



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

Thursday, July 11, 1996

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Public views invited on residential property market report

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The Government today (Thursday) welcomes the publication of the Consumer Council's competition study report on the Hong Kong residential property market.

"We welcome the completion of the Consumer Council's study and will examine the recommendations in the report in detail with a view to publishing a government response by January 1997," a government spokesman said.

"In the meantime, we welcome comments on the report from the general public, as well as interested parties in the property sector."

Members of the public may send their views on the report in writing to the Housing Branch on ninth floor, Citibank Tower, 3 Garden Road, Central before the end of August.

End

Dutiable Commodities (Liquor) Regulations to be amended

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Amendments will be made to the Dutiable Commodities (Liquor) Regulations to remove its gender connotation, a government spokesman said today (Thursday).

"This will make the regulations compatible with the Sex Discrimination Ordinance which is expected to come into operation in September," the spokesman said.

The current regulations impose restrictions on the employment of female employees under the age of 18 years in liquor selling premises. Following the amendments, both male and female employees will be treated on the same basis.

Under the amendment regulation, the employment of all persons under the age of 18 years will be prohibited in liquor selling premises between 8 pm and 6 am.

Furthermore, the employment of this age group of persons is prohibited in liquor selling premises between 6 am and 8 pm except with the written permission of the respective Municipal Council.

The amendment regulation will be published in the Gazette tomorrow and will become effective on the same day.

End

Government committed to meeting new arrivals' needs

* * * * *

The Government is committed to continue identifying the needs of new arrivals and exploring new measures to meet these needs, the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau, said today (Thursday).

Speaking at the luncheon meeting of Y's Men Club of Hong Kong, Mrs Lau said the Administration aimed to assist new arrivals to integrate into the community as quickly, smoothly, and seamlessly as possible through a host of dedicated and general services meant to aid them in their integration process, with the Home Affairs Department (HAD) playing a vital co-ordination role in easing their process of integration.

Noting that the Administration was wary of the adverse effect of "labelling" new arrivals as a distinct group who has a separate set of entitlement to services, Mrs Lau said new arrivals, like other Hong Kong residents, were entitled to a wide range of general services which include social welfare, education and health care.

She stressed that the Government was aware that for some of these newly arrived members, adjustment to Hong Kong could be a challenge and they needed assistance with settling in and with orienting themselves in a society which might be very different from that to which they were accustomed - different in terms of language, system, way of life and pace.

She said: "In this connection, dedicated services meant to assist new arrivals to quickly adapt to the local way of life and to meet their special needs are offered to them by various government departments in addition to the general services which are available to all Hong Kong residents.

"The Education Department, for example, has set up a Central Placement Unit to assist new arrival children to gain admission to a school in a location convenient to them and at a suitable educational level as soon as possible.

"It also subvents a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in providing special induction and extension programmes to help new arrival children to know more about the Hong Kong living environment."

Noting that HAD had been tasked with the direct responsibility for monitoring and assessing the services provided for new arrivals from China in order to ease the process of integration, Mrs Lau said the department was making the best efforts to put in place mechanisms to assess the needs of these new members and to ensure that the service providers were meeting those needs in the best possible way and that services were targeted at areas where they were most needed.

To implement these work targets, she said, a steering committee under her chairmanship and comprising representatives of relevant policy branches and departments had been established to serve as a forum for liaison and exchange of information among branches and departments concerned.

It also identifies new areas of need and explores new measures to meet the special needs of new arrivals.

Mrs Lau said the steering committee also invited representatives of NGOs to attend meetings on a need basis.

"Although still in the early days of its work, the committee will be making recommendations to departments concerned for better deployment of resources to target their services and to the central government for additional resources where it identifies such a need," she said.

Pointing out that a similar inter-departmental committee had also been set up in each of the 18 District Offices, Mrs Lau said through the district liaison network and frequent contacts with local associations and residents, district officers were ideally placed to identify problem areas early and to reflect these difficulties to the steering committee in the form of comprehensive reports on the situation at the district level every two months.

And in order to establish profiles of new arrivals, HAD had been conducting a survey on them since February at the Registration of Persons' Office in Tsim Sha Tsui when they apply for their identity cards.

"Information pertaining to their age, sex, dialects, and the districts in which they have settled is being compiled. These information will be useful in allowing the Home Affairs Department to determine their social, educational and welfare needs.

