DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Monday, October 16, 1995

Contents **Page No.**

Premature broadcast of exit poll results censured 1

Unemployment and underemployment statistics 3

S for T speaks on transport matters 4

Applications for cross-border coach services invited 6

Landslip preventive measures information notes 7

School education indicators discussed 9

Index of industrial production 11

Water storage figure 14

Marine Department investigating catamaran accident 14

Fresh water cut in Sheung Wan and Sai Ying Pun 15

Tender for 3-Year Exchange Fund Notes to be held 15

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations 17

Premature broadcast of exit poll results censured

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The Boundary and Election Commission (BEC) today (Monday) publicly censured three electronic media stations for broadcasting exit poll results of the geographical constituency (GC) and functional constituency (FC) elections before all polls of the Legislative Council (LegCo) elections closed at midnight on September 17, 1995.

The three media organisations are the Asia Television Limited, Radio Television Hong Kong and Wharf Cable Limited.

BEC chairman, Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing, said the move of the three stations had breached chapter 12 of the BEC guidelines which prohibited the publication of exit poll results until after the close of poll in order to avoid any effect that it might have on voter behaviour or on election results.

"They blatantly flouted the BEC guidelines and slighted the importance of maintaining a fair election.

"The commission deplores the irresponsible and unreasonable behaviour of the three television and radio stations," Mr Justice Woo said.

On the other hand, he noted with pleasure that other members of the electronic media had exercised admirable self-restraint and acted most sensibly and responsibly in not adopting the same stance as that of the organisations under censure.

BEC had extended the polling hours for the Election Committee constituency (ECC) election to midnight, one and a half hours longer than those for the GCs and FCs, as some ECC voters, who were all District Board members, were either candidates or canvassers who would be heavily involved in electioneering during the day from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm.

Since making arrangement for more polling stations for them was not possible, polling hours were therefore extended to facilitate these voters to cast their votes at the single polling station provided to them.

BEC met representatives of the electronic media on August 29 to discuss the implications of the extension of the polling hours for the ECC election. Having taken into account of the representatives' comments, BEC then consulted all ECC voters and candidates who would be most affected by way of a questionnaire.

Out of the 153 returns received, 76 (64 electors and 12 candidates) considered that such announcement of the results should not be made until after midnight, 58 (57 electors and one candidate) considered that announcement could be made after 10.30 pm while 19 (18 electors and one candidate) had no opinion.

After considering carefully the responses and the media's representations, BEC decided that the exit poll results for GC and FC elections should not be announced until after all polls of the LegCo elections had closed at midnight.

"Voter behaviour might be affected by any early release of the exit poll results.

"The ECC was to return 10 seats out of 60 in LegCo. Therefore, any possible external influence on any one of 283 ECC electors might have a significant effect.

"Any doubt in the credibility of the election results must be avoided," Mr Justice Woo said.

While the public might be interested in the exit poll results, BEC did not see any compelling need for the public to be apprised of them one and a half hours before all the polls closed, to justify an arrangement which might cast doubt on the election results, he said.

The electronic media were duly informed of the decision on September 13. BEC also appealed to them for co-operation and support of a fair election, urging them to observe the BEC guidelines.

A warning was also given that any breach would be viewed very seriously by the BEC and might very well result in a public censure.

"The commission is most disappointed to note that despite all the advice given, the three electronic media stations announced the exit poll results shortly after 10.30 pm on September 17, 1995," Mr Justice Woo said.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Unemployment and underemployment statistics

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period June to August 1995 was 3.5%, and the underemployment rate was 2.5%, according to the latest labour force statistics released today (Monday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate and the underemployment rate for the period July to September 1995 remained unchanged at 3.5% and 2.5% respectively (provisional figures).

Commenting on these figures, a government spokesman said the labour market situation seemed to have become somewhat more stable in overall terms in recent months. The unemployment rate remained at 3.5%.

