting of the JLG Budget Expert Group.

The following transcript of the remarks made by the Secretary for the Treasury, Mr K C Kwong, at the media session after the meeting will clarify the position.

Transcript of the remarks in English made by Mr K C Kwong today (Thursday):

Question: Mr Kwong, can you give me an English brief?

Mr Kwong: Yes. We have two pragmatic and useful days of meetings and the focus is on the mode of co-operation in the preparation of the 97/98 budget. On the basis of the co-operation and understanding that we have built up in the past 12 months, we have made further progress. In particular, we have agreed on generally an outline timetable for the preparation of the 97/98 budget. That timetable follows broadly the normal timetable in previous years, but of course we have made allowance for discussions of all major issues in the budget expert group. On the discussion of the major issues, it is our aim that we should reach rapid consensus on them as far as possible so that we can continue with the budgetary process on a step by step basis.

Question: Is there an agreement on the mode of co-operation between China and Hong Kong in formulating the budget and that Mr Chen has said China has to take a leading role in formulating the budget. Do you say the British side has said yes to this?

Mr Kwong: We have made some progress in the discussion on the mode of co-operation in preparation of the 97/98 budget. Specific areas where progress has been made, I have already outlined. But I think the most important thing before us is to strengthen co-operation in order to reach consensus on 97/98 through budget so that we can have a smooth transition, and the important thing which Mr Chen has also said, is that, the detailed preparation of 97/98 budget is something which will have to be undertaken by Hong Kong Government departments.

Question: Mr Kwong, does it mean that China is not going to take a leading role in formulating the budget?

Mr Kwong: I think it is really not a question which is important to us. The important question is how we can co-operate to prepare a budget which is a through budget for 97/98 and which will help a smooth transition and we have made it very clear that in the expert group under the Joint Liaison Group, we are equal partners in this co-operation.

End

Family and community support for the elderly more important

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The Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, today (Thursday) refuted suggestions that the Government had refrained from increasing the rate for the single elderly in the recent Review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme because of cost considerations.

"I shall state categorically that that is simply not true," she said.

"The Review made recommendations which were then costed. There was no question of a sum being made available and the recommendations being tailored to meet it."

Addressing the Rotary Club of Kingspark, Mrs Fok explained that to devise a methodology for checking the adequacy of the standard rates, the Government took the data from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) and compared the CSSA standard rates with what people actually spend.

"We looked at the spending levels of people in the lowest five per cent to the lowest 20 per cent income groups. We also constructed basic needs budgets for each category of CSSA recipient - a time-consuming detailed exercise completely separate from the HES approach.

"The findings of the two approaches corroborated each other. Both told us the same thing : the adult rates were very inadequate, the elderly in family rate was a little low, as was that for the 50 per cent disabled adult category.

"In all other cases, the standard rates were higher than the spending of persons in the lowest 20 per cent income group. In some cases, such as for the single elderly, the standard rate was significantly higher than the spending of the entire lowest 20 per cent income group. As a result of these findings, we proposed major increases for the adult standard rates," she explained.

However, Mrs Fok told the Rotarians that the Review had sought to address the social security needs of the elderly in many other ways.

For example, the Government proposed to introduce a new option for elderly CSSA recipients to retire to Guangdong while continuing to receive their standard and long term supplement payments which amount to \$1,935 per month and \$1,435 per year respectively as from April.

In addition, she noted, elderly persons would be granted \$320 per year to encourage them to participate more fully in the life of the community, thus enjoy the benefits this brings in terms of support by neighbours and friends. They would also be given an annual \$200 "lai see" at Chinese New Year.

Mrs Fok stressed that it was inappropriate to test CSSA rates for the elderly by comparing them with the level of financial support envisaged in retirement protection schemes such as the original Old Age Pension Scheme or the Mandatory Provident Fund.

She said: "CSSA payments for the elderly, as for all other groups, are set at a level to meet their basic needs.

"Payments from a pension or retirement protection scheme seek to do more than this - they are normally the accrued benefits from savings which seek to provide financial security and support a certain lifestyle for an elderly person. Because such payments are higher, these schemes are normally contributory because it is recognised that they are too costly to fund exclusively from Government revenues," she added.

Apart from financial assistance, the Secretary believed that the provision of appropriate services and community support for the elderly was of much greater importance.

In this respect, the Government will be spending \$3.7 billion on health and welfare services for the elderly in 1996/97 which is a 15 per cent increase over this year.

