

Chapter 13

Transport

Hong Kong's transport system is among the best in the world. It is modern, efficient and provides affordable, comfortable and safe travelling on a wide range of carriers from which to choose.

The Government provides an efficient transport infrastructure to meet the challenges of population growth and continuous development. It encourages the use of public transport by ensuring quality service. It also manages road use to reduce congestion and promote safety, and supports special measures to protect the environment in places used by public transport.

On rail transport, which is the backbone of the public transport system, a significant development occurred this year in the form of a merger of the two major rail systems – the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) and Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) on December 2. The Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation granted a service concession of an initial 50 years to the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to operate the KCR system. Following the merger, the MTRCL changed its Chinese name to ‘香港鐵路有限公司’ and reduced fares.

Railway projects in general progressed smoothly in 2007. The Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, a second rail passenger boundary crossing at Lok Ma Chau, was commissioned in August. Two other railway projects are under construction for completion in 2009. They are the Kowloon Southern Link, which will connect the East Rail Line with the West Rail Line at the southern tip of Kowloon Peninsula, and the Tseung Kwan O South Station, which will extend Tseung Kwan O Line with a branch from Tseung Kwan O Station to Tseung Kwan O South Station.

Progress was also made in the development of road networks. The section between Cheung Sha Wan and Sha Tin of Route 8 is scheduled for commissioning in March 2008 and the remaining section between Tsing Yi and Cheung Sha Wan will be completed in stages between late 2008 and mid-2009. The feasibility study on the proposed Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao Bridge has been largely completed, and the

governments of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macao are now discussing the financial arrangements for the project.

Implementation of the Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy continued during the year. The scheme calls for deploying advanced information and telecommunication technologies to improve the safety, efficiency, reliability and environmental friendliness of the transport system in Hong Kong. It features two core projects — the Transport Information System, which is under development, and the Journey Time Indication System, which is already operating on Hong Kong Island and is being expanded to Kowloon.

On the civil aviation front, the passenger and cargo throughput at the Hong Kong International Airport set new records, while the air services arrangements with aviation partners were substantially liberalised during the year.

Administrative Framework

The Transport and Housing Bureau of the Government Secretariat, headed by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, is responsible for, among other matters, the formulation of policies on matters relating to Hong Kong's internal and external transport, including land transport, maritime transport and logistics, and air services. The bureau is supported by a number of departments, namely the Civil Aviation Department, the Highways Department, the Marine Department and the Transport Department.

Transport Strategy and Policy Objectives

The Government helps to provide a safe, efficient, reliable and environmentally friendly transport system that meets the economic, social and recreational needs of the community, and is capable of supporting sustainable development in Hong Kong. It does this by:

- expanding and improving the transport infrastructure in a timely manner;
- improving the quality and coordination of public transport services; and
- managing road use to reduce congestion and promote safety.

The Government also ensures these objectives are achieved in an environmentally sustainable manner by seeking and supporting environmental improvement measures adopted in transport-related areas.

It has drawn up long-term transport strategies that ensure a safe, efficient and reliable transport system based on the recommendations of the Third Comprehensive Transport Study. Meanwhile, the transport objectives, promulgated in 'Hong Kong Moving Ahead: A Transport Strategy for the Future' include:

- better integration of transport and land use planning;
- better use of railways as the backbone of the passenger transport system;
- better public transport services and facilities;
- better use of advanced technologies in transport management; and
- better environmental protection.

Railway Development and Railway Development Strategy 2000

Railways are safe, efficient, reliable, comfortable and environmentally friendly mass carriers. They play a key role in Hong Kong's transport systems strategy and the Government gives high priority to railway development. The Railway Development Strategy 2000, which provides a blueprint for the next phase of railway development, includes a number of new railway schemes to meet Hong Kong's increasing transport needs in a sustainable manner over the next two decades.

Hong Kong's railway development has progressed rapidly during the past few years. About \$100 billion has been invested in six railway projects. They are the Tseung Kwan O Line (commissioned in August 2002), the West Rail Line (commissioned in December 2003), the East Rail Line Tsim Sha Tsui Extension (commissioned in October 2004), the Ma On Shan Line (commissioned in December 2004), the Disneyland Resort Line (commissioned in August 2005) and the extension of the East Rail Line to Lok Ma Chau (commissioned in August 2007). Two other railway projects are under construction for completion in 2009, namely the Kowloon Southern Link and the Tseung Kwan O South Station.