"The unemployment rates in import/export trades, restaurants and hotels, and transport declined, offsetting the rise in unemployment rates in manufacturing and in foundation and superstructure construction.

"The underemployment rates in most of the major sectors remained broadly stable," the spokesman said.

"Total employment continued to increase steadily, but this was outstripped by an even stronger labour supply. In the three months ending August 1995, total labour supply rose markedly, by 4.3% over a year earlier, while total employment was 2.6% higher," the spokesman added.

During the period June to August 1995, the number of unemployed persons with previous jobs was estimated at 95,700. Another 15,200 unemployed persons were first-time job-seekers. The number of underemployed persons was estimated at 77,300.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for June to August 1995 covered a quarterly sample of some 14,500 households or 49,700 persons, selected scientifically to represent the land-based civilian non-institutional population in Hong Kong.

Data were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the households sampled.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

'Seasonally adjusted' refers to adjustment for seasonal variations in the proportion of first-time job-seekers in the labour force.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the report on the General Household Survey which is published four times a year.

The next report covering the quarter ending September 1995 will be on sale at the Government Publications Centre at ground floor, Low Block, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, by the end of December 1995.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Secretary for Transports speaks on transport matters

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A total of $9 billion will be spent in 1995-96 on building new roads and improving the road network, the Secretary for Transport, Mr Haider Barma, said this (Monday) morning.

Speaking at a media session to elaborate on transport matters covered in the Governor's Policy Address, Mr Barma said investment in the infrastructure would continue to be substantial with $30 billion earmarked up to the year 2000.

"It is important to recognise that the planning and implementation of new projects require a long lead time," he said.

Mr Barma explained that congestion during peak hours in major thoroughfares was inevitable.

"Notwithstanding this, it is no mean achievement that our traffic speeds are better than those in most major cities although we have more vehicles per kilometre of road than most other places in the world," he said.

Mr Barma also said the Government had ambitious plans for expanding the railway system, as set out in the Railway Development Strategy.

Three priority projects for construction by 2001 have been identified:

* The Western Corridor Railway from the border to the West Kowloon and a spur line to Tuen Mun, with the possibility of an extension to Tuen Mun New town;

* An extension of the Mass Transit Railway to Tseung Kwan O, and

* A new rail link from Ma On Shan to Tai Wai Town Centre, coupled with an extension of the Kowloon Canton Railway from Hung Hom to Tsim Sha Tsui.

KCRC and MTRC have been invited to submit proposals for the first two projects while consultants will be engaged on the third project.

Mr Barma said following a recent public consultation exercise on ways of tackling traffic congestion, it had become clear that there was a strong public support for the introduction of the "user pays principle" to the use of the roads and the implementation of electronic road pricing (ERP).

"We are now planning an ERP feasibility study, to be followed by trial schemes and, if successful, the full implementation of an ERP system," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Barma said, the Government was considering the enactment of legislation to enable the Administration to raise annual licence fees on private cars on transport grounds, to introduce a passage tax at the Eastern Harbour Crossing and to remove the tax benefits currently enjoyed by company cars.

"We will consider implementing the first two measures if the growth of private cars significantly exceeds the acceptable level of two to three per cent a year.

"The latter measure will be implemented in the near future since it is no longer appropriate to offer any incentives that actually encourage the purchase of private cars," he said.

Mr Barma said the Government was doing all it could to address the traffic and transport problems faced by residents of the North West New Territories.

"In addition to the Western Corridor Railway, we are building the Route 3 (Country Park Section), which will relieve Tuen Mun Road, for completion by end 1998.

"We are also widening sections of Tuen Mun Road and Castle Peak Road.

"Traffic surveillance systems and bus only lanes are being provided in Tuen Mun Road to speed the flow of traffic, and public transport services to the area are being enhanced, for example, through the introduction of larger and faster ferries.