"The findings will also be fed to each of the 18 District Offices for further monitoring and assessing purposes and to enable the departments concerned to plan for their services at the district level," said Mrs Lau.

The director also paid regular visits to meet new arrivals attending orientation or education programmes and discuss with service providers the various problems which new arrivals face and the effectiveness of services rendered.

To enhance understanding of the problems facing new arrivals, she and colleagues of relevant departments have also taken every opportunity to participate at seminars or forums organised by NGOs.

Finally, Mrs Lau said HAD had produced a comprehensive service handbook to introduce to new arrivals the public services most relevant to them and the means to access them.

Written in simplified Chinese characters, the handbook is available at various contact points, including Lo Wu, Registration of Persons' Office in Tsim Sha Tsui, district offices, and at the sub-offices of various government departments and NGOs.

End

Government action on US textiles measures supported

* * * * *

The Textiles Advisory Board (TEXTAB) today (Thursday) re-affirmed its full support for the Government's effort in requesting additional import measures imposed unilaterally by the United States on a number of textiles and clothing products from Hong Kong should be rescinded.

Speaking after the TEXTAB meeting, the Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue, who is also the Board Chairperson, said members of the Board also re-affirmed their advice that the US proposal for joint verification could affect the integrity of Hong Kong's custom jurisdiction, and was therefore unacceptable.

"However, we want to co-operate with the US to enhance our common efforts against illegal transshipment and remain willing to discuss other ways of co-operation in place of joint verification and the other unilateral measures that the US has imposed on us," Miss Yue said.

"We will therefore repeat these points to the US and hope that they can understand our position and agree to further consultations on the basis of such understanding, so that the two sides can come to a mutually acceptable solution.

"We will also tell the US that in view of the increasing adverse impact on our trade as a result of the US measures, we are anxious to take the next steps to protect our trading interests as soon as possible."

Miss Yue pointed out that Hong Kong would also make clear to the US that while a bilateral settlement was preferred, it could not wait forever.

"Therefore, unless we have a positive response from the US within a reasonable period of time, we will have no option but to start formal WTO action without any further delay," she added.

End

Liberalised market for trade in services attainable

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While disappointed at how little has been achieved through the four extended tracks of service negotiations conducted under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Hong Kong still believes that a fully liberalised international market for trade in services is attainable through a multilateral agreement, hopefully at the not too distant future.

The Deputy Director-General of Trade, Mr Tam Wing-pong, who represented Hong Kong at the WTO service negotiations, said this today (Thursday) when he addressed a luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Bayview.

Mr Tam said the lacklustre results of the four tracks of extended negotiations - on movement of natural persons, financial services, basic telecommunication services, and maritime transport services - had drawn much criticism from commentators world-wide.

"We must recognise that there is a vast gap in the varied stages of development of the service industries in the developed and the less developed economies which perhaps could not be easily bridged by a multilateral agreement," he said.

"I could understand why many developing economies are still reluctant to open their service market for fear of irresistible invasion by foreign and more advanced suppliers which would overwhelm their newly developed industries, and why developed economies are wary of committing to keep their markets open while the potentially lucrative markets in the developing camp remain closed to them.

"This is particularly relevant to financial services, basic telecommunication services and maritime transport services where huge markets are involved.

"And yet the main purpose of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is just to overcome such problems to help forge a free service market," said Mr Tam.

Reviewing Hong Kong's participation in WTO negotiations, Mr Tam said one observation was that perhaps the time was not yet ripe for a full-fledged multilateral agreement on these sectors.

"Another observation is that the extended negotiations were carried out sector by sector, quite unlike the comprehensive negotiation practice adopted during the Uruguay Round," he said.

"While this sectoral approach could allow greater focus on the liberalisation of that particular sector, it also reduced the scope for compromise through give-and-take across different sectors.

"Besides, negotiations were more susceptible to the powerful lobbying by their domestic industries, obvious in the case of US for financial services and basic telecommunication services."

In his address, Mr Tam gave a brief account on the latest position of the four tracks of service negotiations required by the Uruguay Round.

He said the negotiation on movement of natural persons was completed with an agreement in July last year which allowed temporary entry of persons to provide services, subject to national immigration rules.