Apart from these, the West Island Line, the Shatin to Central Link, the South Island Line (East), the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Northern Link are in the planning stage.

Transport Infrastructure

Road Network

Hong Kong has 2 009 kilometres of roads and 1 193 road structures, three immersed-tube cross-harbour tunnels, nine road tunnels and three major cable supported bridges. These facilities provide a comprehensive road network for Hong Kong.

Major projects completed during the year included:

- Widening of the section of Castle Peak Road between Sham Tseng and Ka Loon Tsuen as well as between Ka Loon Tsuen and Siu Lam to a dual two-lane carriageway.
- Route 8 (Cheung Sha Wan to Sha Tin): a dual three-lane carriageway linking Sha Tin and Kowloon.
- Route 9 between Shek Wai Kok and Chai Wan Kok, a dual two-lane carriageway linking Shing Mun Tunnel and Tuen Mun Road, serving as a local link to the western part of Tsuen Wan.
- Improvements to San Tin Interchange: providing traffic lanes to Lok Ma Chau Crossing from northern San Tin Highway and western Fanling Highway to bypass the elevated roundabout of the interchange.

Tunnels

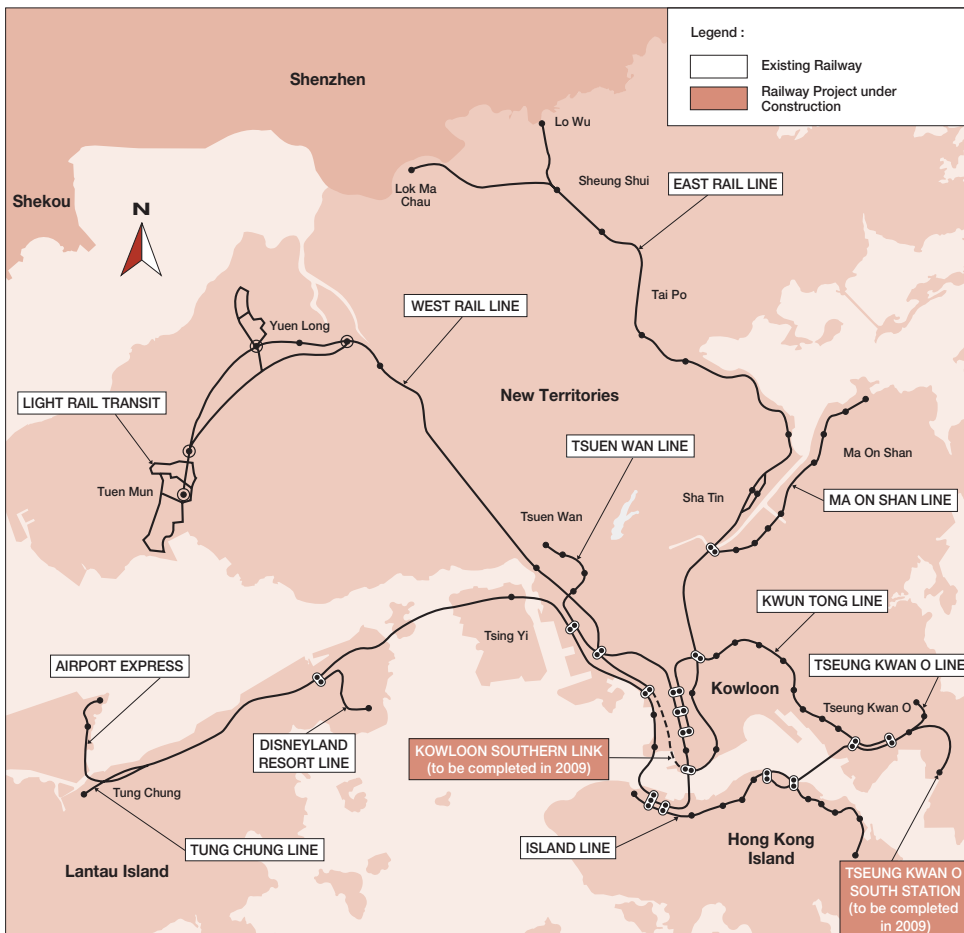
The Cross-Harbour Tunnel, Eastern Harbour Crossing, Tate's Cairn Tunnel, Western Harbour Crossing and Tai Lam Tunnel were built by the private sector under 'Build, Operate and Transfer' franchises. The Cross-Harbour Tunnel, opened in 1972, was handed back to the Government on August 31, 1999, when the franchise ended.