"We plan to increase the peak-hour capacity of ferry services between Tuen Mun and Central by 10 per cent in 1996 through the provision of one more high speed catamaran and introduce an extra Green Minibus route to the Tuen Mun ferry pier later this year," said Mr Barma.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Applications for cross-border coach services invited

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The Transport Department is inviting applications from suitable operators to provide cross-border coach and/or hire car services between Hong Kong and China through the Sha Tau Kok and/or Lok Ma Chau Border Control Points.

To facilitate the processing of applications, applications should be submitted simultaneously to the Public Vehicles Section of the Transport Department, Hong Kong at third floor, United Centre, 95 Queensway, Hong Kong, and the Country Port of People's Government of Shenzhen Port Office, a spokesman for the department said today (Monday).

Applications are free of charge and will be valid for one year with effect from the closing date of applications.

Applications should be made in writing giving the following information:

* Applicants' personal particulars, including name, identity document, address and contact telephone number. In the case of a company, the name of the person(s) to be contacted and information on company registration;

* The name of the Border Control Point to be used. Applicants are required to submit separate applications for the use of each Border Control Point;

* Description of the nature of the service, the number and type of vehicles used and seating capacity;

* In respect of the cross-border coach service, the proposed daily number of crossings between Hong Kong and China and crossing time at the Control Point (new applications for using the Lok Ma Chau Control Point will not be permitted to cross the Border Control Point earlier than 10 am), detailed routeing and terminal) facilities on Hong Kong side;

* Relevant experience in operating similar transport services;

* Details of partnership arrangements such as names and addresses of Hong Kong and partners in China; and

* Approval-in-principle documents issued by relevant Chinese authorities for providing cross-border coach or hire car services.

The closing date of applications on the Hong Kong side is October 30, 1995.

Applications may be lodged in person or by post.

Applications are subject to approval at the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Joint Sub-Working Group Meeting on Cross Border Transport Services. Further enquiries can be made to Ms Rhoda Wong on 2804 2578.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Landslip preventive measures information notes

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The following are the main points given by the Secretary for Works, Mr Kwong Hon-sang, during a visit to a Landslip Preventive Measures site in Kwai Chung and a media session this (Monday) morning:

* Work on the Landslip Preventive Measures (LPM) programme is being speeded up. The aim is to complete the programme for the 1977-78 Catalogue of Slopes in five years, 10 years ahead of the original target.

* The scope of the LPM is being enlarged to include slopes affecting busy roads and footpaths. The Government will include 220 public slopes in the 1996-97 and subsequent years' programme for upgrading works. Of these, 69 slopes (30%) are near busy roads and footpaths, accounting for 45% of the cost for this programme.

* Total expenditure will amount to $1.3 billion, increasing rapidly from $70 million a year (in previous years) to the peak of $300 million over the next five years.

* To cope with the additional work, the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) will create 133 posts, of which 48 (36%) will be at the Geotechnical Engineer Grade.

* GEO will increase the use of consultants to undertake slope investigation and upgrading work. Four consultancies have been commissioned so far to undertake investigation on 400 private slopes and to upgrade 95 public slopes. Two more consultancies will be commissioned soon to investigate 200 private slopes and upgrade 80 public slopes.

* The Buildings Department will step up enforcement action on private slope owners who fail to comply with statutory orders for repair of their slopes. The department will create 27 posts to cope with additional work related to the issue of dangerous slope notices and follow-up action.

* Of the 10,840 slopes registered in the 1977-78 Catalogue of Slopes, preliminary studies have been made on 7,383 slopes and upgrading work carried out on 656 public slopes and 374 private slopes.

* GEO is carrying out a slope recataloguing exercise to identify and register slopes not included in the 1977-78 Catalogue.

* GEO is developing a new priority classification system to select slopes for inclusion in the LPM Programme. The system will include information about slope geometry, topography, evidence of past instability, if there is any, and potential for water ingress.

