

HK ranks 2nd in global competitiveness

Hong Kong and Singapore have retained their top positions on the 1998 World Economic Forum's global competitiveness report despite the Asian economic crisis. Trailing only behind Singapore, Hong Kong was found to excel in its tax rates, infrastructure and labour regulations among 53 countries assessed.

Harvard University economics professor Jeffrey Sachs wrote in the report that the Asian crisis was due more to an acute financial panic than to weaknesses in the region's economies. He said although Hong Kong and Singapore may suffer short-term damage from the Asian crisis, they have no notable underlying weaknesses.

Meanwhile, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s latest World Economic Outlook report, Hong Kong will remain competitive despite its economic slowdown. It said while Hong Kong has lost competitiveness against regional economies due to the depreciation in their currencies, the flexibility of Hong Kong's markets will help it adjust. The IMF forecast Hong Kong's gross domestic product to grow three per cent this year.

British and German businesses remain upbeat

More British companies believe that they will be operating in Hong Kong in the year 2000 than did at the time of the Handover, according to the latest business confidence survey conducted by the British Chamber of Commerce.

The survey revealed that some 83 per cent of the respondents believed that the city's business environment will be positive over the next five years, while 83 per cent also felt that the change of sovereignty had not affected business. Chairman of the Chamber, Mr Patrick Paul, said the most important finding of the survey was that despite earlier fears, the Handover had no large impact on business.

Meanwhile, according to a survey conducted by the German Industry and Commerce in Hong Kong, Hong Kong's location and expertise as a gateway to the Chinese market and regional headquarters for business activities in Asia remain indispensable assets for German companies.

More than 80 per cent of the polled German companies found that the investment climate has remained unchanged or

even become more favourable since the Handover. Three-quarters of them rated the investment climate after the Handover and over the next five years as 'good' and 'very good'. Over 90 per cent said they wanted to keep their regional head office in the Hong Kong in the next few years.

IT co-operation between HK and Canada forged

Hong Kong and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in May for the two places to foster and promote co-operation and exchange on information and communications technology.

Representing Hong Kong at the signing ceremony, Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting, Mr K. C.

Kwong, said it reflected the mutual interest of both sides in promotion, co-operation and exchange on IT.

The MOU focuses on areas of mutual interest for co-operation, such as multimedia and software applications and products, electronic commerce infrastructure and policy, broadband networks and applications, and Internet applications. It covers a period of five years and can be extended by mutual agreement.

"Canada is advanced in IT development and applications. The signing of the MOU will enable Hong Kong to benefit from the experience and expertise of Canada. This will in turn help us maintain our lead in IT and foster the growth of the local IT industry," Mr Kwong said. ♦

Plastics industrialists told to make a move to Hong Kong

Visitors to the booth of the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office (HKETO) at Plast-Ex 98 were told to make a move to Hong Kong to explore the business opportunities there.

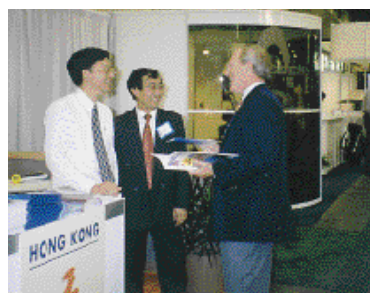
HKETO was one of the 500 exhibitors at Plast-Ex 98, the largest plastics show in Canada. The show, held at the International Centre in Toronto in May, showcased the latest in plastics machinery, raw materials, moulds, equipment, services and technical innovations.

"Being one of North America's largest plastics producers, Ontario accounts for 63 per cent of Canada's plastics products," said Mr Loong Chu, Principal Consultant of HKETO's Investment Promotion Unit. "We encourage business people and professionals in Canada's plastics industry to use Hong Kong as a strategic base from which to launch their expansion into mainland China and the rest of the Asian market."

"Plastics companies that set up in Hong Kong can easily access markets in Asia, especially within automotive parts, food packaging, and medical instruments." Mr Chu said. "Asian economics are potential markets to tap. Plastic parts and components are regarded as promising sectors there."

"Given Hong Kong's expertise in light engineering and consumer goods manufacturing, the high growth automotive industry in China may also be the future source of business for the industry," he said.