The negotiations on financial services which aimed at dismantling trade barriers in the financial sector, have ended in a temporary agreement.

Just before the negotiation deadline of June 30 last year, Mr Tam recalled, the United States who has all along advocated for an open market for financial services decided that she would not commit to opening the US market to new entrants because, in her view, the offers made by some WTO members were inadequate.

After sustained lobbying and intensive deliberations to salvage the negotiations, an interim agreement was reached on July 28, 1995, whereby participants, including Hong Kong, made binding offers to provide access to their markets on a MFN basis without the US.

"The negotiations on basic telecommunication services are still in a limbo," Mr Tam said.

Again towards the end of the negotiations, he continued, representatives of the US raised two issues which they claimed would prevent them from coming to a full agreement if they were not resolved satisfactorily.

The two issues involve accounting rate and satellite services and are highly complicated and technical in nature.

"Admittedly more time is needed to study them in depth before reaching any possible resolution.

"However, it is generally understood that the US was not happy with the offers other negotiating parties have put on the table and wanted more time to urge them to come up with improved offers," Mr Tam said.

"In the end, an agreement was reached on April 30 this year that negotiations will continue until February 15, 1997, so that sufficient time would be available to work out satisfactory solutions to the two outstanding issues and to allow more time for more improved offers to be made.

"Although there is not yet a formal agreement at the moment on this track of negotiation, the comfort is that offers to liberalise basic telecommunication markets will remain on the table during this interim period and will become effective on January 1, 1998."

On negotiations on maritime transport services, Mr Tam said this track of negotiation was doomed from the beginning with no offer from the US as the US was not convinced that the offers from other participants were meaningful for a full-fledged multilateral agreement.

"However, due to the reluctance of participants to accept a total failure in the negotiations, it was agreed that the negotiation be suspended but resumed in 2000 together with the new round of services negotiations," he said.

"In the meantime, participants were urged to maintain their offers on the table with the MFN obligation suspended until the conclusion of the resumed negotiations."

Together with other WTO members, Mr Tam said, Hong Kong is taking stock on the result reached at the four tracks of service negotiation.

"At the first ministerial conference of the WTO to be held in Singapore in December this year, ministers will have the opportunity to take a critical look at the whole question of trade in services negotiations and give the necessary impetus and political steer for further work on this very important area of world trade," he added.

Recapping Hong Kong's gains from these negotiations, Mr Tam said on the general level, Hong Kong had now a much better understanding of the global operation of the three major services sectors which would help in making better preparation whenever the negotiations resume.

"More specifically, we have secured the commitment of a number of countries to open up their financial services market to Hong Kong," Mr Tam said.

"As for basic telecommunication services, the signals we have received so far from several major players have been positive about a fruitful outcome to be achieved on completion of the extended negotiation next February.

"We still have a long way to go to a fully liberalised international market for trade in services, but we shall no doubt get there, hopefully not too far in the future because the first step towards this direction has been taken which is irreversible."

End

External trade statistics by country and commodity for May

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Detailed statistics on external trade with breakdown by country/territory and commodity for May are released by the Census and Statistics Department today (Thursday).

In May 1996, the value of re-exports grew moderately, by 3.8% over a year earlier to \$100.3 billion, while the value of domestic exports decreased by 12% to \$17.6 billion. Taken together, the value of total exports showed a small positive growth of 1.1% to \$117.9 billion.

Nevertheless, the more modest export performance in May 1996 was affected to a considerable extent by the high base of comparison in May last year. Meanwhile, imports decreased by 2.6% to \$129.9 billion.

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

Comparing May 1996 with May 1995, increases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Japan (+17%), the United Kingdom (+16%), South Korea (+11%), France (+8.5%), Germany (+7.8%), the Netherlands (+4.1%), China (+3.9%) and Singapore (+1.2%).

However, the value of re-exports to Taiwan and the United States decreased by 7.9% and 2% respectively.

Comparing the first five months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, increases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Japan (+28%), the United Kingdom (+15%), France (+14%), Germany (+11%), China (+11%), the Netherlands (+9.9%), Singapore (+9.2%) and South Korea (+6.7%).

However, the value of re-exports to Taiwan and the United States decreased marginally, by 0.6% and 0.4% respectively.

