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Government's position on garrison and the law

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The Government would expect the future legal framework governing the garrison to be one which is familiar to the people of Hong Kong to ensure its acceptability, a spokesman for the Security Branch said today (Monday).

Speaking after branch officials attended a meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Security on the Government's position on garrison and the law after 1997, he said "Greater clarity is needed in determining whether local courts or courts outside HKSAR should have jurisdiction."

"At present, criminal cases to be tried in military courts are confined to very limited circumstances only," he said.

"Only when the alleged offence is against another member of the garrison, or is against the property of the UK Government or other garrison members, or arises out of and in the course of his duty, will the case be dealt with in military courts."

Even under such circumstances, the normal practice now is to hand over a case to Hong Kong courts if an offence resulted in a serious incident or injury to a civilian, or if there is a civilian accomplice.

"A soldier may commit an offence whilst he is on duty but such an offence may not have arisen out of and in the course of his duty," the spokesman explained.

"Drink driving whilst a soldier is on duty is a classic example. At present, such cases involving criminal charges will be dealt with by Hong Kong courts.

"We believe this present arrangements in respect of criminal jurisdiction should continue to apply in respect of the future garrison law."

On civil cases, the spokesman said the Government's view was that any civil cases involving the future garrison should be dealt with in Hong Kong courts.

He pointed out that all members of the British Forces were now subject to the civil jurisdiction of Hong Kong courts irrespective of whether they were acting in the course of their duties.

"One example is a traffic accident involving a British soldier carrying out an urgent messengerial duty. The civilian whose vehicle has been knocked down during the accident can sue the British soldier locally," he said.

The British garrison as the employer is vicariously liable for torts committed by military personnel in the course of their employment.

As regards claim against the British garrison as a whole, this may be pursued through the UK civilian courts if it cannot be settled through administrative means. The law of tort and contract in the UK is of course similar to that in Hong Kong, both based on the common law.

"After 1997, where a member of the PLA commits a tortious act which arises out of and in the course of duty, it is important that he and the garrison collectively should both be subject to the jurisdiction of Hong Kong courts, namely, the civil cases can be adjudicated in accordance with the common law principles as at present," he said.

End

Transcript of FS's media session

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Following is the transcript (English) of the media session by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, at the North District Hospital Topping Out Ceremony this (Monday) afternoon:

Question: Mr Tsang, can you comment on the latest Sino-US trade war and its possible impact on Hong Kong?

FS: Well, China and the USA are respectively Hong Kong's largest trading partners, so any trade dispute between the two major partners are not likely to bring any benefits to Hong Kong. We are obviously concerned but looking at the products under dispute, the direct trade impact is not likely to be serious. But my colleagues are examining the implications involved. I just hope that this dispute will be resolved satisfactorily without any further escalation.

End

Electricity generating capacity under review

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The Government said today (Monday) that it had invited Hongkong Electric to do detailed site search and environmental impact assessment studies for new generating facilities likely to be needed in 2003.

The Government also said that it had urged China Light and Power to defer the last four units of its Black Point Power Station by 5 years so as to reduce its reserve margin.

The Secretary for Economic Services, Mr Stephen Ip, announced these decisions at a meeting of the Legislative Council's Panel on Economic Services today. He said that in reaching these decisions, Government had taken into account the interests of the consumer and the community.

Mr Ip said that a review by the Government's consultants of demand for electricity in Hongkong Electric's supply area up to 2005 had shown that the company would need additional generating capacity by 2003 if reliable supplies were to be maintained.

He said that the Executive Council had agreed last week that Hongkong Electric should continue with the preparatory work for new generating capacity, but without commitment on the part of the Government. The company had been informed.

Mr Ip stressed that the decision to invite the company to do further site and environmental studies did not mean that the Government had approved the company's proposal to build a new power station on Po Toi Island or anywhere else.

He said that it was necessary to proceed with the further studies now so that the Government is in possession of all of the necessary data when the time comes to make a final decision. He added that the studies will assume that there are two fuel options - coal and natural gas - and that Hongkong Electric will also make an intensive search for a supplier of natural gas.

