



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Public briefing session on ECR7 Consultation Document	1
Special campaign to recruit local workers for ACP jobs	2
Trial of timed charge for public payphones	3
Recommendations on winding up allowance accepted	4
External trade statistics for October	5
\$2.7 million relief fund grant to fire victims	15
Central Fairway to revert to its original alignment	15
Licence fees for employment agencies revised	17
Occupational Safety Seminar for civil servants	17
BOE members visit skills opportunity school	18
Garrison to bid farewell to Hong Kong Chinese soldiers	19
Hong Kong Monetary Authority interbank liquidity	20

Public briefing session on ECR7 Consultation Document

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Members of the public are invited to participate in a briefing session on Saturday (December 14) to give their views on quality school education, the theme of the Education Commission Report No 7 Consultation Document.

The briefing, which will be held at Wellington College in Telford Gardens, Kowloon Bay, at 10 am, is one of a series of sessions conducted by the EC to solicit views from various sectors on the recommendations in the consultation document.

Present at the briefing will be the EC Chairman, Professor Rosie Young; an EC member, Ms Sansan Ching; and officials of the Education Department.

Similar briefings are scheduled for Legislative Councillors, principals, teachers, school councils and sponsors, advisory boards and committees, education faculties of tertiary institutions, and District Board members during the two-month consultation ending on January 15.

A spokesman for the Education Commission said today (Thursday): "The views collected will be taken into account before finalising and presenting the recommendations to the Government early next year.

"The Consultation Document was published on November 19 with recommendations aimed at helping schools to improve their performance and ensuring that resources for school education are used in the most effective, efficient and accountable manner.

"It represents the Commission's vision of a quality school education system which will have lasting benefits to the generations to come," the spokesman said.

The major recommendations are on the development of school-based management; the introduction of pilot incentive schemes for schools; the establishment of a framework for developing and monitoring quality of school education; the role of the Education Department; and training of key players in the school system.

This is the second phase of the Commission's two-round consultation exercise to gauge public response. The first round of public consultation on broad principles was held in June this year.

Copies of the ECR7 Consultation Document are available at all district offices and the sub-offices of the Education Department. It is also available at the E-mail address: embinfo@emb.gcn.gov.hk.

Views can be forwarded before January 15, 1997 to the Secretary, Education Commission, ninth floor, Central Government Offices (West Wing), 11 Ice House Street, Central (fax: 2537 4591 or e-mail address: embinfo@emb.gcn.gov.hk.)

End

Special campaign to recruit local workers for ACP jobs

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The Labour Department will be playing an active part in the special Local Workers Recruitment Campaign for the new airport and related projects which will run for two weeks from next Monday (December 16) to December 31.

This recruitment campaign will be jointly organised by the Government, the Airport Authority and the Mass Transit Railway Corporation, and will be based at both the Airport Core Programme Job Centre and the Local Employment Service of the Labour Department.

The purpose of this campaign is to enable contractors concerned to make an extensive trawl of the market for suitable local workers for those job vacancies which have to be filled within the next three months in order to meet the tight works schedule of the projects.

On the basis of the results of this recruitment campaign, the Government will give expeditious approval of applications for imported workers to fill any particular shortfall of labour established through the two-week recruitment exercise during this campaign.

Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Employment Services), Mrs Jennie Chor, said today (Thursday) that both the Local Employment Service and the Special Placement Team (SPT) for the Airport Core Programme of the Department would step up their efforts in helping local construction workers to find jobs in the new airport and related projects during this campaign.

During the two-week campaign period, information on job vacancies will be displayed in the SPT and all LES offices throughout the territory.

The SPT will also send the vacancy information to over 20 relevant trade unions, encouraging their members to apply for the jobs.

To strengthen the placement service to local workers, the SPT on the second floor of Tsuen Wan Government Offices will extend its working hours on Saturdays from noon to 5.30 pm during the campaign.

Mrs Chor urged local construction workers interested in the airport-related jobs to register at the SPT or any of the LES offices. They could also call the "jobs hotline" 2492 2001 for more information of the vacancies.

End

Trial of timed charge for public payphones

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The Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) announced today (Thursday) that a trial of timed charges for public payphones will be conducted by the Hong Kong Telephone Company Limited (HKTC) for a three-month period from December 18, 1996 to March 18, 1997. About 400 payphones have been selected for the trial. The call charge for a local call on these phones will be \$1 for 5 minutes.