Picture shows Mr Chu and Mr Lawrence Tang of the Industry Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, explaining to a visitor how the HKSAR Government helps industrialists to explore co-operation opportunities with the high growth automotive industry in China. ♦



The Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office in Toronto is the official representative of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in Canada, responsible for promoting Hong Kong's interests across the country.

Its main responsibilities include facilitating trade talks and handling trade-related matters with the Canadian Government, and the promotion of Canadian investment and business opportunities in Hong Kong. It liaises closely with business and commercial sectors, politicians, think-tanks, and the media, etc. It also provides an inquiry service about Hong Kong and organizes various trade, economic, and public relations activities to promote ties between Canada and Hong Kong.

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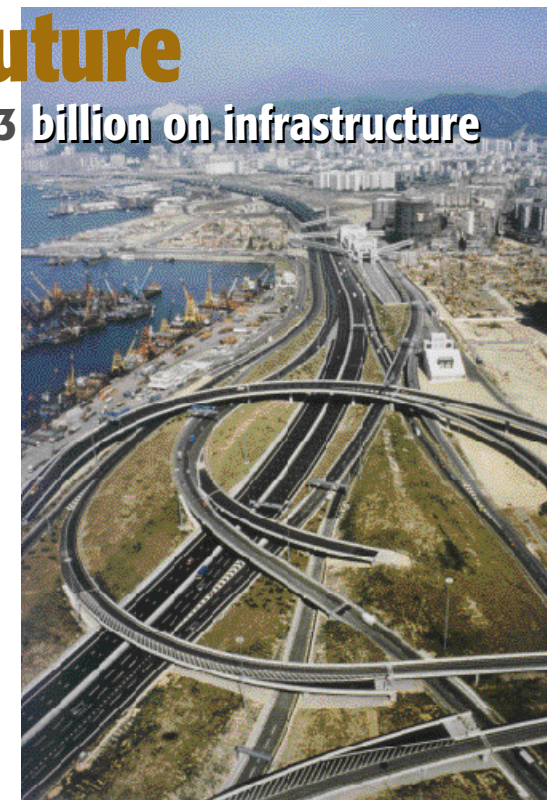
HONG KONG UPDATE

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Engineering a Prosperous Future

Hong Kong spending C\$43 billion on infrastructure



At a time when Asian countries are cutting back on development because of the current economic downturn, Hong Kong is spending C\$43 billion on infrastructural development in the next five years.

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Tung Che-Hwa said that the huge investment will stimulate economic growth, raise the competitiveness of Hong Kong, increase land supply and provide more job opportunities. It will also provide contracts for overseas companies which have built many of Hong Kong's huge infrastructure projects.

The C\$43 billion infrastructure investment in the next five years exceeds by a huge margin the C\$29 billion which Hong Kong has invested in the Airport Core Programme projects (ACP) over the past seven years.

By far the largest portion of infrastructure spending will go to transport. Hong Kong has some of the most congested roads in the world with 500,000 vehicles using just 1,500 kilometres of road. The government will invest C\$4.6 billion in the next five years to implement a number of ambitious new road projects. It will finalise very soon its study on the Central Kowloon Route. This will include another six-lane road tunnel.

Planning further ahead, the government has just awarded a contract for the preliminary design of Route 10 that will connect North Lantau with Yuen Long. Work on the 17.5

kilometre route which will cost C\$4 billion will start in 2002. It will include a two-kilometre-long suspension bridge connecting Lantau with the New Territories. This will be longer than the Tsing Ma Bridge, the world's longest suspension bridge, carrying both road and rail traffic.

The government's policy is to develop rail transport to the extent that it is economically viable to reduce reliance on road transport. About C\$20 billion has been set aside for railway development in the next five years. The projects, which will increase Hong Kong's total rail mileage from 121 kilometres to 225 kilometres, include the 54-kilometre West Rail Rail that will connect Kowloon with major urban centres in the New Territories and with mainland China's rail system.

But it does not stop there. Studies will be done to determine the next phase of railway development. Proposals to be investigated will include a fourth rail crossing under Victoria Harbour, a new Mass Transit Railway line from Central to Causeway Bay, with a possible extension tunnelling through Hong Kong Island itself south to Aberdeen. Studies are underway on a new East Kowloon line to serve the present Kai Tak airport area when it is developed into a massive housing and commercial centre, and a western extension of the MTR Island Line to Kennedy Town on the west of Hong Kong Island.