Taking all destinations together, the value of re-exports in the first five months of 1996 was \$458.9 billion, 8.9% 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 five 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 electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$6.3 billion or 15%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$5.2 billion or 24%); clothing (by \$3.4 billion or 11%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$2.7 billion or 5.7%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$2.4 billion or 12%); and footwear (by \$2.2 billion or 9.3%).

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 \$431 million or 1%).

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

Comparing May 1996 with May 1995, the value of domestic exports to most main destinations showed decreases of various magnitudes: France (-27%), Canada (-25%), Taiwan (-18%), the Netherlands (-18%), the United States (-16%), China (-11%), Singapore (-9.2%), Germany (-8.8%) and Japan (-0.7%).

The value of domestic exports to the United Kingdom nevertheless increased by 2.5%.

Comparing the first five months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of domestic exports to the United Kingdom and Taiwan increased by 4.7% and 0.7% respectively.

Decreases were recorded in the value of domestic exports to the United States (-10%), Singapore (-9.7%), Canada (-8.6%), France (-7.8%), the Netherlands (-7%), Germany (-5.2%), China (-2.9%) and Japan (-2%).

Taking all destinations together, the value of domestic exports in the first five months of 1996, at \$82.4 billion, decreased by 5.9% over the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first five months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, increases in the value of domestic exports were registered for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$1.4 billion or 12%); and machinery specialised for particular industries (by \$146 million or 12%).

Over the same period, decreases in the value of domestic exports were recorded for office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$2.2 billion or 28%); clothing (by \$1.5 billion or 6%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$849 million or 20%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares (by \$543 million or 7%); and photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$465 million or 6.9%).

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

Comparing May 1996 with May 1995, decreases were recorded in the value of imports from Germany (-19%), Japan (-15%), Taiwan (-14%), South Korea (-10%), the United States (-2.7%) and Singapore (-0.1%).

However, the value of imports from Italy, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and China increased by 16%, 5.9%, 5.8% and 5.6% respectively.

Comparing the first five months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from Malaysia (+24%), Italy (+22%), the United Kingdom (+17%), Singapore (+11%), the United States (+10%), China (+6.3%), Germany (+3.6%) and South Korea (+2.2%).

However, the value of imports from Japan and Taiwan decreased by 5.9% and 1.9% respectively.

Taking all sources together, the value of imports in the first five months of 1996, at \$610 billion, increased by 4.7% over the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first five months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, increases in the value of imports were registered for electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$8.4 billion or 12%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$5.9 billion or 23%); clothing (by \$2.4 billion or 6.7%); general industrial machinery and equipment, and machine parts (by \$1.8 billion or 9.5%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$1.5 billion or 4%); and telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$1.4 billion or 2.6%);

Over the same period, a decrease in the value of imports was recorded for textiles (by \$2.3 billion or 4.1%).

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 May 1996 will be released in early August.

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

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

TABLE 1 : RE-EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	MAY 96 OVER MAY 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-MAY 96 OVER JAN-MAY 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	37,067	+ 3.9	167,729	+ 10.7
UNITED STATES	19,450	- 2.0	83,952	- 0.4
JAPAN	6,115	+ 16.7	32,043	+ 28.0
GERMANY	3,990	+ 7.8	18,750	+ 11.2
UNITED KINGDOM	3,005	+ 16.3	12,632	+ 15.3
TAIWAN	2,364	- 7.9	10,874	- 0.6
SINGAPORE	2,403	+ 1.2	10,738	+ 9.2
SOUTH KOREA	1,873	+ 10.7	8,255	+ 6.7
FRANCE	1,645	+ 8.5	7,373	+ 13.6
NETHERLANDS	1,416	+ 4.1	6,948	+ 9.9
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GERMANY	3,990	+ 7.8	18,750	+ 11.2
UNITED KINGDOM	3,005	+ 16.3	12,632	+ 15.3
TAIWAN	2,364	- 7.9	10,874	- 0.6
SINGAPORE	2,403	+ 1.2	10,738	+ 9.2