* The works departments will step up inspection and repair of public drains and supply pipes which may affect stability of slopes. Owners of private lots will be encouraged to do the same for their buried drains and water pipes.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

School education indicators discussed

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The Board of Education today (Monday) welcomed the compilation of 57 education indicators by the Education Department to systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Hong Kong's school education system.

The Chairman of the board, Dr Tam Man-kwan, said after today's board meeting that the indicators are useful quantitative statistics that measure performance over time, pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of the education system, and may help policy-makers to identify future direction and needs.

The 57 identified indicators are classified into three groups.

The first is a group of 31 "provision" indicators which give information on the provision of school places, adult education services, teachers and teacher training, and education expenditure.

Examples of this group are the pupil-teacher ratio in primary and secondary schools and the Government's education expenditure as a percentage of the gross domestic product.

Another 11 "process" indicators cover curriculum aspects, guidance and support services, school improvement measures and parental participation.

An example is the percentage of P1 to P3 classes in public sector schools which adopt the activity approach to teaching.

In addition, there are 15 "performance" indicators, such as illiteracy rate, which cover academic aspects, sports/cultural/aesthetic aspects and affective/behavioural aspects.

Some of the highlights from the 57 indicators include:

* The illiterate population aged 15 and above has dropped from about 39 per cent in 1961 to 13 per cent in 1991.

* The provision of subsidised S4 places to the 15-year-old population increased steadily from 79 per cent in 1990-91 to 84.6 per cent in 1994-95, which is very close to the target provision of 85 per cent.

* Some 37 per cent of pupils holding subsidised S4 places in 1992-93 were offered subsidised S6 places two years later in 1994-95. This figure already exceeded the target provision of one public sector S6 place for every three public sector S4 places two years ago.

* In 1993-94, some 51 per cent of serving kindergarten teachers were trained, compared with only 22 per cent 10 years ago in 1984-85.

* Also in 1993-94, some 75 per cent of serving teachers in secondary schools were trained, compared with 58 per cent in 1984-85.

* The proportion of graduate teachers in secondary schools increased from 64 per cent in 1984-85 to nearly 73 per cent in 1993-94. Among these serving graduate teachers, some 69 per cent in 1993-94 were trained, compared with 53 per cent in 1984-85.

* The pupil-teacher ratio in secondary schools dropped from 25:1 in 1984-85 to 21:1 in 1993-94. For primary schools this ratio decreased from 27:1 in 1984-85 to 25:1 in 1993-94.

* On average, only 22 per cent of the teaching periods in junior secondary classes (apart from periods in subjects such as English, Chinese, Chinese History, Religious Education, practical and technical subjects) are conducted in the Chinese medium in 1994-95 and 1995-96.

* Each year there are more than 2,000 reported cases of drop-out pupils leaving school without completing S3.

* In 1993, nearly 900 youngsters under 16 years for every 100,000 population under 16 were arrested for various crimes, compared with 524 youngsters in 1982.

* In 1993, among all the newly reported drug abusers, some 11.6 per cent were youngsters under 16 years of age. In 1985, this percentage was only 3.8 per cent.

The Education Department will update the set of indicators annually. New indicators will be developed whenever feasible and an abridged version of a report on the indicators will be prepared annually for public consumption.

The board suggested that the Education Department should consider analysing the indicators to find out the causes for certain concerns, such as the number of school dropouts, and see how the problem should be tackled.

It was also proposed at the meeting that in analysing the indicators, attention should be given to any trends shown by the statistics, the existence of any relevant benchmarks and comparisons with the policy goal.

On another agenda item, the Board of Education noted the Government's acceptance of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications that teachers with non-local degrees and a local Postgraduate Certificate in Education should be eligible to compete with other candidates for appointment as Graduate Teachers in secondary schools.

It is intended that this alternative qualification should not only be implemented in aided secondary schools, caput schools and schools in the Bought Place Scheme, but also to Government schools as well. The relevant staff unions are being consulted on the recommendation.