The Government owns seven road tunnels at: Lion Rock, Aberdeen, Kai Tak, Shing Mun, Tseung Kwan O, Cheung Tsing and Cross-Harbour, which are managed and operated by private companies under management contracts. Use of the Kai Tak Tunnel and Cheung Tsing Tunnel is free of charge. As for the others, tolls are set and monitored by the Government.

In addition, there is a private tunnel, the Discovery Bay Tunnel Link, built, operated and maintained by Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited. The tunnel is open only to vehicles taking goods to Discovery Bay, or providing services to residents there.

Rail Network

Railways form a vital part of Hong Kong's transport network and are essential to its continuous economic, social and land development. They account for about 35 per cent of daily public transport passenger travel and about 65 per cent of land-based cross-boundary trips to the Mainland. They are being extended to various parts of Hong Kong. The map below shows the coverage of the existing railway network and two railway projects under construction.



Railway Projects under Construction

The 3.8-kilometre Kowloon Southern Link under construction will connect the East Rail Line and the West Rail Line at the southern tip of the Kowloon Peninsula. Upon completion in 2009, passengers will be able to cross from the East Rail Line to the West Rail Line and vice versa at Hung Hom.

The Tseung Kwan O South Station, an extension of the Tseung Kwan O Line, is expected to be completed in 2009.

Railway Projects in the Planning Stage

The West Island Line will be an extension of the existing Island Line from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town with two intermediate stations at Sai Ying Pun and University. The Government has reviewed the MTRCL's revised project proposal and has told the corporation to proceed with the detailed design. The railway scheme was gazetted in October 2007. Work on the project is expected to start in early 2009.

The Shatin to Central Link will extend the East Rail Line across the harbour to Hong Kong Island together with an extension of the West Rail Line to Sha Tin/Ma On Shan via Hung Hom, Southeast Kowloon and Diamond Hill. The Government is examining the project proposal from the MTRCL and expects construction to start in 2010.

The South Island Line (East) will be a medium capacity railway line running from Admiralty to South Horizons with three intermediate stations at Ocean Park, Wong Chuk Hang and Lei Tung Estate. The Government has asked the MTRCL to proceed with further planning and to draw up a preliminary engineering design to enable construction to begin in 2011 and to be completed by 2015.

The Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong Express Rail Link will provide an additional link from a new terminus at West Kowloon to the boundary at Huanggang for connection with the Mainland section. Trains will be able to run through a 26-kilometre-long tunnel at a maximum speed of 200 kilometres per hour. Upon completion, the journey time between Guangzhou and Hong Kong will be reduced from 100 minutes to less than 60 minutes. The Government is studying the proposed project.

Since the adoption of the 'Dedicated Corridor' option for the Express Rail Link, the Northern Link has become a separate project from the Express Rail Link. It will connect the West Rail Line at Kam Sheung Road to the boundary crossing point at Lok Ma Chau, and together with the East Rail Line, will form a strategic corridor connecting the West Rail Line and the East Rail Line. The Government is coordinating the arrangements for this proposal.

Road Projects under Construction

Major road projects under construction include:

- Route 8 (Tsing Yi to Cheung Sha Wan): This dual three-lane carriageway will provide an alternative route to the Route 3 Tsing Yi and Kwai Chung sections and serve as an access route to Container Terminals 8 and 9. Construction

started in April 2002 and will be completed in two phases in late 2008 and mid-2009 respectively.

- **Trunk Road T3:** This dual two-lane trunk road in Tai Wai will link Route 8 (Cheung Sha Wan to Sha Tin) with the existing Tai Po Road to help divert traffic from several congested sections of Tai Po Road. Construction started in March 2003 and will be completed by early 2008.
- **Tung Chung Road between Lung Tseng Tau and Cheung Sha:** This road will be upgraded into a single two-lane road to improve Lantau Island's north-south access and to increase the capacity and safety of the existing substandard Tung Chung Road. Construction started in June 2004 and is scheduled for completion in September 2008.