TABLE 2 : RE-EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	MAY 96 OVER MAY 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-MAY 96 OVER JAN-MAY 95 (% CHANGE)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	11,769	+ 2.9	50,497	+ 5.7
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	10,632	+ 5.0	48,844	+ 14.8
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	9,699	+ 9.9	44,517	- 1.0
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	9,134	+ 1.7	39,012	+ 2.4
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	7,357	+ 8.1	35,884	+ 10.6
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	5,724	+ 16.0	27,037	+ 23.9
FOOTWEAR	5,101	+ 3.9	25,731	+ 9.3
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	4,619	+ 3.5	21,519	+ 12.4
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	3,353	+ 2.7	14,460	+ 4.4
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	3,388	+ 14.5	13,811	+ 10.7

TABLE 3 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	MAY 96 OVER MAY 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-MAY 96 OVER JAN-MAY 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	5,422	- 11.3	24,229	- 2.9
UNITED STATES	4,175	- 15.7	19,197	- 10.1
JAPAN	1,027	- 0.7	4,839	- 2.0
SINGAPORE	912	- 9.2	4,585	- 9.7
GERMANY	933	- 8.8	4,115	- 5.2
UNITED KINGDOM	879	+ 2.5	3,911	+ 4.7
TAIWAN	544	- 18.3	2,977	+ 0.7
NETHERLANDS	341	- 17.7	1,740	- 7.0
CANADA	260	- 24.5	1,427	- 8.6
FRANCE	195	- 26.5	1,087	- 7.8

TABLE 4 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	MAY 96 OVER MAY 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-MAY 96 OVER JAN-MAY 95 (% CHANGE)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	5,079	- 10.9	22,857	- 6.0
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	2,476	- 9.2	13,046	+ 11.8
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WARES)	1,662	- 4.4	7,165	- 7.0
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	1,326	- 12.9	6,266	- 6.9
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	1,092	- 25.7	5,695	- 28.0
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,311	- 4.3	5,640	- 1.8
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	653	- 25.8	3,391	- 20.0
MANUFACTURES OF METALS	376	- 21.7	1,729	- 7.0
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	296	- 29.1	1,626	- 15.0
MACHINERY SPECIALIZED FOR PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES	248	- 8.2	1,314	+ 12.5

TABLE 5 : IMPORTS FROM TEN MAIN SUPPLIERS

SUPPLIER	MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	MAY 96 OVER MAY 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-MAY 96 OVER JAN-MAY 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	48,802	+ 5.6	215,572	+ 6.3
JAPAN	15,996	- 14.5	84,623	- 5.9
TAIWAN	10,835	- 13.6	50,661	- 1.9
UNITED STATES	11,358	- 2.7	49,302	+ 10.3
SINGAPORE	6,653	- 0.1	34,074	+ 10.8
SOUTH KOREA	6,861	- 10.1	31,152	+ 2.2
MALAYSIA	2,689	+ 5.9	13,804	+ 24.2
GERMANY	2,605	- 18.6	13,731	+ 3.6
UNITED KINGDOM	2,819	+ 5.8	13,337	+ 17.1
ITALY	2,524	+ 15.9	12,480	+ 22.3

TABLE 6 : IMPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	MAY 96 OVER MAY 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-MAY 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-MAY 96 OVER JAN-MAY 95 (% CHANGE)
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	15,908	- 0.9	78,028	+ 12.1
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	10,939	- 3.6	56,756	+ 2.6
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	12,590	- 5.8	53,368	- 4.1
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	8,811	- 1.9	38,900	+ 4.0
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	8,224	+ 7.0	37,575	+ 6.7
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	7,215	+ 27.1	31,377	+ 23.1
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,073	- 8.8	25,256	*
FOOTWEAR	4,669	+ 6.2	22,417	+ 6.5
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	4,464	+ 3.3	21,056	+ 9.5
NON-METALLIC MINERAL MANUFACTURES	3,663	- 7.8	17,757	- 1.5

* DENOTES LESS THAN 0.05%

End

Senior Naval Officer to take salute at Sea School

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Chief of Staff and Senior Royal Naval Officer at the British Garrison, Captain Peter Melson, will take the salute at a passing out parade at the Hong Kong Sea School, Stanley, tomorrow (Friday).

Due to the withdrawal of British Forces in June 1997, this will be the last time a Royal Naval Officer will take the salute and it is a particular honour for Captain Melson as 1996 sees the school celebrating its 50th anniversary.