Most of Hong Kong's success and a good portion of the money invested in infrastruc-

ture comes from its port. Port related industrial and commercial enterprises contribute some 20 per cent of Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provide jobs for nearly 22 per cent of its workforce.

The government's latest Port Cargo Forecasts show that by 2016 there will be a demand for Hong Kong to handle 33 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) a year. To cope with this demand, Hong Kong is planning a completely new container port on Lantau Island with twice the capacity of the present port at Kwai Chung.

Building this new port on a series of artificial islands will be one of the world's biggest civil engineering projects. The new port is vital, not only for Hong Kong, but for southern China. More than 64 per cent of the cargo passing through Hong Kong is entrepot trade with mainland China.

To meet the growing demand at the port, Container Terminal 9 (CT9) is being built at Tsing Yi Island. It will consist of four deep-sea berths and two feeder berths to accommodate the interchange of containers between large, ocean-going vessels and regional carriers. CT9 is expected to come into operation by the middle of 2001 and increase the port's throughput capacity by more than two million TEUs a year.

Hong Kong's investment in infrastructure is fundamentally aimed at providing better life to its people. One of the priorities of a good life is adequate housing. To ensure adequate housing, the government plans to build 85,000 flats a year. That is a rate slightly faster than one new flat every 10 minutes.

After the opening of the new airport in July 1998, the government plans to develop the existing airport site and adjacent areas at Kai Tak to make them into a residential and commercial area which will accommodate 285,000 people.

Such huge spending on infrastructure may seem surprising in the light of the Asian economic crisis. But Hong Kong is better placed than any Asian country to weather the present downturn. It has a sound economy and the third largest foreign currency reserves in the world at US\$96 billion. ♦

Bold initiatives to counter negative growth

Hong Kong's first quarter GDP figures showed that the territory had suffered a two percent contraction, the first in 13 years. The Government has announced seven measures to stimulate recovery of the economy, with special emphasis on the property, banking and tourism sectors.

The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, said the measures were designed to bring about a rapid response to the abrupt change in financial fortunes following the downturn across Asia.

The package includes a streamlining of the purchase programme for residential mortgages and plans to kick-start the development of the Hong Kong dollar repurchase market. The pre-sale period for uncompleted flats has also been extended from 15 to 20 months.

In an effort to stimulate retail spending and revive the tourism industry, the government has lifted restrictions on Taiwanese nationals travelling via Hong Kong to mainland China to encourage them to stay. The quota of mainland visitors allowed into HK for sightseeing was also raised by 30 per cent. A cable car to the giant Buddha statue on Lantau Island was also given the go-ahead as part of the tourism strategy.

The unemployment rate has increased to 4.2 per cent as a result of the financial turmoil. The Government has introduced recently 12 measures to help ease unemployment by enhancing vocational training and employees retraining, strengthening employment services and Job Matching Programme, promoting further education, and combating illegal employment. The Government has also advanced the schedules for the C\$43 billion major infrastructure projects, which together with other initiatives will create 100,000 jobs for the Hong Kong community in the near future.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's economic outlook for the medium to longer term remains good. This is underpinned in particular by sustained high economic growth in the mainland. Hong Kong's past prudent financial management has produced very strong fiscal reserve which will provide a solid base for a strong recovery in a not too distant future. ♦

Hong Kong will emerge stronger

"In Hong Kong we have met many challenges before. In 1974/5 we had three quarters of negative growth; in 1985 we had two quarters of negative growth. But each time we were able to come out of these difficulties and we became stronger and better."

— The Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee Hwa

The Asian financial crisis has bitten deeply into Hong Kong's economy, but the territory, with the best fundamentals in the region, will emerge from the turmoil stronger.

The message was conveyed in June by the Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee Hwa, during his recent visit to Australia and New Zealand, and by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, when she spoke to the Japanese and American business people.

They admitted that Hong Kong had not been immune from the Asian turmoil. But the fact that the financial crisis came so closely after the Handover may well have been a blessing in disguise because it highlighted why Hong Kong is different.

It showed that Hong Kong already has mature and well-regulated banking and stock market sectors, and its fixed exchanged rate and currency board system can withstand the enormous pressure of a regional financial meltdown.

They emphasized that the Hong Kong dollar is backed "eight times" by the Exchange Fund assets, and Hong Kong's foreign currency holdings of more than US\$96 billion are the world's third largest.