Road Projects in the Planning Stage

A number of road construction/improvement projects are being planned to further expand and improve the existing road network:

- The preliminary design and site investigation of the Tuen Mun–Chek Lap Kok Link and Tuen Mun Western Bypass is under way. The project will provide a dual two-lane strategic road connecting the Kong Sham Western Highway with Hong Kong International Airport/Lantau to meet the anticipated traffic demand of the Northwest New Territories and Lantau after 2016. The new road will also serve as an alternative road to and from the airport. Construction is scheduled to start in 2011 for completion by 2016.
- Reconstruction and improvement of Tuen Mun Road is scheduled to start in early 2008 for phased completion by the end of 2012. The project is to upgrade the dual three-lane carriageway of the expressway section to current expressway standards, including the provision of hard shoulder lanes wherever practicable. Design and site investigation works started at the end of 2005. The widening of the Tuen Mun Road Town Centre Section is scheduled to start in end-2008 for completion by end-2010.
- Planning of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass is under way. It is part of a strategic highway running through the northern shore of Hong Kong Island. It will connect the existing flyover near Rumsey Street in Central to the existing Island Eastern Corridor at North Point. This dual three-lane carriageway will relieve congestion along Connaught Road Central/Harcourt Road/Gloucester Road corridor, and improve the network reliability of the east-west link.
- Planning of the Central Kowloon Route and widening of the Gascoigne Road Flyover is under way. The proposed Central Kowloon Route will connect West Kowloon reclamation and the future Kai Tak development with a 3.8 kilometre-long dual three-lane tunnel. The widening of Gascoigne Road Flyover is to upgrade the existing single two-lane carriageway to dual two-lane configuration. The investigation study started in August 2007.
- Detailed design of the widening of Tolo Highway/Fanling Highway between the Island House Interchange and Fanling is being carried out. The project is to

widen the section of the Tolo Highway between Island House Interchange and Tai Hang (Stage 1) and the section of Fanling Highway between Tai Hang and Wo Hop Shek Interchange (Stage 2) from the existing dual three-lane to dual four-lane. The Stage 1 road scheme was gazetted in October 2007. Construction is scheduled to start at the end of 2008 for phased completion by 2013.

- Trunk Road T4 is a proposed dual two-lane carriageway, which will connect Sha Tin Road with the future Trunk Road T3 and Shing Mun Tunnel Road, and will serve as a bypass to Tai Po Road (Sha Tin section) and other district distributor roads at Sha Tin Town Centre. Implementation of the project will be reviewed after the commissioning of Route 8 and Trunk Road T3.

Tsing Ma Control Area

The Tsing Ma Control Area, opened to traffic in May 1997, is a 21-kilometre expressway network comprising the Tsing Kwai Highway, Cheung Tsing Tunnel, Cheung Tsing Highway, North West Tsing Yi Interchange, Tsing Yi North Coastal Road, Lantau Link, Ting Kau Bridge, part of the North Lantau Highway and Ma Wan Road. The control area is operated and maintained by a private management contractor.

The Lantau Link has a one-way toll collection arrangement. Vehicles travelling on the Lantau Link are charged twice the single journey toll when they return from Lantau Island or enter Ma Wan. The double toll ranges from \$20 to \$80 for different types of vehicles. A daily average of 56 930 vehicles used the Lantau Link in 2007.

Public Transport

Rail, bus, ferry and other public transport services offer Hong Kong commuters a good choice of different transport modes at reasonable fares and different levels of comfort, speed and convenience.

Railways

Railways form an important part of the public transport system. They account for some 35 per cent of the total daily public transport volume. The merger of the MTR and KCR systems were implemented on December 2, 2007, to provide an integrated rail system and service network to the public. The rail merger improves the overall efficiency of Hong Kong's railway system through achieving economies of scale, attaining synergy through better interface and streamlining of the operations of the MTR and KCR systems. The integration of the two railway systems generates synergies to support reduction in rail fares including the abolition of the second boarding charge. It also brings about better interchanging arrangements, thus improving passenger convenience and travelling time.