After the parade inspection and march past, Captain Melson, who serves as an observer on the school's Board of Management, will then present some of the 72 boys, all age 16, with trophies and certificates marking their academic achievements and performances throughout the year.

The Hong Kong Sea School was established in 1946 to enable orphans and street children to obtain a basic education and learn seamanship and stewardship skills for employment at sea.

Today the students are boys who have all chosen to be educated in a variety of practical skills including, mechanical engineering, office practice and language training as well as the discipline of seamanship.

This year it was the only secondary school to participate in the International Dragon Boat Race at Sha Tin and took top honours, breaking the course record and beating all university and post secondary college teams.

End

Inquiry into barge accident ordered

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The acting Director of Marine, Mr S Y Tsui, has ordered a Local Marine Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the collision of a barge with the South Tsing Yi Bridge early this (Thursday) morning, a Marine Department spokesman said.

Senior Surveyor of Ships, Mr Lee Kwok-ping and Marine Officer, Mr Lau Ka-kau, have been appointed to be the Inquiry Officers.

The 45-metre barge lost control after the tow wire linking her to a tug broke. She drifted and subsequently her mast rammed into the South Tsing Yi Bridge.

Part of the handrail on the bridge about 10 metres in length was damaged.

No oil spill was reported and no one was injured in the collision.

End

STI to attend APEC trade ministers meeting

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The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue, will represent Hong Kong at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Trade Ministers Meeting to be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, on July 15 and 16.

The main purpose of the meeting is to formulate initiatives on trade and investment liberalisation that APEC economies as a group will advocate at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference to be held in Singapore in December.

"APEC has already set itself the ambitious goal of achieving free flow of goods, services and investment within the Asia-Pacific region by 2010/2020. APEC wishes the rest of the world to catch up by pursuing further multilateral liberalisation," Miss Yue said.

"The Singapore Conference will be a very important meeting for the WTO and for sustaining the momentum of trade liberalisation. The Conference is the first ministerial meeting of the WTO since its establishment in 1995, and will chart the future course for global trade liberalisation.

"We hope to produce at Christchurch an APEC position on the future direction and work programme of the WTO that will lift the levels of debates and decision at the Singapore Ministerial Conference."

The Christchurch meeting will also review progress made on the preparation of individual action plans by APEC member governments to liberalise their trade and investment regimes.

Last November in Osaka, economic leaders of APEC adopted an action agenda on the basis of which each APEC member must formulate within 1996 its own action plan to achieve the APEC free trade goal.

While in Christchurch, Miss Yue will also meet bilaterally with ministers from other APEC member economies to exchange views on trade and economic issues of mutual interest.

APEC is an informal forum for high level government-to-government dialogue on trade and economic issues, and at present comprises 18 members.

Besides Hong Kong, other members are Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and the USA.

End

Parents urged to keep in touch with school

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Parents' role does not stop in the family. They also play a key role in helping the school to help their children.

Officiating at the 18th Annual Graduation Day of Holy Family Canossian College today (Thursday), the Director of Education, Mrs Helen C P Lai Yu, encouraged parents to take the initiative to keep in touch with the school and to have a clearer idea of the progress of their children.

Mrs Yu said the parents helped in moulding the character and shaping the behaviour of their children in the family and it was, therefore, crucial for them to acquire and to improve parenting skills.

She said what parents could and should afford was time and presence and believed that mutual trust would facilitate confidence and provide a firm foundation for parents to offer timely advice, guidance and encouragement to their children.

Mrs Yu, at the same time, stressed the important part played by parents in the school.

"It is impossible for teachers, however keen and committed, to see to every aspect of the development of individual students. It is necessary for parents, it is incumbent upon parents, to recognise their responsibility and to shoulder it with the assistance of school," she said.

The Education Department recognises the importance of parents' contribution to school education and management and thus, has set up a Home-School Co-operation Committee and a home-school co-operation unit to assist schools and parents in founding and running parent-teacher associations.

End

123 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight

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A group of 123 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam today (Thursday) on the 45th flight under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP).

All of the returnees, comprising 56 men, 28 women, 20 boys and 19 girls, are from North Vietnam.

The majority of them arrived in Hong Kong in 1989, with the remaining in 1988, 1990, 1991, 1995 and 1996.

The group brought to 4,006 the total number repatriated on ORP flights since November 1991.