"Years of high property prices, high inflation and negative interest rates had created a bubble economy which needed to be corrected if we are to retain our commercial and economic vibrancy," said the Chief Executive. Hong Kong will begin from a much lower base once recovery starts. This will help Hong Kong's long-term competitiveness.

They both reiterated Hong Kong's commitment to defend the US-HK dollar link, which has made Hong Kong a bastion of stability in the region. The Chinese Government not only stated its unequivocal support for the Hong Kong-US dollar link, but also pledged to back it to the hilt with its own foreign exchange reserves, which is the world's second largest such holdings.

"We are not allowing the Asian financial turmoil to derail our long-term focus of building a better Hong Kong," said Mr Tung, adding that because of Hong Kong's strong fiscal reserves, Hong Kong is able to continue with its massive plan of investment in infrastructure and education which will make Hong Kong much more efficient and competitive in the 21st Century. ♦

Record turnout in Hong Kong elections

About 1.49 million voters went to the first Legislative Council elections under the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government for a record high 53.3 per cent turnout rate.

Despite torrential rains on May 24, a total of 1,489,705 out of 2.8 million registered voters cast their ballots for 20 directly elected seats. In the functional constituencies, 77,813 voted for a 63.5 percent turnout rate, while 790 out of 800 members voted in the Election Committee.

Mr Tung Chee Hwa, Chief Executive of the HKSAR, said he was very pleased to see the enthusiastic response. "This demonstrates a very strong support from the public for these first Legislative Council elections, and shows Hong Kong people's determination and confidence in 'one country, two systems' - Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy."

In an interview with the media in Toronto, Mr Donald Tong, Director of the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office, said that the elections were held in accordance with the Basic Law and "are a very important and successful step" towards further democratic development in Hong Kong. "Though the efforts of all, we have built up a solid foundation to prepare for our ultimate aim of electing our legislature by universal suffrage."

About 920,000 people — 35.8 per cent of the registered voters — exercised their right to vote in Hong Kong's last Legislative Council election under the British rule in 1995. ♦

Business opportunities in Hong Kong

Canadian business people, including professional engineers and architects; senior officials and journalists were updated on the latest developments in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) by the Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office of the HKSAR in Canada, Mr Donald Tong.

Mr Tong who crissed-crossed Canada from Nova Scotia to British Columbia in April, also strongly encouraged Canadian businessmen, industrialists and consultants to take advantage of the unlimited opportunities available to them in the HKSAR.

As an example, he told the Canadians and friends of Hong Kong at meetings and keynote addresses the HKSAR Government's massive infrastructure projects that are to be completed in the next five years between 1998 and 2002.

Worth more than C\$43 billion, the projects include a complete new railway system to serve the Western part of the territory, roads and highways and housing estates.

The Canadians were very appreciative of the message he brought them and requested Mr Tong to visit them again at a later date.

In early May, Mr Tong also accompanied presidents and key directors of the Hong Kong Canada Business Association (HKCBA) from many major Canadian cities on a visit to Hong Kong. During their stay in Hong Kong, the HKCBA members met various senior HKSAR Government officials, including the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan. The HKCBA also paid a visit to China afterwards. ♦



Mr Tong (right) pictured with Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon and the President of HKCBA, Winnipeg section, Mr Ken Wong.



Mr Tong who gave a keynote address to business people in Halifax presents a souvenir to Mayor Walter Fitzgerald.



Mr Tong briefing Richmond Mayor Greg Halsey-Brandt before the Mayor's departure for an official visit to Hong Kong.



Following a keynote address on SAR's infrastructure development at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Mr Tong was being interviewed by a mainstream radio station.

Pictured with Mr Tong is the Secretary of State for Asia and Pacific, Mr Raymond Chan, who invited the Director to give a keynote address on new projects in Hong Kong to a group of engineers and architects in Vancouver.



Mr Tong chatting with Mayor Susan Thompson of Winnipeg.



Accompanied by Mr. Raymond Wong (left), President of the HKCBA, Halifax section, Mr Tong called on the Lieutenant Governor John Kinley.



This group photograph was taken in Hong Kong during a courtesy call by the HKCBA on the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan (seated in middle of front row).



The control tower of the new airport

WEEKS before its opening, the new Hong Kong International Airport at Chek Lap Kok is already a huge attraction. Thousands of people have taken advantage of the Airport Authority's series of open days and the Hong Kong Tourist Association's popular guided weekday tours.