"At present, the charge for making a local call at all HKTC operated public payphones is \$1. There is no time limit to the length of the call. From time to time, OFTA receives submissions from the public about their concern over the prolonged occupation of some public payphones located in busy areas. The prolonged occupation of payphones is causing inconvenience to other users," a spokesman for the OFTA said.

"The purpose of this trial is to gather information on customers attitude and usage pattern on public payphones, in particular, whether putting a time limit to the \$1 payphone charge will help ease the long queue problem in busy areas," the spokesman continued.

The kiosks of the payphones selected for the trial will be clearly labelled for easy identification. Buntings will be hung at the entrance to the kiosks of the payphones under trial and a label will be adhered to the phone informing users about the trial tariff. In addition, customers will be reminded 20 seconds before expiry of the paid call duration by a tone and a LCD display to insert another coin for continual usage.

During the trial period, HKTC will commission an on-site survey to collect responses and comments from payphone users.

At the completion of the trial, OFTA will assess the information and feedback collected to find out the opinion of the public on such a charging scheme and whether such a payphone charging system is helpful to ease the long queue.

"This exercise is conducted to collect the views of the public to overcome the problem of long queues on payphones. It has no connection whatsoever with the exercise on timed local calls for residential and business lines", the spokesman said.

End

Recommendations on winding up allowance accepted

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The Commission on Remuneration for Members of the Legislative Council has completed its consideration of the report on Review on Winding Up Allowance for LegCo Members and accepted most of the recommendations contained in it.

The report was submitted by the Legislative Council Subcommittee on Review of Allowances for Members of the Legislative Council.

"The Commission's report has been fully accepted by the Government," a Government spokesman said today (Thursday).

"The Commission's recommendations, which are of general application, have taken into account LegCo Members' practical needs and at the same time maintain the accountability principle. We will seek the approval of the Finance Committee next month to implement these proposals," he added.

The main recommendation of the Commission is that the winding up allowance should no longer be set at \$180,000, but should consist of two elements-

- (i) a fixed amount equivalent to the total monthly operating expenses reimbursement and district office allowance, payable on a reimbursement basis (for example, a total of \$92,780 at present rates), of which \$10,000 may be claimed against certified claims of expenses incurred, to enable LegCo Members to cover all expenses incurred (including liabilities arising from premature termination of tenancy agreements) when they have to leave office for reasons beyond their control; and

- (ii) a separate amount with no pre-set ceiling, payable on the basis of the actual severance payment that needs to be paid to staff employed using the operating expenses reimbursement.

The Commission is chaired by the Hon J D McGregor. Its members at the time the report was produced were Dr Cheng Hon-kwan, Mr Christopher Cheng Wai-chee, Mr Lawrence Lam Yin-ming, Dr Thomas Leung Kwok-fai and Miss Gladys Li Chi-hei.

End

External trade statistics for October

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In October 1996, the value of re-exports grew by 8.2% over a year earlier to \$110.5 billion, while the value of domestic exports decreased by 6.5% to \$19.4 billion. Meanwhile, imports increased by 5.2% to \$138.1 billion.

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

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

Comparing October 1996 with October 1995, increases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Singapore (+19%), the Netherlands (+18%), China (+14%), Japan (+13%), South Korea (+12%), the United Kingdom (+8.5%) and the United States (+4.9%).

However, decreases were recorded in the value of re-exports to Taiwan (-4.1%), France (-1.5%) and Germany (-0.5%).

Comparing the first ten months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of re-exports to most main destinations showed increases of various magnitudes : Japan (+18%), the United Kingdom (+14%), the Netherlands (+11%), France (+8.7%), China (+8.3%), Singapore (+7.5%), South Korea (+6.5%), Germany (+6.1%) and the United States (+3.9%).

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

Taking all destinations together, the value of re-exports in the first ten months of 1996 was \$986.9 billion, 6.9% higher than that in the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first ten 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 \$10.7 billion or 23%); clothing (by \$8.7 billion or 11%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$7.6 billion or 8.1%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$7.2 billion or 6.0%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$5.1 billion or 12%); footwear (by \$4.5 billion or 9.0%); and textiles (by \$2.2 billion or 2.8%).

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 \$2.6 billion or 2.6%).

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

Comparing October 1996 with October 1995, the value of domestic exports to China and Germany increased by 7.1% and 2.6% respectively.