Services to be provided include in-patient care, elderly health clinics, outreaching geriatric and psycho-geriatric teams, a wide range of residential care facilities, home help services, day care services and social centres.

The Government will also promote social networking to provide support to the single elderly living alone.

The Director of Social Welfare is also launching two inter-related initiatives to address this issue. The first involves a two-year pilot project costing over \$17 million in which the 24 existing multi-service centres for the elderly and the six new ones due to open this year will be given extra resources to organise new ways of reaching out to elderly people at risk.

The second initiative is for District Social Welfare Officers to create District-based Committees involving representatives of non-governmental organisations, the Housing Department and the Home Affairs Department to foster new social networking.

However, Mrs Fok pointed out that in a caring society, the burden of care could not just lie with the Government. "The Government plays an important role in meeting the needs of the vulnerable but it can succeed only if the community as a whole also actively participates," she said.

"It is also important that we continue to reinforce the normal family and community responsibilities which have traditionally been so strong in our society.

"We are now working much harder to encourage more people to take the same attitude so that, in particular for the growing number of elderly persons, they can expect a more fulfilling future by participating in and having the support of the community around them," Mrs Fok said.

End

Study on telecommunications market to be examined

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The Government today (Thursday) welcomed the publication of the Consumer Council's report entitled "Achieving Competition in the Liberalised Telecommunications Market".

A government spokesman said: "This is a complex subject and we shall examine very carefully the recommendations in the report. A government response will be finalised in about six months' time.

"We welcome comments on the report from the general public as well as interested parties.

"We shall approach the recommendations with an open mind taking into account these comments."

Members of the public may send their views on the report in writing to the Economic Services Branch, Hong Kong Government at second floor, Main Wing, Central Government Offices, Central, before May 15.

End

HK delegation to leave for APEC meeting

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The Secretary for the Treasury, Mr K C Kwong, will lead a Hong Kong delegation to take part in the third Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Finance Ministers Meeting in Japan.

Ministers of the 18 APEC member economies will attend the conference which will be held at the Kyoto International Conference Hall on March 16 and 17.

Major issues to be discussed include recent marcoeconomic developments in APEC member economies, financial and capital market development, the effects of exchange rate movements on trade and investment and mobilisation of resources for financing infrastructure development.

End

Warning against textiles-related malpractices

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The Trade Department today (Thursday) reminded traders that involvement in malpractices relating to the importation, exportation, re-exportation and transshipment of textiles products is an offence in law and is liable upon conviction to heavy fines and imprisonment..

The department further warned that such malpractices is also liable to stringent administrative action by the department which may result in permanent surrender of the full amount of the quota involved in the malpractice and cancellation of the textiles control registration of the offender.

A department spokesman said: "The department takes a serious view of such malpractices and legal and administrative actions would be taken against the offender to uphold the law and to safeguard the integrity of the Hong Kong's textiles export control system."

The spokesman said a company/registered business found committing an offence under the Import and Export Ordinance is liable upon conviction to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

"The Trade Descriptions Ordinance also provides for a fine of \$500,000 and five years' imprisonment for offences relating to the false labelling of textiles products," the spokesman said, adding that depending on the circumstances of the malpractice in question, the traders concerned may be prosecuted for other offences under the laws of Hong Kong.

In addition to prosecution action, the spokesman said, it is the department's policy to take administrative action against traders in cases of malpractice relating to the importation, exportation, re-exportation and transshipment of textiles products to uphold Hong Kong's international reputation amongst her trading partners.

"Traders infringing the textiles origin rules and/or in breach of any of the provisions of the textiles export control system may be subject to administrative action irrespective of whether they have been prosecuted, whether they are engaged in the export of restrained textiles or are parties to the export licence(s), and if this is the case, whether they are quota suppliers for the shipments concerned," he said.

"Administrative action may also been taken against traders involved in transshipment fraud or other malpractices, irrespective of whether the goods have been shipped, whether Hong Kong quotas have been misused, and whether import/export/re-export licences have been applied for or cancelled.

"In the event that there is more than one party involved, the department may take administrative action against one or more of the parties involved. If, for any reason, one of the parties ceases to be available for administrative actions, then the remaining party or parties will be held wholly responsible for the administrative action.

"Such administrative actions may include permanent surrender of the full amount of quota involved in the malpractice."