Completed on time and under budget, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's biggest single engineering project will be open for round-the-clock air traffic on July 6, 1998.

The futuristic Y-shaped terminal building is 1.3 kilometres long and has a total area of 516,000 square metres, increasing to 550,000 square metres by the end of this year. The roof of the terminal is equivalent to roofing over London's Soho district.



The Air Traffic Control System at the new airport will use the latest "state-of-the-art" technology to handle full dual runway operation

So long is the terminal that an automatic, driverless train, running on rubber tyres and concrete tracks, will take passengers to the furthest of the more than 80 departure gates. This will be augmented by 54 moving walkways, 102 lifts, 63 escalators and 8,000 luggage trolleys. Passengers not on the move will be able to rest in one of the 12,500 lounge seats and check their flight details on one of 2,000 display screens.

The nine levels of the terminal include 288 check-in counters capable of handling 13,680 pieces of luggage an hour while 12 luggage reclaim carousels will be able to handle 20,000 pieces of luggage an hour.

Once they have checked in, passengers can shop at any of the 141 retail outlets, including 25 serving food and drinks. The shops are in a 30,000 square-metre shopping mall and will offer shopping and dining at down-town prices.

The terminal building is the focal point of the six-kilometre-long, 3.5-kilometre-wide man-made island at Chek Lap Kok on which the 1,248 hectare Hong Kong International Airport stands.



The first runway of the new airport is 3.8 kilometres long



The Departure Hall

New Airport—Already a big attraction

It is roughly equivalent to creating an airport with the same area as London's Heathrow in the sea. One of the world's largest earth moving operations, it involved 2,500 workers from 13 countries moving 10 tonnes of rock soil, mud and marine sand every second around the



The New Town to support the airport is built on specially reclaimed land at Tung Chung. It has more than 15,000 population now

clock for 31 months. At the height of the operation, more than half of the world's total dredging tonnage was working in Hong Kong.

Impressive as it is, the new airport is just one of 10 major projects in the Airport



One of the check-in counters at the new airport

Core Programme (ACP)—one of the biggest civil engineering projects in the world.

The other ACP projects include the Tung Chung New Town which will ultimately accommodate a population of 250,000, the North Lantau Highway, the Airport Railway, the spectacular Tsing Ma Bridge, one of the world's longest suspension bridges and the West Kowloon Expressway.

Passengers will be able to check in the luggage at the Airport Railway terminal in Central, be issued with their boarding cards, take the railway and 23 minutes later will be at the airport itself ready to board their flight. In-town check in service is also available at the Airport Railway Station in Kowloon.

Massive as each of these 10 projects is, they have all been completed on time and

under budget. When work started in 1992, the total cost was estimated at US\$21 billion. The latest cost estimate is US\$20 billion, a saving of five per cent on a very large figure.

Although the new airport terminal was completed in April 1998 it was decided to begin commercial operations on July 6, to coincide with the opening of the Airport Railway. When it opens, the airport will be able to handle 35 million passengers a year. Eventually, it will have a capacity of 87 million a year.

To maintain the reputation of the existing Kai Tak Airport as the world's busiest international air cargo terminal, the new airport will be able to handle three million tonnes of air freight a year. Eventually it will be able to handle nine million tonnes a year. ♦

How to get to new airport at Chek Lap Kok

The new Hong Kong International Airport at Chek Lap Kok will be served by an extensive and convenient public transport network upon its opening in July.

Air passengers are reminded that journey time needed to travel to the airport varies but in any case, at least one hour should be allowed, even though a high-speed rail can take passengers from Central to the airport terminal in 23 minutes. Different modes of public transport services at different price ranges will be available. Information hotlines are being set up by public transport operators to provide assistance to commuters:

Airport:	(852) 2181 8888 (Chinese)
	(852) 2181 0000 (English)
Airport ferry services :	(852) 2987 7351
Citybus:	(852) 2873 0818
Kowloon Motor Bus:	(852) 2745 4466
Long Win Bus:	(852) 2786 6036
MTR (Mass Transit Railway) Corporation:	(852) 2881 8888
New Lantau Bus:	(852) 2984 9848

MTR Tung Chung Line (TCL)

It links Tung Chung New Town with the urban areas. There are six stations: Hong Kong, Kowloon, Olympic, Lai King, Tsing Yi and Tung Chung. TCL stations can be accessed by more than 60 feeder bus routes and 10 green minibus routes.