Mr Ip went on to say that a review by the Government's consultants of demand for electricity in China Light and Power's supply area up to 2005 had shown that the company would have an excess of generating capacity up to that date.

He said that the review had shown that it would be justifiable to ask the company to address this problem by deferring the last four 312 megawatt units due to be installed at Black Point Power Station for 5 years. (The units are currently due to be installed in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001.). The Executive Council had agreed last week that the company should be urged to submit such a proposal to the Government within three months (by early February 1997). He said that the company had been informed.

Mr Ip said that there had been much public interest in the possibility of the two power companies co-operating over power supply, particularly as to whether China Light and Power's excess capacity could supply consumers on Hong Kong Island.

He said that this option was not so straightforward. The consultants had advised that an additional transmission line (interconnector) between the two companies, costing about $470 million, would be required, but it would only be needed for 3 years. This option was therefore less economical than others and hence not in the best interests of consumers. Furthermore, it would use only one of the four CLP units requiring deferral.

He added that the Government would nonetheless continue to study the feasibility of power transfer between China Light and Power and Hongkong Electric for possible application in the future.

End

Major reduction in ACP budget

* * * * *

The Government today (Monday) announced that the Airport Core Programme (ACP) budget has been reduced by $1,805 million principally as a result of significant savings on three of the seven government core projects.

The Director of the New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office (NAPCO), Mr Billy Lam, said that as a result of rigorous control over costs and a small reduction in scope of the ACP, the Government had achieved considerable savings from the Lantau Link, Route 3 and the West Kowloon Reclamation projects.

The savings were identified following a comprehensive review of the ACP by the Government.

Speaking at a special briefing of the Airport Consultative Committee, he told members that as a result of these savings the overall cost estimate for the 10 projects in the Airport Core Programme had been reduced from $158,169 million to $156,364 million.

This is the second time that the ACP budget has been reduced. In January 1994 the ACP budget was cut from $163,730 million to $158,169 million mainly because of savings arising from government contracts being awarded below the original estimates.

"Many major infrastructure projects overseas have been hit by massive cost over-runs. It is therefore a major achievement on one of the world's largest infrastructure projects that we have been able to reduce costs and to have done it twice.

"The savings were achieved as a result of the strenuous efforts by all concerned, in particular the staff of the works agents, to control costs," Mr Lam said.

The bulk of the savings have been identified in the Lantau Link, Route 3 and West Kowloon Reclamation projects while some savings have also been achieved from various utility and other works.

As at the end of September, the Government's ACP projects were 91 per cent complete while overall, including the airport, airport railway and the Western Harbour Crossing, the ACP was about 68 per cent complete.

Mr Lam said the seven projects funded directly by the Government and the Western Harbour Crossing would be completed before June 30, 1997, save for a few minor works items.

The airport and the airport railway are on target for completion in April and June 1998 respectively. Some of these works will straddle mid-1997 because work has been rescheduled in order to better tie in with the airport and airport railway which are scheduled to open in April and June 1998 respectively.

He said that although these minor works would not be completed by mid-1997, they would not in any way affect the opening and operation of the 34-kilometre long transport corridor from Central to the new airport at Chek Lap Kok and the new town at Tung Chung.

He said provision had been made within the overall ACP budget to meet expenditure on these minor works.

Mr Lam said that of the reduction of $1,805 million in the budget, $1,584 million was achieved by savings while $221 million was accounted for by a reduction in the scope of the ACP.

He said that 12 of the original 334 hectares of land originally planned for the West Kowloon Reclamation project together with the provision of a permanent ferry pier had been excluded from ACP works. These works are not expected to commence until 1998 to tie in with the proposed Kowloon Point Development.

End

STI to attend APEC Meeting on Industrial Science & Technology

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The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue, will head a Hong Kong delegation to Seoul to attend the second Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Ministers' Conference on Regional Co-operation in Industrial Science and Technology.

Miss Yue will leave tomorrow (Tuesday) and return on Friday (November 15).

The meeting, to be opened by President Kim Young Sam, will be attended by ministers with responsibility for science and technology from all APEC member economies.

Discussion will focus on the policy principles for APEC's cooperative efforts to enhance the scientific and technological capability of the region and to acknowledge the progress made in areas such as information flow, human resources development and joint research in science and technology.