End

Monitors' Report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Orderly Repatriation Programme operation this (Thursday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The two monitors comprised a non-official Justice of the Peace, Mr Chau How-chen; and a representative from a non-governmental organisation, Ms Nadine de Lamotte from Medecins Sans Frontieres.

End

Plover Cove visitor centre re-open

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The Plover Cover Country Park Visitor Centre will be re-open for public use after being shut down for renovation work.

An Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) spokesman said it had been closed for necessary maintenance and re-introduction of new exhibits.

The renovated centre is now ready to provide services for visitors together with four others centres in country parks in Aberdeen, Tai Mo Shan, Clear Water Bay and Shing Mun as well as the Lions Nature Education Centre, Sai Kung.

The spokesman said a number of facilities and exhibits were installed in visitor centres for educational purpose.

Among the standard facilities are an audio-visual room, a reception area, a nature corner and many colourful photographs concerning the respective country park and its unique features.

All visitor centres are open daily, except Tuesdays, between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm.

No advance booking is required for tours to these centres by individual visitors. But availability for group visits may be confirmed by telephoning AFD's Conservation Education Unit on 2733 2121.

End

Outstanding schools athletes won awards

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Twenty student athletes will be presented with the School Outstanding Athlete Awards tomorrow (Friday) for their remarkable performance and sportsmanship in the schools international and interport competitions in the 1995-96 school year.

The list of Schools outstanding athletes is as follows:

Swimming:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Secondary Boys | - Tsui Lap-yin (St Joseph's College) |
| Secondary Girls | - Wong Hoi-tik, Heidi (Belilios Public School) |
| Primary Boys | - Lam Cheuk-ho (Hennessy Road Government Primary AM School) |

Cross Country:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Secondary Boys | - Ho Hoi-to (STFA Tam Pak Yu College) |
| Secondary Girls | - Li Yin-yee, Ali (Good Hope School) |

Table-tennis:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Secondary Boys | - Tang Kwok-kei (Kiangsu-chekiang College) |
| Primary Girls | - Li Yuen-ching (PLK Chong Kee Ting Primary AM) |

Badminton:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Secondary Boys | - Liu Kwok-wah (Kiangsu-chekiang College) |
| Secondary Girls | - Chan Mei-mei (Buddhist Kok Kwong Secondary School) |

Athletics:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Secondary Boys | - Wan Tat-yung (Diocesan Boys' School)
Leung Tat-wai (Jockey Club Ti-Yi College) |
| Secondary Girls | - Hung Lai-hong, Wendy (Diocesan Girls' School) |
| Primary Boys | - Wu Man-chiu (HKSYP and IA Chan Lai So Chun Memorial School) |

Basketball:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Secondary Boys | - Leung Kwok-shing (YL Lutheran Secondary School) |
| Secondary Girls | - Chan Yin-ling (Ying Wa College) |
| Primary Boys | - Tse Kwok-fu (Kwong Ming School AM) |

Football:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Secondary Boys | - Fung Ka-ki (Jockey Club Ti-Yi College) |
| Primary Boys | - Tse Chun-hei (PLK Chee Jing Yin Primary School) |

Volleyball:

Secondary Boys - Ngai Chun-kuen (La Salle College)
Secondary Girls - Ho Ka-yan (Belilios Public School)

At the same time, two student ambassadors have also been selected to represent Hong Kong in the Atlanta Olympic Youth Camp.

The award presentation and a farewell reception for the student ambassadors are organised by the Education Department and the Hong Kong Schools Sports Council.

The Director of Education, Mrs Helen C P Lai Yu, and the President of ASF and OC of Hong Kong, Mr A de O Sales will officiate at the ceremony.

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	1,769	0930	+195
Closing balance in the account	1,833	1000	+195
Change attributable to :		1100	+190
Money market activity	+189	1200	+190
LAF today	- 125	1500	+190
		1600	+189

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.5 *+0.0* 11.7.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.04	2 years	2805	6.30	99.89	6.46
1 month	5.14	3 years	3904	6.30	98.89	6.85
3 months	5.30	5 years	5106	7.23	99.42	7.51
6 months	5.48	7 years	7305	7.60	99.45	7.85
12 months	5.92	5 years	M502	7.30	99.02	7.71

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$15,625 million

Closed July 11, 1996

End