Public bus services

Airbus services take passengers between the new airport and Causeway Bay, Sai Wan Ho, Hung Hom, Lam Tin, Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin and Mui Wo.

Airport Express Line (AEL)

A rail link developed by MTR Corp. for the new airport, the AEL has four stations: Hong Kong, Kowloon, Tsing Yi and Airport. Train services will operate daily from 6 am to 1 am the following morning. Normal single journey fares on AEL are set at about C\$20. There are free in-town check-in services at Hong Kong and Kowloon Stations. AEL ticket holders can also enjoy four free feeder services to Hong Kong and Kowloon Stations.

Taxi services

Roads within the airport at Chek Lap Kok will be opened for vehicular traffic on July 6. All types of taxis and motorists can access the airport via the new expressway network commissioned last year, the Lantau Link and the North Lantau Highway.

Ferry services

High-speed ferry services between Chek Lap Kok and Tuen Mun will be run by Airport Ferry Services Limited. Fare for each single journey will be about C\$3. ♦

Mother of all airport relocation operation

In just seven hours, from 11:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 5 to 6:30 a.m. Monday July 6, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) will carry out the most critical part of the operation to move the world's fifth busiest international passenger airport and the busiest international cargo airport at Kai Tak some 30 kilometres westward to Chek Lap Kok on Lantau Island.

These critical hours have come to be known as "The Night" in Hong Kong.

In terms of time and scale, it will be the world's biggest relocation operation involving more than 1,000 vehicle movements, flights by 30 jet airliners, 70 barge sailings, thousands of tonnes of equipment and 1,000 policemen to control the traffic.

The time is dictated by the schedule of the last international flight to leave the existing airport at Kai Tak, at about 11:30 on the night of July 5 and the first flight to land at the new Hong Kong International Airport at about 6:30 on July 6 morning.

So essential is Hong Kong as the region's airline hub in that there can be no interruption of the hundreds of flights that land and take off on any given day. Kai Tak must close down and the new airport open up right on time. It has to be a seamless move.

To ensure that nothing will go wrong, the move is being planned like a military operation. It has also been divided into three stages, the Main Body Move, which took place from June 5 to 21, the Night Move and the Follow On Move from July 6 to August 5. The three stages will involve a

total of 10,000 vehicle movements, the most crucial being the 1,000 on "The Night".

The problems connected with the move, apart from having to pass through some of the densest urban areas, are compounded by the nature of some of the equipment to be used, the large, strange-shaped, utilitarian vehicles familiar on airport parking areas, but never seen on roads.

The size of some of the loads also presents problems; loads like the main deck loader which is 4.9 metres high when loaded on a trailer, is 4.7 metres wide and weighs 48 tonnes.

To ensure the operation's success, a trial run was carried out on April 29, during which a 40-vehicle convoy made the journey from the old to the new airport to test

loading methods, the route, the police escort and entry to the new airport.

"The move might not be as big as D-Day, but the same kind of planning approach is being used," said Mrs. Elizabeth Bosher, the Airport Authority's Planning and Coordinating Director. She said her staff includes retired army officers whose experience in military logistics has proved invaluable.

Everything has been planned to the finest detail but one thing that cannot be planned in advance is the weather. July is the middle of Hong Kong's typhoon season, and if a typhoon does strike, the move and the operational opening of the airport will be postponed for a week.

Typhoons aside, Hong Kong is confident that it will be all right on "The Night". It has to be and will be the case. ♦

Functions to celebrate reunification anniversary

The Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office (HKETO) is organizing a series of events across Canada to mark the first anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

"Following the smooth transition, the newly established HKSAR has continued to function in a steady and progressive manner, with the concept of 'One-country-two-systems', 'Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong' and 'a high degree of autonomy' fully realised," said Mr Donald Tong, the Director of HKETO. "The first anniversary will be an occasion to look back on the achievement of the HKSAR since July 1, 1997, and let people here have a better understanding of Hong Kong's situation after the reunification."

To mark the occasion, the HKETO is organizing receptions for friends from the business and trade sectors, academic and political circles, media, three levels of the Canadian government and the Chinese community in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. A luncheon reception will be held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto for 700 people on June 30, while a cocktail reception will be staged at Waterfront Centre Hotel in Vancouver in that evening for 500 guests. The reception in Calgary will be organized at the Palliser Hotel in the evening of July 2 for another 500 people. All these receptions will be highlighted by a display of photographs featuring Hong Kong's past, present and future, as well as the territory's new airport at Chek Lap Kok which will be opened on July 6.