As a result of the merger, the MTRCL is now responsible for the daily running and maintenance of both the MTR and KCR systems, which include the Kwun Tong Line (Tiu Keng Leng–Yau Ma Tei), Tsuen Wan Line (Tsuen Wan–Central), Island Line (Chai Wan–Sheung Wan), Tung Chung Line (Hong Kong–Tung Chung), Tseung Kwan O Line (Po Lam–North Point), East Rail Line (East Tsim Sha Tsui–Lo Wu/Lok Ma Chau), West Rail Line (Tuen Mun–Nam Cheong), Ma On Shan Line (Wu Kai Sha–Tai Wai) and

Disneyland Resort Line (Sunny Bay–Disneyland Resort). There are over 80 stations along the 168-kilometre network. MTRCL also operates a 35.3-kilometre Airport Express. The system carries an average of 3.6 million passengers per weekday.

Apart from the heavy rail systems, MTRCL operates the 36-kilometre Light Rail network with 68 stops in northwest New Territories. The Light Rail carries about 390 000 passengers daily.

To provide rail passengers with a more comprehensive service network, MTRCL also operates the Light Rail feeder bus services.

In addition, MTRCL provides inter-city through train services from Hong Kong to cities in Guangdong as well as to Shanghai and Beijing. Apart from passenger services, MTRCL provides rail freight services to the Mainland.

Tramway

Electric trams have been operating on Hong Kong Island since 1904. The Hongkong Tramways Limited runs six routes on 13 kilometres of double track along the northern shore of Hong Kong Island between Kennedy Town and Shau Kei Wan, and about three kilometres of single track around Happy Valley.

The company's 164 trams, including two open-balcony trams for tourists and private hire and one special maintenance tram, make up the world's largest fleet of double-deck trams in operation. The tramway records a daily average of 230 000 passenger trips.

Peak Tram

Hong Kong's other tramway is a cable-hauled funicular railway operated by the Peak Tramways Company Limited from Central (Garden Road) to the Peak. The 1.4-kilometre tramway began operation in 1888 and was modernised in 1989. The Peak Tram records an average of 13 000 passenger trips a day, made mostly by tourists and local sightseers.

Other Road-based Passenger Transport

The other road-based passenger transport modes — mainly franchised buses, public light buses, taxis and residents' services of non-franchised buses — account for 64 per cent of all public transport journeys.

Franchised Buses

Franchised buses are the largest road-based carriers and account for about 34 per cent of the total daily public transport volume. Local bus services in Kowloon and the New Territories are largely provided by the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB). At year-end, the company operated 383 bus routes in Kowloon and the New Territories; 22 and 29 cross-harbour routes jointly with Citybus Limited (CTB) and New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB) respectively; and 10 cross-harbour routes on its own.

The KMB fleet comprised 4 027 licensed vehicles at year-end; 3 786 were air-conditioned and 1 858 wheelchair-accessible. KMB recorded 1.01 billion passenger

trips (a daily average of 2.76 million passenger trips), which covered 331 million kilometres of roads during the year. Its fares ranged from \$1.60 to \$38 for the regular routes.

Local bus services on Hong Kong Island are provided by NWFB and CTB. At year-end, NWFB was operating 53 bus routes on Hong Kong Island, eight in Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O and 33 cross-harbour routes, 29 of which were run jointly with KMB. It had a licensed fleet of 694 buses, of which 693 were air-conditioned and 532 wheelchair-accessible.

NWFB recorded 184.4 million passenger trips — a daily average of 505 151 passenger trips — which covered 50.4 million kilometres of roads during the year. Its fares ranged from \$3 to \$34.2 for the regular routes.

CTB operates two bus networks under two franchises. One of the franchises covers 63 bus routes on Hong Kong Island, one bus route in the New Territories and 30 cross-harbour routes, 22 of which are operated jointly with KMB. Another franchise covers a network of 18 routes plying between the urban areas and North Lantau or the airport.

At year-end, CTB had a licensed fleet of 919 air-conditioned buses, of which 173 were wheelchair-accessible. The company recorded 210.4 million passenger trips (a daily average of 576 000 passenger trips) which covered 82.5 million kilometres of road during the year. Its fares ranged from \$2.50 to \$48 for the regular routes.

The Long Win Bus Company Limited provides bus services between the New Territories and Lantau Island/the airport. The company made 27.7 million passenger trips (a daily average of 75 800 passenger trips) covering 24.9 million kilometres of road during the year. At year-end, 155 buses were serving a total of 18 routes; all were air-conditioned and 152 were wheelchair-accessible. Fares ranged from \$3.50 to \$28 for the regular routes.