These areas were discussed at the first APEC Ministers' Conference held in Beijing last year.

While in Seoul, Miss Yue will also pay a courtesy call on Mr Park Jae Yoon, Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea.

Other members of the delegation include the Director-General of Industry, Mr Francis Ho, and Assistant Director-General of Industry, Miss Annie Choi.

End

External trade statistics by country and commodity

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

In September 1996, the value of re-exports grew by 2.2% over a year earlier to $107.8 billion, while the value of domestic exports decreased by 14% to $18.3 billion. Meanwhile, imports decreased marginally by 0.2% to $130.7 billion.

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

Comparing September 1996 with September 1995, increases were recorded in the value of re-exports to the Netherlands (+20%), the United Kingdom (+16%), the United States (+11%), Singapore (+9.2%) and South Korea (+0.7%).

However, decreases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Taiwan (-5.2%), France (-1.9%), Japan (-1.7%), Germany (-0.3%) and China (-0.2%).

Comparing the first nine months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of re-exports to most main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes: Japan (+19%), the United Kingdom (+14%), the Netherlands (+10%), France (+10%), China (+7.7%), Germany (+6.9%), Singapore (+6.1%), South Korea (+5.8%) and the United States (+3.8%).

However, the value of re-exports to Taiwan decreased by 4.8%.

Taking all destinations together, the value of re-exports in the first nine months of 1996 was $876.5 billion, 6.7% higher than that in the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first nine months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of re-exports of most principal commodity divisions rose. More notable increases were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by $9.2 billion or 23%); clothing (by $7.5 billion or 11%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by $7.3 billion or 6.9%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by $6.3 billion or 7.5%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by $4.4 billion or 12%); footwear (by $4.3 billion or 9.5%); and general industrial machinery and equipment, and machine parts (by $1.8 billion or 8.3%).

Over the same period, a decrease in the value of re-exports was registered for telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by $2.2 billion or 2.5%).

Changes in the value of domestic exports to 10 main destinations are shown in Table 3.

Comparing September 1996 with September 1995, the value of domestic exports to all main destinations showed decreases of various magnitudes : Taiwan (-27%), Singapore (-21%), the United States (-20%), China (-9.7%), Canada (-8.2%), the United Kingdom (-8%), Japan (-7.4%), the Netherlands (-6.9%), France (-3.1%) and Germany (-2.1%).

Comparing the first nine months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of domestic exports to all main destinations also showed decreases of various magnitudes : Taiwan (-15%), Singapore (-15%), the United States (-13%), Canada (-9.4%), the Netherlands (-8.8%), France (-7.8%), Germany (-6.8%), China (-5.5%), Japan (-3.1%) and the United Kingdom (-1.4%).

Taking all destinations together, the value of domestic exports in the first nine months of 1996, at $156.5 billion, decreased by 8.9% over the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first nine months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of domestic exports of most principal commodity divisions decreased. More notable decreases were registered for clothing (by $4.1 billion or 7.6%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by $3.9 billion or 28%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by $1.7 billion or 21%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares (by $1.5 billion or 9.9%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by $1.2 billion or 9.8%); and plastics in primary forms (by $434 million or 13%).

Over the same period, an increase in the value of domestic exports was registered for professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus (by $211 million or 9.8%).

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

Comparing September 1996 with September 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from Malaysia (+14%), Germany (+9.9%), South Korea (+2.9%), Italy (+2.5%), China (+1.9%) and Singapore (+0.9%).

However, decreases were recorded in the value of imports from the United Kingdom (-11%), Japan (-8.2%), Taiwan (-4.9%) and the United States (-3.6%).

Comparing the first nine months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from Malaysia (+18%), Italy (+16%), the United Kingdom (+7%), the United States (+5.7%), China (+5.5%), Singapore (+5.5%) and Germany (+2.1%).

However, decreases were recorded in the value of imports from Japan (-8%), Taiwan (-4%) and South Korea (-0.1%).