The administrative actions may involve, but shall not necessarily be confined to, any or all of the following :

- * suspension or cancellation of the textiles control registration of the company/registered business concerned and retrieval of all the quotas held by that company/registered business;
- * permanent forfeiture or surrender of quota;
- * withdrawal of the balance of quota remaining unlicensed at that time;

- * disqualification from eligibility for receipt of future allocations of quota; discount of the shipment performance gained by the licence(s) for the purpose of quota allocation;
- * debarment from all facilities of the textiles export control system;
- * debarment from all export licensing, quota transfer and certification facilities;
- * debarment from participation in textiles export control schemes; refusal to issue a licence;
- * invalidation/cancellation of a licence; suspension of a licence,
- * and suspension and revocation of any exemption and/or registration granted under the Textiles Trader Registration Scheme.

The spokesman said administrative action is normally taken as soon as practicable.

"However, circumstances are such that action may be instituted some time after the malpractice has occurred. Traders should take note that notwithstanding the allocation of quota in a subsequent year on the basis of the shipment performance of particular consignments, in cases where malpractices has been uncovered, the department may take administrative action against the parties concerned, including the quota supplier, where it deems appropriate," he said.

Traders were further reminded that in respect of the quotas involved in fraud or improperly utilised, they were not eligible for quota allocation.

"As such, even though the quota suppliers and/or the transferors of temporary quota concerned were not implicated in the fraud, their future allocation may be adversely affected in case previous shipment performance already credited is discounted as a result of subsequent administrative action," the spokesman added.

Further information about actions against textiles-related malpractices can be obtained from the department's Systems and Common Services Branch by telephoning 2398 5505.

End

Hong Kong's external trade statistics for January

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The Census and Statistics Department today (Thursday) released detailed statistics on external trade with breakdown by country/territory and commodity for January 1996.

The value of re-exports increased by 22% over a year earlier to \$101.2 billion in January 1996.

Comparing January 1996 with January 1995, the value of re-exports to most of the main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes: China (+43%), Japan (+35%), Taiwan (+21%), France (+19%), Singapore (+19%), the United Kingdom (+17%), the Netherlands (+14%), Germany (+14%) and South Korea (+11%).

However, the value of re-exports to the United States decreased by 2.8%.

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

As the external trade figures for a single month at the beginning of each year tend to be fluctuating due to effects of the Lunar New Year holidays, it is more meaningful to make comparisons over a longer period.

Comparing the three months ending January 1996 with the three months ending January 1995, the value of re-exports to most main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes : Japan (+30%), China (+25%), France (+21%), the Netherlands (+20%), the United Kingdom (+19%), South Korea (+16%), Singapore (+16%), Taiwan (+15%) and Germany (+12%).

However, the value of re-exports to the United States decreased marginally by 0.9%.

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

Comparing the three months ending January 1996 with the three months ending January 1995, increases of various magnitudes were recorded in the value of re-exports of all principal commodity divisions. More notable increases were registered for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$5.8 billion or 24%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$5.1 billion or 44%); plastics in primary forms (by \$2.5 billion or 44%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$2.3 billion or 7.4%); textiles (by \$2.1 billion or 9.9%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$2 billion or 16%); and footwear (by \$1.9 billion or 13%).

The value of domestic exports in January 1996, at \$19 billion, increased by 4.5% over a year earlier.

Comparing January 1996 with January 1995, increases were recorded in the value of domestic exports to Taiwan (+32%), China (+23%), the United Kingdom (+4.3%) and France (+1.2%).

However, the value of domestic exports to Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, Canada and the United States decreased by 8.5%, 4.4%, 4.3%, 4.3%, 2.9% and 2.8% respectively.

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

Comparing the three months ending January 1996 with the three months ending January 1995, decreases were recorded in the value of domestic exports to Canada (-8.4%), Germany (-7.7%), the United States (-6.8%), Singapore (-6.7%), France (-6.6%), the Netherlands (-5.9%), Japan (-4.7%) and the United Kingdom (-0.5%).

However, the value of domestic exports to Taiwan and China increased by 27% and 6.6% respectively.

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

Comparing the three months ending January 1996 with the three months ending January 1995, decreases in the value of domestic exports were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$1.3 billion or 25%); clothing (by \$916 million or 4.7%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$426 million or 8.6%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$420 million or 15%); and textiles (by \$177 million or 4.8%).

Over the same period, increases in the value of domestic exports were recorded for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$2.1 billion or 32%); and manufactures of metals (by \$173 million or 16%).

The value of imports increased by 24% over a year earlier to \$130.3 billion in January 1996.