The board planned to make an overseas visit during the 1995-96 financial year.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Index of industrial production

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The index of industrial production for the second quarter of this year continued to increase by 2.5% over the same quarter last year, according to the results of a survey released today (Monday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

An appreciable increase of 7.2% was recorded in the industry group of electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods.

Within this group, the production of machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components increased markedly by 9.7% but the production of consumer electrical and electronic products decreased by 4.1%.

Increases were also recorded in the wearing apparel (except footwear) industry (+4.1%); the food, beverages and tobacco industry (+3.0%); the textiles (including knitting) industry (+2.8%); and the paper products and printing industry (+2.5%).

On the other hand, output of the chemical, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products industry decreased by 7.5%. This was largely attributable to a decrease of 17.4% in the production of plastic products.

The basic metals and fabricated metal products industry also registered a decrease of 4.1%.

Compared with the first quarter of 1995, the index of industrial production showed a notable increase of 10.5%. This is consistent with the usual pick-up in manufacturing activities in the second quarter.

The index of industrial production reflects changes of local manufacturing output in real terms. In other words, it measures the volume of local production after discounting the effect of price changes.

More detailed information can be obtained from the "Quarterly Index of Industrial Production, 2nd Quarter 1995" report, which is on sale at $11 a copy at the Government Publications Sales Centre, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, or at the Census and Statistics Department Publications Unit, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai. Regular subscription may also be arranged.

Enquiries about the survey result may be directed to the General Economic Surveys Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6643.

Percentage changes in the indices of industrial production are shown in the table. As from the first quarter of 1992, the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) is used to form the industry groups and component industries.

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Indices of industrial production by industry group and selected component industry
(1986 = 100)

Industry group / Selected component industry	Index for 2nd Qtr. 1995	% change over 2nd Qtr. 1994	% change over 1st Qtr. 1995
1. Food, beverages and tobacco	158	+3.0	+5.8
2. Wearing apparel (except footwear)	107	+4.1	+10.8
3. Textiles (including knitting)	109	+2.8	+22.8
4. Paper products and printing	288	+2.5	+21.6
5. Chemical, rubber, plastic and non-metallic mineral products	64	-7.5	+9.1
within which : Plastic products	(38)	(-17.4)	(+7.0)
6. Basic metals and fabricated metal products	92	-4.1	+0.8
within which : Fabricated metal products (except machinery and equipment)	(90)	(-5.1)	(+6.7)
7. Electrical and electronic products, machinery, professional equipment and optical goods	168	+7.2	+5.2
within which : Consumer electrical and electronic products	(117)	(-4.1)	(+2.1)
: Machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components	(245)	(+9.7)	(+3.2)
8. Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	79	-3.1	+6.0
ALL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES	123	+2.5	+10.5

Notes : 1. Four selected component industries, which carry relatively large weights and are major components of their relevant industry groups, are also included in the above table. For easy reading, the figures of these selected component industries are shown in brackets.

2. As from the first quarter of 1992, the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) is used to form the industry groups and selected component industries presented in the above table. For the exact coverage of the industry groups and component industries in terms of HSIC codes, please refer to the publication 'Quarterly Index of Industrial Production, 2nd Quarter 1995'.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Water storage figure

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Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Monday) stood at 98.9 per cent of capacity or 579.699 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 573.074 million cubic metres of water, representing 97.8 per cent of capacity.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Marine Department investigating catamaran accident

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In response to press enquiries, a spokesman for the Marine Department said today (Monday):

"The Marine Department is investigating an accident in which a Hong Kong bound catamaran hit the waterfront west of the Macau Ferry Terminal around noon today.

"The catamaran, carrying 69 passengers and eight crew members, was berthing at the terminal when she lost control and rammed into the seawall. Two of the passengers were slightly injured and later discharged from hospital. Some areas in the front part of the ship were buckled and fractured."

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Fresh water cut in Sheung Wan and Sai Ying Pun

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Sheung Wan and Sai Ying Pun will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Thursday (October 19) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains alteration work.