Taking all sources together, the value of imports in the first nine months of 1996, at $1,135.1 billion, increased by 2.5% over the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first nine months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, more notable increases in the value of imports were registered for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by $8.6 billion or 17%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by $5.8 billion or 4.2%); clothing (by $5 billion or 6.9%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by $3.3 billion or 4.3%); and footwear (by $3.1 billion or 7.9%).

Over the same period, decreases in the value of imports were recorded for telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by $3.1 billion or 2.9%); textiles (by $2.7 billion or 2.7%); and non-metallic mineral manufactures (by $1.4 billion or 4.1%).

All the trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and 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 September 1996 will be released in early December 1996.

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

The September 1996 issue of the Hong Kong External Trade with detailed analyses on the performance of Hong Kong's external trade in September 1996 will be on sale at $129 per copy around November 22.

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).

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TABLE 1 : RE-EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	SEP 96 OVER SEP 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-SEP 96 OVER JAN-SEP 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	33,066	- 0.2	304,485	+ 7.7
UNITED STATES	26,463	+ 10.5	181,292	+ 3.8
JAPAN	7,513	- 1.7	59,280	+ 18.7
GERMANY	4,154	- 0.3	35,427	+ 6.9
UNITED KINGDOM	3,858	+ 15.6	26,436	+ 14.4
SINGAPORE	2,544	+ 9.2	20,291	+ 6.1
TAIWAN	2,310	- 5.2	19,474	- 4.8
SOUTH KOREA	1,727	+ 0.7	15,162	+ 5.8
FRANCE	1,665	- 1.9	14,005	+ 10.0
NETHERLANDS	1,718	+ 20.0	13,443	+ 10.1

TABLE 2 : RE-EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	SEP 96 OVER SEP 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-SEP 96 OVER JAN-SEP 95 (% CHANGE)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	17,425	+ 10.0	112,339	+ 6.9
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	10,829	- 4.6	90,165	+ 7.5
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	11,156	- 5.2	85,559	- 2.5
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	10,496	+ 5.7	75,333	+ 11.0
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	7,618	- 4.0	71,281	+ 1.9
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	6,133	+ 19.6	50,085	+ 22.5
FOOTWEAR	5,540	+ 7.2	49,654	+ 9.5
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,225	+ 10.7	40,862	+ 12.0
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	3,262	+ 3.3	27,530	+ 3.5
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	1,904	+ 1.4	22,877	+ 8.3

TABLE 3 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	SEP 96 OVER SEP 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-SEP 96 OVER JAN-SEP 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	5,154	- 9.7	44,986	- 5.5
UNITED STATES	5,141	- 19.8	39,056	- 12.9
JAPAN	866	- 7.4	8,604	- 3.1
GERMANY	874	- 2.1	8,328	- 6.8
UNITED KINGDOM	964	- 8.0	7,881	- 1.4
SINGAPORE	765	- 20.6	7,824	- 14.8
TAIWAN	576	- 26.7	4,947	- 15.2
NETHERLANDS	351	- 6.9	3,538	- 8.8
CANADA	354	- 8.2	2,945	- 9.4
FRANCE	236	- 3.1	2,169	- 7.8

TABLE 4 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	SEP 96 OVER SEP 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-SEP 96 OVER JAN-SEP 95 (% CHANGE)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	6,503	- 11.6	50,022	- 7.6
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	2,412	- 17.8	22,697	- 1.8
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WARES)	1,600	- 8.9	13,327	- 9.9
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	1,255	- 18.9	11,243	- 9.8
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,130	+ 1.2	10,225	- 2.8
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	1,081	- 32.8	9,857	- 28.4
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	709	- 26.8	6,334	- 21.3
MANUFACTURES OF METALS	355	- 0.8	3,167	- 8.9
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	337	- 15.4	2,918	- 12.9
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CONTROLLING INSTRUMENTS AND APPARATUS	273	+ 10.0	2,361	+ 9.8