On the other hand, decreases were recorded in the value of domestic exports to Singapore (-34%), Taiwan (-17%), the United States (-14%), Canada (-12%), France (-9.4%), the Netherlands (-8.7%), Japan (-4.6%) and the United Kingdom (-4.4%). Nevertheless, domestic exports to many of these markets showed smaller declines in October than in September.

Comparing the first ten months of 1996 with the same period in 1995, the value of domestic exports to all main destinations showed decreases of various magnitudes : Singapore (-17%), Taiwan (-15%), the United States (-13%), Canada (-9.7%), the Netherlands (-8.8%), France (-7.9%), Germany (-6.0%), China (-4.3%), Japan (-3.2%) and the United Kingdom (-1.7%).

Taking all destinations together, the value of domestic exports in the first ten months of 1996, at \$175.9 billion, decreased by 8.7% over the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first ten 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 \$4.3 billion or 7.0%); office machines and automatic data processing machines (by \$4.2 billion or 28%); telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment (by \$1.9 billion or 21%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares (by \$1.6 billion or 9.4%); photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks (by \$1.4 billion or 10%); and electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$661 million or 2.5%).

Over the same period, an increase in the value of domestic exports was registered for professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus (by \$260 million or 11%).

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

Comparing October 1996 with October 1995, increases were recorded in the value of imports from the United Kingdom (+23%), Malaysia (+16%), Italy (+14%), the United States (+13%), Germany (+11%), China (+9.5%) and Singapore (+0.9%).

However, decreases were recorded in the value of imports from Taiwan (-13%), South Korea (-3.6%) and Japan (-2.1%).

Comparing the first ten 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 (+8.6%), the United States (+6.5%), China (+5.9%), Singapore (+5.0%) and Germany (+2.9%).

However, decreases were recorded in the value of imports from Japan (-7.4%), Taiwan (-5.0%) and South Korea (-0.5%).

Taking all sources together, the value of imports in the first ten months of 1996, at \$1,273.2 billion, increased by 2.8% over the same period in 1995.

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

Comparing the first ten 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 \$10.4 billion or 19%); electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof (by \$7.1 billion or 4.6%); clothing (by \$6.2 billion or 7.6%); miscellaneous manufactured articles consisting mainly of baby carriages, toys, games and sporting goods (by \$3.8 billion or 4.3%); and footwear (by \$3.4 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 \$4.7 billion or 3.9%); textiles (by \$2.5 billion or 2.3%); and non-metallic mineral manufactures (by \$1.2 billion or 3.2%).

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 October 1996 will be released in early January 1997.

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

The October 1996 issue of the "Hong Kong External Trade" with detailed analyses on the performance of Hong Kong's external trade in October 1996 will be on sale at \$129 per copy around December 21, 1996.

The report can be purchased at either (i) the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, or (ii) 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. No. 2598 8194) and enquiries on trade statistics to the Census and Statistics Department (Tel. No. 2582 4915).

TABLE I : RE-EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	OCT 96 OVER OCT 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-OCT 96 OVER JAN-OCT 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	37,872	+ 13.8	342,363	+ 8.3
UNITED STATES	23,480	+ 4.9	204,771	+ 3.9
JAPAN	7,877	+ 12.6	67,157	+ 17.9
GERMANY	4,148	- 0.5	39,575	+ 6.1
UNITED KINGDOM	3,593	+ 8.5	30,029	+ 13.6
SINGAPORE	2,738	+ 18.8	23,029	+ 7.5
TAIWAN	2,388	- 4.1	21,862	- 4.8
SOUTH KOREA	1,826	+ 12.4	16,988	+ 6.5
FRANCE	1,640	- 1.5	15,644	+ 8.7
NETHERLANDS	1,673	+ 18.1	15,115	+ 10.9

TABLE 2 : RE-EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	OCT 96 OVER OCT 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-OCT 96 OVER JAN-OCT 95 (% CHANGE)
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	14,991	- 0.3	127,330	+ 6.0
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	12,116	+ 12.2	102,281	+ 8.1
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	11,279	- 3.8	96,838	- 2.6
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	9,534	+ 14.9	84,867	+ 11.4
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	8,904	+ 10.2	80,184	+ 2.8
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	6,799	+ 27.9	56,884	+ 23.1
FOOTWEAR	5,214	+ 4.4	54,869	+ 9.0
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,367	+ 15.9	46,228	+ 12.4
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR CONTAINERS	3,225	+ 7.4	30,755	+ 3.9
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	1,944	+ 15.3	24,820	+ 8.8

TABLE 3 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO TEN MAIN DESTINATIONS