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

Comparing January 1996 with January 1995, the value of imports from all main suppliers showed increases of various magnitudes: Italy (+69%), Malaysia (+57%), Germany (+44%), the United States (+35%), Taiwan (+33%), the United Kingdom (+28%), South Korea (+25%), Singapore (+20%), Japan (+19%) and China (+15%).

Comparing the three months ending January 1996 with the three months ending January 1995, the value of imports from all main suppliers showed increases of various magnitudes: Malaysia (+43%), Italy (+40%), the United States (+28%), Singapore (+17%), South Korea (+16%), Taiwan (+15%), Germany (+9.7%), China (+9.3%), the United Kingdom (+8.4%) and Japan (+7.6%).

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

Comparing the three months ending January 1996 with the three months ending January 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports of most principal commodity divisions. More notable increases were registered for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$8 billion or 20%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$5.1 billion or 36%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$3.7 billion or 11%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$2.1 billion or 9.5%); general industrial machinery and equipment, and machine parts (by \$1.9 billion or 23%); and textiles (by \$1.8 billion or 6.1%).

Over the same period, a decrease in the value of imports was recorded for road vehicles (by \$357 million or 3.1%).

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

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

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

The January 1996 issue of the "Hong Kong External Trade" with detailed analyses on the performance of Hong Kong's external trade in January 1996 will be on sale at \$129 per copy around March 23.

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

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

TABLE 1 : RE-EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	JAN 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN 96 OVER JAN 95 (% CHANGE)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 (HKD Mn.)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 OVER NOV 94 TO JAN 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	37,271	+ 43.4	105,226	+ 25.2
UNITED STATES	17,626	- 2.8	51,603	- 0.9
JAPAN	6,903	+ 34.7	20,034	+ 30.0
GERMANY	4,444	+ 14.2	12,912	+ 11.7
UNITED KINGDOM	2,804	+ 16.9	8,631	+ 19.2
TAIWAN	2,544	+ 20.7	7,350	+ 15.1
SINGAPORE	2,323	+ 18.8	6,902	+ 16.0
FRANCE	1,652	+ 18.9	4,708	+ 21.2
NETHERLANDS	1,643	+ 14.3	4,716	+ 19.8
SOUTH KOREA	1,603	+ 10.8	4,945	+ 16.3

TABLE 2 : RE-EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	JAN 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN 96 OVER JAN 95 (% CHANGE)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 (HKD Mn.)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 OVER NOV 94 TO JAN 95 (% CHANGE)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	10,895	+ 4.9	33,018	+ 7.4
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	10,455	+ 31.8	30,431	+ 23.6
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	9,566	- 2.6	29,102	+ 0.2
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	8,892	+ 14.4	23,694	+ 5.4
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	8,763	+ 33.5	23,577	+ 9.9
FOOTWEAR	6,199	+ 12.8	16,040	+ 13.1
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	5,729	+ 52.9	16,879	+ 43.8
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	4,641	+ 23.9	14,283	+ 16.2
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	3,131	- 0.7	8,527	+ 4.5
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	2,861	+ 50.3	8,319	+ 43.7

TABLE 3 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	JAN 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN 96 OVER JAN 95 (% CHANGE)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 (HKD Mn.)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 OVER NOV 94 TO JAN 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	5,456	+ 22.9	15,872	+ 6.6
UNITED STATES	4,433	- 2.8	14,585	- 6.8
GERMANY	1,071	- 4.4	3,421	- 7.7
SINGAPORE	1,069	- 4.3	3,057	- 6.7
JAPAN	960	- 8.5	2,951	- 4.7
UNITED KINGDOM	889	+ 4.3	2,900	- 0.5
TAIWAN	704	+ 32.1	2,047	+ 27.0
NETHERLANDS	461	- 4.3	1,404	- 5.9
CANADA	367	- 2.9	1,056	- 8.4
FRANCE	288	+ 1.2	855	- 6.6

TABLE 4 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	JAN 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN 96 OVER JAN 95 (% CHANGE)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 (HKD Mn.)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 OVER NOV 94 TO JAN 95 (% CHANGE)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	5,858	+ 2.9	18,656	- 4.7
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	2,841	+ 32.2	8,689	+ 32.1
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY PRINTED MATTER)	1,503	- 1.2	4,729	- 0.2
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	1,469	- 2.0	4,521	- 8.6
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,251	+ 14.8	3,498	- 4.8
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	1,232	- 28.8	3,942	- 24.8
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	830	- 7.0	2,364	- 15.1
MANUFACTURES OF METALS	394	+ 19.6	1,222	+ 16.5
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	327	- 2.8	1,039	+ 0.1
MACHINERY SPECIALIZED FOR PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES	304	+ 37.9	779	+ 8.6