TABLE 5 : IMPORTS FROM TEN MAIN SUPPLIERS

SUPPLIER	SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	SEP 96 OVER SEP 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-SEP 96 OVER JAN-SEP 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	53,116	+ 1.9	422,129	+ 5.5
JAPAN	17,325	- 8.2	153,196	- 8.0
TAIWAN	9,906	- 4.9	91,225	- 4.0
UNITED STATES	9,333	- 3.6	89,720	+ 5.7
SINGAPORE	6,572	+ 0.9	61,114	+ 5.5
SOUTH KOREA	6,082	+ 2.9	55,027	- 0.1
GERMANY	2,673	+ 9.9	24,896	+ 2.1
MALAYSIA	2,905	+ 13.6	24,840	+ 17.8
UNITED KINGDOM	2,646	- 11.0	24,182	+ 7.0
ITALY	2,350	+ 2.5	23,031	+ 16.1

TABLE 6 : IMPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	SEP 96 OVER SEP 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-SEP 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-SEP 96 OVER JAN-SEP 95 (% CHANGE)
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	16,333	- 9.6	143,290	+ 4.2
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	12,548	- 10.1	104,183	- 2.9
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	9,809	- 5.0	95,717	- 2.7
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	10,981	+ 3.2	81,003	+ 4.3
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	10,478	+ 3.1	77,231	+ 6.9
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	7,044	+ 10.6	58,595	+ 17.2
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,460	- 2.3	46,689	- 0.2
FOOTWEAR	4,673	+ 2.8	42,674	+ 7.9
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	2,845	- 2.2	34,464	+ 5.7
NON-METALLIC MINERAL MANUFACTURES	3,512	- 16.9	31,965	- 4.1

End

CITES holds regional enforcement training seminar in HK

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A Hong Kong Government-funded regional enforcement training seminar organised by the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was officially opened by Secretary for Economic Services, Mr Stephen Ip Shu-kwan, today (Monday).

The five-day seminar, part of CITES' effort for training enforcement officers all over the world, has attracted more than 80 participants from 11 south-east Asian countries and territories. It is organised with the assistance of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD).

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mr Ip said he was glad that Hong Kong had been able to make a contribution of US$150,000 to the CITES Secretariat, part of which was used to organise the seminar.

Mr Ip noted that CITES had been established as a foundation for international co-operation to protect species of animals and plants threatened by over-exploitation through international trade.

He said Asia was a region where cultural influences, growing affluence and consumerism were taking an unsustainable toll on many species of animals and plants.

"This has created lucrative markets for illegal trade in endangered species. Effective enforcement of the convention has therefore become a particularly demanding, and even more pressing, responsibility throughout the region," he said.

On Hong Kong's effort relating to CITES, Mr Ip said that the territory had implemented a four-point action plan.

Firstly, an Endangered Species Protection Liaison Group was formed to co-ordinate enforcement of the convention and liaison with overseas enforcement agencies and local non-governmental organisations. The group is led by AFD as Hong Kong's CITES Management Authority, with other members from the Customs and Excise Department and Police.

Secondly, Hong Kong increased the maximum penalties under the related legislation for implementing the Convention to a $5 million fine and two years' imprisonment.

Also, the much heavier fines and prison sentences handed down for contraventions of the related legislation had indicated that the Judiciary recognised the increased concern in the community over illegal trade in endangered species and was prepared to punish offenders severely, he said.

Mr Ip pointed out that the third point was that Hong Kong had embarked on a comprehensive programme of public education on the need to protect all endangered species. The main objective is to change public attitude towards consumption of endangered species and increase public awareness of the relevant legislation.

Fourthly, Hong Kong was committed in improving enforcement through better training of enforcement officers, both in the territory and overseas, Mr Ip added.

CITES Secretariat's Enforcement and Training Co-ordinator, Mr J P Le Duc pointed out that it was very grateful to the authorities of Hong Kong to have made possible this training seminar for enforcement officers of the south-east Asian region.

"Co-operation between CITES Management Authorities and enforcement agencies, particularly customs and police, is crucial to achieve better enforcement of the convention and to prevent the illegal trade in wildlife from threatening the survival of species of animals and plants," Mr Le Duc added.

End

Don't attach retrieving line to towing line

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The Marine Department advises owners, operators and masters of towing vessels not to attach a retrieving line to a towing line because this practice is unsafe.

A spokesman for the Marine Department said today (Monday) that it was difficult to pay out the towing line and the retrieving line simultaneously in a safe manner.