DESTINATION	OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	OCT 96 OVER OCT 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-OCT 96 OVER JAN-OCT 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	5,898	+ 7.1	50,877	- 4.3
UNITED STATES	5,393	- 14.1	44,449	- 13.0
JAPAN	962	- 4.6	9,566	- 3.2
GERMANY	914	+ 2.6	9,242	- 6.0
UNITED KINGDOM	899	- 4.4	8,779	- 1.7
SINGAPORE	697	- 34.4	8,521	- 16.9
TAIWAN	656	- 16.9	5,603	- 15.4
NETHERLANDS	298	- 8.7	3,837	- 8.8
CANADA	339	- 11.5	3,284	- 9.7
FRANCE	231	- 9.4	2,401	- 7.9

TABLE 4 : DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	OCT 96 OVER OCT 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-OCT 96 OVER JAN-OCT 95 (% CHANGE)
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	6,718	- 2.3	56,741	- 7.0
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	2,683	- 8.3	25,380	- 2.5
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WARES)	1,752	- 6.1	15,079	- 9.4
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	1,349	- 14.4	12,593	- 10.3
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	1,261	- 0.6	11,485	- 2.5
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	1,098	- 20.7	10,955	- 27.7
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	806	- 19.5	7,140	- 21.1
MANUFACTURES OF METALS	363	- 6.1	3,529	- 8.6
PLASTICS IN PRIMARY FORMS	357	- 19.1	3,269	- 13.8
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CONTROLLING INSTRUMENTS AND APPARATUS	306	+ 18.9	2,667	+ 10.8

TABLE 5 : IMPORTS FROM TEN MAIN SUPPLIERS

SUPPLIER	OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	OCT 96 OVER OCT 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-OCT 96 OVER JAN-OCT 95 (% CHANGE)
CHINA	53,420	+ 9.5	475,549	+ 5.9
JAPAN	18,568	- 2.1	171,764	- 7.4
TAIWAN	10,729	- 12.6	101,954	- 5.0
UNITED STATES	11,449	+ 12.7	101,170	+ 6.5
SINGAPORE	6,649	+ 0.9	67,763	+ 5.0
SOUTH KOREA	6,130	- 3.6	61,157	- 0.5
MALAYSIA	2,877	+ 16.0	27,717	+ 17.6
GERMANY	2,681	+ 10.6	27,577	+ 2.9
UNITED KINGDOM	3,124	+ 22.9	27,306	+ 8.6
ITALY	2,895	+ 14.3	25,923	+ 15.9

TABLE 6 : IMPORTS OF TEN PRINCIPAL COMMODITY DIVISIONS

COMMODITY DIVISION	OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	OCT 96 OVER OCT 95 (% CHANGE)	JAN-OCT 1996 (HKD Mn.)	JAN-OCT 96 OVER JAN-OCT 95 (% CHANGE)
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPARATUS AND APPLIANCES, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS THEREOF	18,452	+ 7.7	161,742	+ 4.6
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND RECORDING AND REPRODUCING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT	12,732	- 10.9	116,914	- 3.9
TEXTILE YARN, FABRICS, MADE-UP ARTICLES AND RELATED PRODUCTS	11,269	+ 1.1	106,986	- 2.3
MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES (MAINLY BABY CARRIAGES, TOYS, GAMES AND SPORTING GOODS)	10,178	+ 4.5	91,181	+ 4.3
ARTICLES OF APPAREL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES	10,397	+ 13.7	87,628	+ 7.6
OFFICE MACHINES AND AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINES	7,646	+ 29.7	66,241	+ 18.5
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, OPTICAL GOODS, WATCHES AND CLOCKS	5,758	+ 7.3	52,446	+ 0.6
FOOTWEAR	4,639	+ 7.2	47,313	+ 7.9
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, AND MACHINE PARTS	2,937	+ 5.0	37,400	+ 5.7
NON-METALLIC MINERAL MANUFACTURES	3,724	+ 5.5	35,689	- 3.2

End

\$2.7 million relief fund grant to fire victims

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The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has granted more than \$2.7 million under the Emergency Relief Fund to victims and family members affected by the No. 5 alarm fire at Garley Building, Yau Ma Tei.

A department spokesman said today (Thursday) that staff of SWD's family services centres and social security field units have already reached out and contacted all 121 families of the injured and the deceased.

"Among them, 91 families have been provided with the various welfare services including financial assistance, counselling, clinical psychologist services, child care, home help and care for the elderly," the spokesman said.