TABLE 5 : IMPORTS FROM TEN MAIN SUPPLIERS

SUPPLIER	JAN 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN 96 OVER JAN 95 (% CHANGE)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 (HKD Mn.)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 OVER NOV 94 TO JAN 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	48,030	+ 15.0	138,490	+ 9.3
JAPAN	16,618	+ 19.5	52,323	+ 7.6
TAIWAN	11,372	+ 33.1	33,310	+ 15.4
UNITED STATES	10,031	+ 34.7	30,092	+ 28.1
SINGAPORE	7,078	+ 19.6	20,563	+ 17.2
SOUTH KOREA	5,998	+ 25.3	17,820	+ 16.4
GERMANY	3,141	+ 43.8	8,373	+ 9.7
MALAYSIA	2,917	+ 56.8	8,140	+ 42.9
UNITED KINGDOM	2,719	+ 28.4	8,021	+ 8.4
ITALY	2,708	+ 69.4	7,970	+ 40.1

TABLE 6 : IMPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	JAN 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN 96 OVER JAN 95 (% CHANGE)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 (HKD Mn.)	NOV 95 TO JAN 96 OVER NOV 94 TO JAN 95 (% CHANGE)
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	16,501	+ 35.2	47,825	+ 20.2
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	12,403	+ 11.5	36,769	+ 11.2
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	10,977	+ 21.4	31,869	+ 6.1
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	8,844	+ 17.8	25,310	+ 6.3
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	8,138	+ 16.6	24,803	+ 9.5
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	6,422	+ 54.5	19,270	+ 36.0
FOOTWEAR	5,356	+ 14.2	14,205	+ 11.5
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,268	+ 9.3	15,874	+ 0.2
ROAD VEHICLES	3,897	+ 22.2	11,350	- 3.1
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	3,655	+ 43.4	10,224	+ 23.3

End

Weather of February

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February 1996 was characterised by one of the longest cold spells recorded in Hong Kong. Daily minimum temperatures of below 10 degrees were recorded for seven consecutive days from 18 to 24 February, the sixth longest for February. Some media reports associated this cold spell to be directly or indirectly related to the deaths of some elderly people.

As the winter monsoon dominated the major part of the month, it was colder than normal. The daily mean temperature of 6.9 degrees on 21 February was the sixth lowest for the month. In addition, the monthly mean sea-level pressure of 1 020.7 hectopascals was the tenth highest for February. Although the weather in the latter half of the month was gloomy, the monthly total rainfall amounted to only 27.2 millimetres, 43 per cent below the normal figure.

Fine and dry weather brought by the northeast monsoon prevailed during the first four days of the month. It turned cloudy on 5 February and winds strengthened from the east that night. There were periods of rain the next day and winds weakened later on 7 February.

A northerly surge arrived on 9 February bringing drier air and fine weather to the territory. A hill fire at Pat Sin Range the next day took the lives of two teachers and three students and injured several others.

The weather turned cloudy again on 12 February. Winds became light and was subsequently replaced by a southerly airstream the next day. The warm airstream brought the temperature up to 26.4 degrees, the highest for the month, on 15 February. Winds turned easterly the next day as periods of rain set in and lasted for almost two weeks.

Meanwhile, an intense anticyclone over China advanced south and a cold front crossed the south China coast on the night of 17 February. As a result of this intense northerly surge, temperatures dropped nearly eight degrees in seven hours that night. It marked the beginning of a prolonged cold spell of seven consecutive days with daily minimum temperatures falling below 10 degrees. The lowest temperature of the month, 5.8 degrees, was recorded on the morning of 21 February. Temperatures fell below the freezing point at Tate's Cairn on 20 February and frost was observed at Tai Mo Shan on the mornings of 20 and 21 February.

The weather remained gloomy for almost the rest of the month until rain stopped on 28 February and it became brighter. As winds became light, haze was reported on 29 February and visibility fell to 1 000 metres at Waglan Island in the evening.