Hong Kong photo exhibitions will also be held at the Chinese cultural centres, major shopping malls and other venues in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary following the celebrations. Mr Tong will also be giving keynote speeches on the achievement of the HKSAR in the past 12 months in celebration activities organized by various organizations in Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal and Toronto.

"We would like to show how the HKSAR could be a launching pad to business opportunities in the Asia Pacific Region," said Mr Tong. "At the same time, we welcome business or community organizations in Canada organising their own activities to mark the anniversary. Despite the financial turmoil, Hong Kong has made some good achievements over the past year that are worth celebrating."♦

HKETO launches new web

.....www.hketo.ca

People in Canada can now easily "click" to many important Hong Kong links with the launching in April of a new web site (<http://www.hketo.ca>) by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO).

The Director of HKETO, Mr Donald Tong, said, "The web site is launched because we are fully aware of the internet's capability in disseminating information, and we are keen to offer the Canadian communities an additional and convenient means to access and acquire information on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the HKETO around the clock.

The HKETO web site displays the services, work and organisation of the Toronto Office, as well as carrying major speeches and press releases issued by the Office.

The web site is also hooked up with the HKSAR Government Information Centre which houses home pages of all HKSAR policy bureaux and government departments. These include the Trade and Industry Bureau, Trade Department and Industry Department which provide information on doing business in Hong Kong.

For people interested in reaching out to other sources of information on doing business with Hong Kong, the HKETO web site links with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the Hong Kong Canada Business Association, and trade bodies in Hong Kong.

Canadians offered teaching appointments

Seventy-seven Canadians have been selected to teach English classes in Hong Kong schools starting from the new academic year this September.

Letters of appointment are being sent out by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's Education Department to the 77 candidates selected from the pool of 160 Canadians interviewed in Toronto and Vancouver in May.

A total of 257 successful candidates have been offered appointments. Apart from the Canadians, there are 180 successful applicants from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Hong Kong.

The recruitment of the teachers, under the Native-Speaking English Teachers (NET) scheme, is aimed at improving the standard and proficiency in the use of English in Government and Government subvented secondary schools.

Schools in Hong Kong need more than 700 NET scheme teachers over the next few years. The recruitment of the NET teachers is expected to cost a total of about C\$83 million a year in salaries, benefits and other expenses.

The newly recruited teachers will teach English to Chinese ESL (English as Second Language) students at the secondary level (equivalent to grades 7-12 in Canada) and help create an environment for students to speak English in Schools.♦

In addition, the HKETO web site provides information on government tenders, and shows people the opportunities in participating in the territory's huge C\$43 billion infrastructural projects through its links with the Hong Kong Airport Authority, Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation, Mass Transit Railway Corporation and the HKSAR Government's Works Bureau.

Through the web, the legal profession has access to the statutory laws of Hong Kong and a selection of constitutional documents. The Laws of Hong Kong are available in both English and Chinese, free of charge. Hong Kong's mini-constitution, the Basic Law, is also there. Furthermore, the web site leads surfers to background information on Hong Kong, including fact sheets and statistics.

For those permanent residents of Hong Kong and students who are interested in working for the HKSAR Government, they can look up civil service vacancies on the HKETO web. Want to explore Hong Kong? The web carries a Government video "This is Hong Kong". It also takes people to the Hong Kong Tourist Association's home page, provides access to Hong Kong's telephone directories and yellow pages, as well as the Hong Kong World Wide Web Database.♦

Hong Kong takes on copyright pirates

Hong Kong "crushed" more than three million copies of pirated music CDs, CD-Roms, video CDs and laser discs in the first four months of this year.

"We stick them into a machine that crushes them to tiny flakes of plastic," said Mr Calvin Leung, head of the Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's (HKSAR) Customs and Excise Department.

Unlike many other Customs services, Hong Kong has a dedicated Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau responsible for protecting intellectual property rights not only at border control points but within the HKSAR.

By the end of April, more than 3.5 million pirated optical discs with a retail value of more than US\$13 million had been seized by the bureau. This compares to 4.5 million seized optical discs worth more than US\$18 million in 1997 and 944,000 discs worth US\$6 million in 1996.