The department's clinical psychologists have also organised five Critical Incident Stress Debriefing sessions for the victims and their families, members of the public as well as staff of the Chow Sang Sang Jewellery Company.

Meanwhile, caseworkers of the SWD will continue to contact the families of the injured and deceased to offer appropriate assistance.

End

Central Fairway to revert to its original alignment

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The Central Fairway, one of the busiest traffic lanes in Victoria Harbour, will revert to its original alignment on December 16 (Monday), the Assistant Director of Marine (Port Services), Mr Roger Tupper, announced today (Thursday).

The fairway was first re-aligned in February 1994 and subsequently in December 1994 and January 1996 to facilitate marine works associated with the Western Harbour Crossing and the Airport Railway Tunnel within Victoria Harbour.

"As the marine works for the two major projects are approaching completion, it is now possible to revert the current realigned Central Fairway to its original alignment," Mr Tupper said.

All other fairways adjoining the Central Fairway will also be reverted to their original alignments in the same exercise. The navigational and special marker buoys demarcating the Central Fairway and the related fairways will be relocated starting from 10 am on Monday.

Mr Tupper was pleased that the marine accidents remained at an acceptable level even though the normal pattern of traffic was disrupted when the marine works were in progress.

"The effort by the Marine Department to maintain the safety of the harbour and the co-operation from the port users to make our port a safe one have paid off," he said.

As part of its effort to maintain a safe harbour when the marine works are in progress, the department has marked the works areas with special marker buoys to guide masters.

"We issue them with notices from time to time to inform them the changes and the new arrangements. At the same time we deploy additional patrol launches to give on-the-spot advice and regulate traffic," he said.

To keep the traffic volume at an acceptable level, the department discouraged ocean-going vessels from transiting the central harbour, Mr Tupper said.

In addition it mounted a series of marine safety campaigns in the central harbour and organised seminars for masters to remind them of the rules of the road.

As a safety precaution, navigational warnings on the fairway realignment will be broadcast at regular intervals and additional patrol launches will be deployed to regulate traffic.

For the first three days after the fairway reversion, marine works in the vicinity of the Central Fairway will be suspended.

Mr Tupper appealed to masters and operators of vessels to be vigilant at all times.

"They tend to relax when the marine works areas begin to disappear, but that does not mean they can be less watchful," he said.

End

Licence fees for employment agencies revised

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The fee for the issue or renewal of licence for an employment agency under the Employment Agency Regulations will be adjusted with effect from January 17, 1997.

The adjustment, which has been approved by the Secretary for the Treasury under the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance, is set out in the Employment Agency (Amendment)(No. 2) Regulation 1996 gazetted on December 6, 1996.

"The licence fee for an employment agency and the fee for the duplicate licence for each of the branch office of the employment agency has been revised from \$1,400 and \$280 to \$1,870 and \$360 respectively," a spokesman for the Labour Department said today (Thursday).

The spokesman explained that under the Employment Ordinance, any person wishing to operate an employment agency must apply to the Commissioner for Labour for a licence and that an employment agency which operates at more than one location is required to apply for a duplicate licence for each branch location.

The fees were last revised in December 1994 and the present revision aimed at recovering the full administrative cost incurred.

Enquiries about the licence fees may be directed to the Employment Agency Administration of the Labour Department on 2852 3535 or 2852 3541.

End

Occupational Safety Seminar for civil servants

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Some 300 civil servants representing 50 departments attended today (Thursday) a seminar on occupational health and safety practices in offices, which was jointly organised by the Civil Service Branch and Occupational Safety and Health Council.

Officiated by the Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Joseph W P Wong, the seminar provided a forum for civil servants to share their experience in promoting good occupational health and safety practices in offices.

This was the first of two seminars aimed at helping departmental management and staff understand the Occupational Safety Charter better.

The Charter, launched in September this year, carries the theme "safety is a shared responsibility".

It conveys constructive and meaningful messages to employees so that they understand their rights to enjoy a safe working environment. The Charter also outlines the responsibilities of employers to prevent workplace accidents and promote occupational health.

The Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Lau Lai-chiu, elaborated on the role of the Civil Service Branch in the promotion of occupational health and safety in the civil service.

Participants were briefed on the Charter by the Acting Deputy Commissioner for Labour, Mr Mak Sai-yiu and Executive Director of the Occupational Safety and Health Council, Mr Yip Yuk-lun.