He added that the chances of the retrieving line getting entangled with the vessel's fixtures leading to accidents were very high.

A recent investigation of a fatal injury to a crew member of a tug revealed that the death was caused by the backlash of a retrieving line which parted.

A synthetic fibre rope of a diameter of 16 millimetres had been attached to the towing line as a retrieving line to facilitate recovery of the tow line.

One end of the 55-millimetre diameter synthetic fibre towing line was secured to the towing hook and the other end had been made fast on the tow.

As the tug moved ahead to take the weight on the towing line, the retrieving line became entangled in fixtures on the vessel, thus shortening its length and causing it to part.

End

Post Office launches home page on Internet

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The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Monday) that the Post Office has established its own home page on the Internet.

All Internet users can access the Post Office Home Page directly at http://www.info.gov.hk/hkpo/ or through the Government Information Centre (GIC) Home Page at http://www.info.gov.hk.

The Post Office Home Page contains information in four sub-groups, namely:

Facts about the Hong Kong Post Office;
Postage Rates and Services;
Philately; and
Speedpost - International Courier Service

"The Post Office Home Page is both user-friendly and rich in graphical illustrations," Mr Footman said.

Apart from a wealth of information about the Post Office and its services, the home page offers attractive features such as e-mail forms for requesting certain services and offering comments, and a ready-reckoner for Speedpost postage.

"We will continue to improve the home page. Plans are in hand to incorporate our development plans and performance pledges in the near future," Mr Footman added.

End

HK students win prizes in English essay competition

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Nineteen Hong Kong students were awarded prizes and commended in the 1995/96 Royal Commonwealth Society Essay Competition for local students.

The success achieved by local students in the competition reflects their high writing skills compared with other students from all parts of the Commonwealth.

The acting Deputy Director of Education, Mr Hsu Show-hoo; the Honorary Treasurer of the Royal Commonwealth Society in Hong Kong, Mr James Foulton; and the Assistant Director (Industrial and Corporate Affairs Division) of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, Dr Cheung Yiu-sing, presented prizes and certificates to the winners.

This year, a total of 313 Hong Kong students from 50 schools took part in the contest, competing with 4,581 students from 50 commonwealth countries and territories.

The competition is divided into four classes - Class A for students aged between 16 and 18, Class B for aged 14 and 15, Class C for aged 12 and 13 while Class D for those aged 11 and below.

The first three winners in each of the four classes were awarded book coupons ranging from $750 to $2,000 by the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, the first prize winner in class A, Miss Fiona Lam of St Paul's School (Lam Tin), were presented with the Royal Commonwealth Society in Hong Kong Award. The award is a book voucher in the sum of $2,000.

The annual competition is organised by the Education Department and sponsored by the Royal Commonwealth Society in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce.

End

Water storage figure

* * * * *

Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Monday) stood at 96.4 per cent of capacity or 564.787 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 579.049 million cubic metres of water, representing 98.8 per cent of capacity.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

* * * * *

Tender date	11 Nov 96
Paper on offer	EF notes
Issue number	2811
Issue date	12 Nov 96
Maturity date	12 Nov 98
Coupon	5.72 PCT
Amount applied	HK$2,600 MN
Amount allotted	HK$500 MN
Average price accepted (yield)	100.04 (5.78 PCT)
Lowest price accepted (yield)	100.03 (5.79 PCT)
Pro rata ratio	About 38 PCT
Average tender price (yield)	100.02 (5.79 PCT)

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

* * * * *

	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	2,370	0930	+529
Closing balance in the account	2,589	1000	+529
Change attributable to :		1100	+529
Money market activity	+529	1200	+529
LAF today	- 310	1500	+529
		1600	+529

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.3 *-0.1* 11.11.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.87	2 years	2808	6.00	100.66	5.67
1 month	4.89	3 years	3910	6.28	100.60	6.14
3 months	4.95	5 years	5109	7.32	103.02	6.68
6 months	5.02	7 years	7308	7.24	102.02	6.98
12 months	5.26	10 years	1610	7.37	101.63	7.27
		5 years	M503	7.35	101.83	7.01

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - $7,381 million

Closed November 11, 1996

End