The New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited mainly provides bus services on Lantau Island. The company recorded 16.1 million passenger trips (a daily average of 44 200 passenger trips) which covered 5.5 million kilometres of road during the year. It ran 23 routes with a licensed fleet of 94 vehicles. Its fares ranged from \$3 to \$40 for the regular routes.

Different forms of fare concessions are provided by the franchised bus companies. For example, all franchised bus companies offered concessionary fares for children aged under 12 and elderly passengers on all routes (except recreational routes operated by CTB).

Bus-Bus Interchange schemes are being implemented to encourage more efficient use of bus resources and limited road space, and to allow more choices for passengers. Fare discounts are offered to passengers when interchanging among designated bus routes. At year-end, a total of 228 Bus-Bus Interchange schemes were in operation, involving about 400 routes.

Non-franchised Buses

Non-franchised bus services play a supplementary role in the public transport system. They relieve heavy demand on regular public transport services primarily during peak hours, fill the gaps which cannot be met by regular public transport services and provide tailor-made services to specific groups of passengers. They mainly serve tourists, groups of residents, employees and students. At year-end, there were 7 067 registered non-franchised buses of which 6 945 were in operation.

Based on the recommendations of the Transport Advisory Committee's review of the licensing and regulatory framework for non-franchised bus operation completed in July 2004, the Government continued to implement measures to improve the regulation of non-franchised bus operation in 2007. The measures aim at coordinating the change in non-franchised bus services with demand; strengthening control over non-franchised bus operation; and enhancing effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement actions.

Minibuses

Hong Kong's minibuses are licensed to carry a maximum of 16 passengers. At year-end, there were 6 226 licensed minibuses. Of these, 4 349 were public light buses (PLBs), and 1 877 were private light buses. Private light buses are authorised to carry only group passengers and are not allowed to collect separate fares.

There are two types of PLBs — green and red minibuses. Green minibuses provide scheduled services with fixed routing, fares, vehicle allocation and timetables stipulated by the Transport Department. During the year, there were 2 901 green minibuses operating 354 routes, which recorded a daily average of 1 427 600 passenger trips. Red minibuses are not required to operate on fixed routes or timetables. They may set their own fares but are subject to certain restrictions on their operating areas. There were 1 449 red minibuses in operation and they recorded a daily average of 404 000 passenger trips during the year.

The Transport Department and the Quality Public Light Bus Service Steering Committee have launched a series of schemes to improve the quality of the PLB service. To improve communication between passengers, the trade and the Government, the department published a PLB Newsletter in November.

The department also continued to promote and facilitate the provision of on-board facilities for passengers. As regards safety, three workshops were held for the operators and PLB drivers during the year to remind trade members and drivers about the importance of driving safely. Representatives of the trade, the Police and the Transport Department collaborated in drawing up a 'Code of Practice for PLB Drivers' and 'Guidelines for Picking up/Setting Down Passengers for PLB Drivers' which were introduced in March. The department also continued to assist the Vocational Training Council (VTC) in running an 'Advanced PLB Driver Training Course' under the VTC's 'Skill Upgrading Scheme'.

Furthermore, all PLBs now have speed display devices (SDD). The installation of SDDs will become mandatory from May 1, 2008 onwards, and any unauthorised

alteration to these devices will be regarded as a criminal act. To encourage the trade to retrofit older PLBs with seat belts, the Transport Department provided the PLB trade with specifications and plans for retrofitting seat belts and high-back seats on some older PLB models in 2006. Some 57 PLBs have now been retrofitted.

The Government introduced incentive schemes in August 2002 to encourage the early replacement of diesel light buses with vehicles running on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or electricity. The schemes ended at the end of 2005 and some 2 370 applications have been processed and grants have been made to the applicants. Another incentive scheme to encourage the replacement of Pre-Euro and Euro I commercial vehicles, including light buses, with new commercial vehicles, was introduced in April. Some 15 PLB-related applications had been processed with grants made to the applicants. At year-end, 2 484 LPG PLBs and 180 LPG private light buses were running on the roads. One electricity-driven private light bus was in operation.