There was only one tropical cyclone over the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in the month of February. Details of the issuance/hoisting and cancellation/lowering of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1.1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal of February are tabulated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Warnings and signals in February 1996

Warnings / Signals	Effective date and time
Strong Monsoon Signals	5 Feb 2300 - 7 Feb 1020 17 Feb 2300 - 18 Feb 1135 19 Feb 0015 - 19 Feb 0600
Fire Danger Warnings	
Yellow	31 Jan 0600 - 1 Feb 0600
Red	1 Feb 0600 - 5 Feb 0600
Yellow	5 Feb 0600 - 6 Feb 0600
Red	6 Feb 0600 - 6 Feb 1345
Yellow	9 Feb 0600 - 9 Feb 1810
Red	9 Feb 1810 - 12 Feb 0600
Gas Heater Alerts	1 Feb 1630 - 2 Feb 1120 2 Feb 1630 - 3 Feb 0700 17 Feb 1630 - 28 Feb 1620

Table 1.2 Figures and Departures from Normal - February 1996

Total Bright Sunshine	80.0 hours; 17.7 hours below normal
Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation	8.60 MJ/SQM; 2.09 MJ/SQM below normal
Total Rainfall	27.2 mm ; 20.8 mm below normal
Mean Cloud Amount	73 % ; normal
Mean Relative Humidity	74 % ; 4 % below normal
Mean Daily Maximum Temperature	17.1 Degree Celsius; 1.5 Degree Celsius below normal
Mean Air Temperature	14.9 Degree Celsius; 1.0 Degree Celsius below normal
Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	12.9 Degree Celsius; 1.0 Degree Celsius below normal
Mean Dew Point	10.1 Degree Celsius; 1.7 Degree Celsius below normal
Total Evaporation	51.6 mm ; 27.4 mm below normal

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

End

35 nominated for conduct council election

* * * * *

The Education Department has received a total of 35 nominations in the second election to the Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPCE).

They comprise 18 nominations for organisation-nominated seats and 17 for teacher-nominated seats. The candidates will compete for 20 elected seats in the two categories on the council.

Besides the 20 seats, there are five elected seats in the two categories which will be left vacant during the coming term because no nominations have been received.

The Director of Education will appoint the Assistant Director of Education (Services), Mr David Pun, and two lay members to the council, making a total of 23 members in the coming term.

Voting will take place on April 24, 1996.

All full-time registered teachers, permitted teachers and Government school teachers are eligible to vote. Details about election procedures will be sent to schools and organisations shortly.

End

Regiment's 'good sport' pull together for charity

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Over 60 British, Chinese and Gurkha soldiers from Hong Kong's newest and shortest-lived regiment, the Hong Kong Logistic Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, will be gritting their teeth and pulling more than a few faces tomorrow (Friday) in their attempt to raise money for charity.

As part of a strenuous Inter-Squadron 24-hour Sportathon, four 15-man teams will try to pull a four-tonne truck 80 metres uphill at their base at Osborn Barracks, Kowloon Tong, in aid of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and the Kely Support Group, a local charity that offers support to Hong Kong's youngsters.

The truck-pull is only one of 12 sporting activities which organiser Warrant Officer (WO1) Sandy McCauley has arranged to put the men through their paces.

"It's going to be a busy 24 hours," said WO1 McCauley, "with the teams taking part in rugby, football, basketball and hockey games. However, we'll sort out the men from the boys in the early hours of the morning when they will be expected to work out on the rowing machines, run a relay race and finish off with tug-of-war.

"They'll be very tired at the end of the event," he added, "but it will be worth it if we can raise plenty of money for the two charities."

The Hong Kong Logistic Support Regiment is known as the 1,000-Day Regiment because of its short lifespan and it is unusual in that it is made up of British, Chinese and Gurkha personnel.

It was formed in April 1994 as part of the drawdown of British Forces in the territory and the need to concentrate and manage the remaining logistic expertise.

The regiment employs over 500 military and civilian personnel and has its headquarters at Osborn Barracks, Kowloon Tong.

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	1,903	0930	+898
Closing balance in the account	1,859	1000	+898
Change attributable to :		1100	+898
Money market activity	+896	1200	+896
LAF today	-940	1500	+896
		1600	+896

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.7 *+0.0* 14.3.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.82	2 years	2802	5.16	98.31	6.20
1 month	5.13	3 years	3901	5.57	97.98	6.45
3 months	5.35	5 years	5012	6.38	98.31	6.91
6 months	5.47	7 years	7302	6.02	93.84	7.29
12 months	5.68	5 years	M502	7.30	100.80	7.22

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$17,306 million

Closed March 14, 1996

End