The suspension will affect premises in 322-323 Des Voeux Road Central, Chung Kong Road, Water Front Police Station, Western Fire Services Street, Hong Kong Electric Sub-Station, Sewage Works Primary Sub-Station of the Drainage Services Department, Sheung Wan Fire Station, Mass Transit Railway Site Office, Water Supplies Department's Water Selling Kiosk, 3-158 Connaught Road West, 1-278 Des Voeux Road West, 1-356 Queen's Road West, 335-379 Queen's Road Central, 135-149 Bonham Strand, 1-87 Bonham Strand West, On Tai Street, New Market Street, Tung Loi Lane, Tung Hing Lane, 114-247 Wing Lok Street, Heung Hing Lane, Queen Street, Fat Hing Street, Sutherland Street, Ko Shing Street, Tsung Sau Lane East, Tsung Sau Lane West, Wo Fung Street, Kom U Street, Li Shing Street, Wilmer Street, Tsz Mi Alley, 1-42 Eastern Street, Mui Fong Street, Kwai Heung Street, Sung Hing Lane, Sai Yuen Lane, Ki Ling Lane, Chung Ching Street, 1-51 Centre Street, 1-45 Western Street, First Street, 1-121 Second Street, 1-127 Third Street, 3-126 High Street, 63-83 Bonham Road, 60-68 Pokfulam Road and 71-77 Pokfulam Road.

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Tender for 3-Year Exchange Fund Notes to be held

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The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced today (Monday) that the tender for the ninth issue of three-year Exchange Fund Notes would be held on Monday, October 23, 1995 for settlement on Tuesday, October 24, 1995.

Similar to the previous issue, an amount of HK$500 million three-year Notes will be on offer. In addition to that, another HK$100 million will be held as reserve by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority for supply to Market Makers in the secondary market. The Notes will mature on October 26, 1998 and will carry interest at the rate of 6.15% per annum payable semi-annually in arrears.

Members of the public who wish to tender for the Notes may do so through any of the Market Makers or Recognised Dealers on the published list which can be obtained from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority at 30th floor, 3 Garden Road, Hong Kong, Tel 2878 8150. Each tender must be for an amount of $50,000 or integral multiples thereof.

Tender information for the ninth issue of three-year Exchange Fund Notes is as follows:

Issue Number	:	3810
Tender Date and Time	:	Monday, October 23, 1995, 9.30 am to 10.30 am
Issue and Settlement Date	:	Tuesday, October 24, 1995
Amount on Offer	:	HK$500 million plus an additional HK$100 million as reserve stock for the Monetary Authority
Maturity	:	Three years
Maturity Date	:	October 26, 1998
Interest Rate	:	6.15% per annum payable semi-annually in arrears
Interest Payment Dates	:	April 24, 1996; October 24, 1996; April 24, 1997; October 24, 1997; April 24, 1998; October 26, 1998
Tender Amount	:	Each tender must be for an amount of HK$50,000 or integral multiples thereof. Members of the public who wish to tender for the Notes may approach Market Makers or Recognised Dealers on the published list
Other details	:	See Information Memorandum published or approach Market Makers or Recognised Dealers

End/Monday, October 16, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	1,641	0930	+1,534
Closing balance in the account	1,564	1000	+1,534
Change attributable to :		1100	+1,535
Money market activity	+1,536	1200	+1,536
LAF today	-1,613	1500	+1,536
		1600	+1,536

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 122.0 *-0.1* 16.10.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.29	2 years	2708	6.06	100.53	5.83
1 month	5.44	3 years	3807	6.16	100.31	6.12
3 months	5.52	5 years	5009	6.95	101.13	6.79
6 months	5.58	5 years	M501	7.90	103.13	7.21
12 months	5.61					

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - $24,304 million

Closed October 16, 1995

End/Monday, October 16, 1995