The seizures have also resulted in a marked increase in jail terms for those caught manufacturing, supplying and retailing the pirated goods. In 1995, there were 18 jail terms for the pirates, compared to 144 in 1996 and 256 in 1997. Maximum penalties handed down so far are a US\$100,000 fine and a two-year jail term. However, under the new laws pirates are liable to a four-year jail term.

Hong Kong's intellectual property laws comply fully with the latest international

standards, including the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects on Intellectual

Property Rights under the World Trade Organisation and the World Intellectual Property Organisation's two treaties on copyright.

"We have one of the best intellectual property regimes in the world and we

are committed to enforcing those robust laws." Mr Leung points to the new Copyright Ordinance and two licensing schemes introduced in 1997 and 1998 on CD manufacturing, as vital steps in giving Customs and Excise officers more power to sink piracy operations.

Since December last year the import and export of optical disc manufacturing equipment has been subject to licensing requirements. A new law passed in March - the Prevention of Copyright Piracy Ordinance - will make it even harder to

Exhibition of ancient Chinese inventions

Two major exhibitions of historical significance will be held in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) following the opening of the territory's state-of-the-art airport at Chek Lap Kok, the Director of the Hong Kong SAR Government in Canada, Mr Donald Tong has announced.

The exhibition, one on ancient Chinese inventions and the other on ancient Egyptian relics, will be held between September 1998 and January 1999. "These exhibitions are bound to have an immense impact on visitors, both local and overseas," Mr Tong said.

"Canadians wishing to visit Hong Kong in October should not miss this golden opportunity of seeing for themselves the glorious Chinese scientific and technological achievements that have aided human progress throughout the ages."

It will be for the first time that the exhibition of ancient Chinese inventions is held outside mainland China. Entitled "Gems of Ancient Chinese Inventions", the exhibits will be on display at the Hong Kong Museum of History in Tsim Sha Tsui East, and will run for three months ending on January 3, 1999.

Featuring a selection of priceless relics from over 20 museums across China, the displays will unfold Chinese achievements and dominance in the field of science and technology during the centuries before the birth of Christ. Altogether 230 items of exhibits will go on display.

The items of Chinese technological inventions are very diverse, ranging from textile weaving, papermaking and printing to the production of gunpowder, compass, iron and cereals.

Among the star exhibits will be the world's oldest map of China on linen paper, the world's oldest water-clock as well as a bronze wine vessel dated 2000 BC. Others will include life-like replicas of Shang Heng's seismograph, the odometer wagon and the south-pointing carriage.

While the display of ancient inventions of China gathers momentum, the Museum of Art will have completed its preparation to showcase artifacts of ancient Egypt. Entitled "The Premiere of an Asian Tour", the exhibits will come from the British Museum of London. The exhibition will open on November 2 and last until January 17, 1999.

It will feature art and artifacts which were produced to serve Egyptian religious beliefs and ritual practices, spanning nearly 3000 years of dynastic history. The pieces to be displayed will range from life-sized sculptures of pharaonic royalty and their subjects to miniature funerary figurines and amulets.♦

manufacture pirated goods. This ordinance requires the licensing of all optical disc manufacturing operations and the introduction of source identification codes for all optical discs manufactured in Hong Kong. Customs officers have been given greater powers to carry out spot checks on manufacturers to ensure they comply with licensing conditions.

"We now have the legal ammunition we need," said Mr Leung. "If we can hit the problem at source then obviously it is going to be harder for the retailers to get supplies. At the same time we have stepped up raids on known retail blackspots to the extent that many of the pirate goods retailers have closed shop."

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The Chinese inventions exhibition features lifelike replicas such as Zhang Heng's Seismograph.

Hong Kong's Customs and Excise manpower has also been increased substantially - from 117 in 1994/5 to 236 in 1998/99 - to tackle the problem. "We know that pirated goods are still available but the problem is not as rampant as before and is getting less and less of a problem," said Mr Leung.

Piracy is a world-wide problem which required close co-operation among law enforcement agencies. Hong Kong has very good working relationships with Mainland authorities, as well as Hong Kong-based US Customs officers and the Customs services in Australia, Japan and Korea. "China's biggest seizure of pirated optical discs was a result of information passed on by the HKSAR's Customs and Excise," he said.♦