Other panel speakers included the staff side representative of the CSB Working Group on Occupational Safety and Health in the Civil Service, Mr Wong Hyo; Acting Chief Factory Inspector, Mr Wong Wai-chi and Occupational Health Officer of Labour Department, Dr Lo Tsun-yan.

The next seminar on the Charter will be held on December 17.

End

BOE members visit skills opportunity school

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The Board of Education Chairman, Mr Cheng Mo-chi, and three other members today (Thursday) visited CCC Nim Tsi School in To Kwa Wan. They were accompanied by the Assistant Director of Education (Services), Mr David Pun. The three members were Mr Chan Tak-hang, Mr Ronald Lau Yiu-fai and Mr Issac Tse Pak-hoi.

On arrival, they were greeted by the school head, Mr Rodney Wong. Mr Wong briefed the visitors on various aspects of the school, and accompanied the group on a tour of the classrooms and workshops.

CCC Nim Tsi School was founded in 1980 under the sponsorship of the Church of Christ in China (Hong Kong Council). It is now an aided whole-day co-educational Skills Opportunity School for students with serious learning difficulties aged between 12 and 16. It operates Secondary 1-3 classes, with five classes at each level, providing a total of 300 places.

Academic and non-academic subjects take up 60 percent and 40 per cent respectively of the school curriculum. A range of extra-curricular activities are offered. Four school social workers provide case work, group work, parent counselling services and career guidance for students. An educational psychologist visits the school every fortnight.

End

Garrison to bid farewell to Hong Kong Chinese soldiers

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A long and illustrious association with the British Garrison will come to a ceremonial end when members of the Hong Kong Military Service Corps (HKMSC) hold their disbandment parade on Stonecutters Island on Saturday (December 14).

Over 270 Hong Kong Chinese soldiers will take part in the parade which will also be attended by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, the Adjutant General, General Sir Michael Rose, and Commander British Forces, Major General Bryan Dutton.

The Corps is a unique part of the British Army and is thought to be the last locally raised regular force which once stood at some 1 400 but which now, since drawdown, numbers 500 officers and men.

Among those taking part in the final parade are the Lion and Dragon Dance teams, the Motorcycle Display Team from 29 Transport Regiment of the Royal Logistic Corps, men from Dragon Company of the HKMSC's infantry unit, guard dog teams from the Defence Animal Support Unit and Royal Military Police from the Adjutant General's Corps.

Following the Governor's inspection of the troops, the Corps' flag will be lowered for the last time and paraded through the ranks before being handed over to the Hong Kong Soldiers' Association for safekeeping.

The history of the Hong Kong Chinese soldiers with the Army began in the 1880s when locals were employed by the Royal Engineers in building barracks and defence works.

Members of the Hong Kong Chinese Regiment fought against the Japanese in 1941 and in 1948 the Hong Kong Chinese Training Unit was formed. This later became the Hong Kong Military Service Corps in 1962, a change in both name and organisation which offered local soldiers the opportunity to pursue a full career in the Army.

Today there are 500 Hong Kong Chinese officers and soldiers serving throughout the Garrison in a wide variety of roles and employments.

Sadly the Corps will disband on March 31, 1997 as part of the Garrison's drawdown prior to the transfer of sovereignty but its reputation for loyal service and excellence will live on.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority interbank liquidity

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		TIME	AGGREGATE BALANCE OF SETTLEMENT ACCOUNTS
OPENING AGGREGATE BALANCE	804 MN	0930 HR	27580 MN
CLOSING AGGREGATE BALANCE	1243 MN	1000 HR	28200 MN
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100 HR	42993 MN
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+13414 MN	1200 HR	49205 MN
LAF REVERSAL	+8 MN	1500 HR	52738 MN
LAF TODAY	-12983 MN	1600 HR	51329 MN

LAF RATE 4.00% BID/6.00% OFFER TWI 124.8 *-0.1* 12.12.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF Bills		EF Notes/MTRC Notes				
Terms	Yield	Terms	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.09	2 years	2811	5.72	100.10	5.74
1 month	4.30	3 years	3910	6.28	100.59	6.14
3 months	4.63	5 years	5109	7.32	102.70	6.75
6 months	4.90	7 years	7311	6.80	98.91	7.12
12 months	5.18	10 years	1610	7.37	101.10	7.34
		5 years	M503	7.35	101.43	7.10

TOTAL TURNOVER OF EF BILLS AND NOTES - \$17,989 MN

CLOSED DECEMBER 12, 1996

End