Taxis

At year-end, there were 15 250 red urban taxis, 2 838 green New Territories taxis and 50 blue Lantau taxis in Hong Kong, carrying about one million passengers per day.

To improve the operating environment for taxis, the Transport Department has extended the temporary arrangement, first introduced in May 2003, to January 31, 2008, to allow all taxis to pick up and set down passengers during peak hours and 7 am-to-7 pm restricted zones on roads with speed limits of less than 70 kilometres per hour. At year-end, there were over 230 designated taxi pick-up/drop-off points and taxi drop-off points. The department will continue to provide taxi pick-up/drop-off facilities at suitable locations.

The department and the Quality Taxi Services Steering Committee continued to implement schemes to improve the quality of taxi service. These included updating the information on the light emitting diode display panels and providing additional taxi information plates at various taxi stands. It also published and distributed 40 000 free copies of quarterly Taxi Newsletters to taxi drivers, and distributed leaflets at the Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong Disneyland and Lok Ma Chau Control Point to provide useful information on taxi services to taxi drivers, passengers and tourists.

Ferries

Ferries provide essential transport links to outlying islands where no land transport alternatives are available. They also provide an alternative transport service to and from the inner harbour and other areas in Hong Kong.

At year-end, one ferry operator provided two cross-harbour franchised passenger ferry services and 12 ferry operators provided 26 licensed passenger ferry services to outlying islands, new towns and the inner-harbour. These franchised/licensed services were supplemented by about 75 'kaito', or small boats, which provide services to relatively remote parts of Hong Kong.

Ferries recorded a daily average of about 83 700 passenger trips within the harbour and about 64 400 passenger trips to/from the outlying islands.

Transport Management

Effective transport management is essential for the orderly and safe operation of the transport system. The Government's regulatory powers are provided under the Road Traffic Ordinance. Every effort is made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of transport management through the use of modern technology in a variety of areas.

Licensing

At year-end, there were 1 799 173 licensed drivers, 558 751 licensed private vehicles and 6 320 government vehicles. There were 372 203 licensed private cars, of which 33 124 were new vehicles registered during the year. Registered goods vehicles totalled 120 532, of which 75 385 were light goods vehicles, 41 848 were medium goods vehicles and 3 299 were heavy goods vehicles. On average, there were 3 635 new learner-drivers per month.

Driver Improvement Scheme

To promote road safety and make drivers more law abiding through better understanding of good driving behaviour and attitude, the Transport Department launched a Driver Improvement Scheme in September 2002 and designated a number of driving schools to help both drivers and road users to behave properly on the road. From September 2002 to December 2007, over 13 000 drivers attended the driving improvement course which they found very useful. About 77 per cent of the drivers who attended the course did not incur new driving-offence points for six months after the course.

Vehicle Examination

Vehicles are examined to ensure they are roadworthy and properly maintained. All public service vehicles, goods vehicles exceeding 1.9 tonnes, and trailers must undergo annual inspections. In 2007, 196 000 vehicles were examined at the four government vehicle examination centres. In addition, 3 500 spot checks were carried out on franchised buses to confirm their safety, roadworthiness and service standards. Private cars over six years old and light goods vehicles not exceeding 1.9 tonnes are inspected annually at 22 designated car testing centres run by the private sector. These centres carried out 216 000 vehicle examinations during the year.

Two chassis dynamometers have been installed in the Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre to carry out random checks on smoke emissions from diesel vehicles.

All vehicles imported into Hong Kong may be examined to make sure they meet statutory requirements before they can be registered and licensed. In 2007, of 602 vehicle types approved, 581 went through a simplified procedure that involved examining sample vehicles of the same model.

Electronic payment facilities are now available at all vehicle examination centres, providing additional convenience for users. Vehicle Appointment Status Display Systems have been installed at the New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre and Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre and at the To Kwa Wan Vehicle Examination Centre, informing people of available booking dates. The booking information is also available on the Internet.

Application of Technology

Closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras are installed at heavy traffic spots to monitor conditions at these places so that drivers can avoid them if possible. At present, there are 168 cameras installed in the urban areas of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan, Tai Po and North District. In mid-2006, the Transport Department upgraded its Hong Kong Island CCTV system by replacing it with a digital CCTV system, the first in Hong Kong. The new system improves monitoring and reduces operating cost over the long term.

There are also 97 cameras operating on major highways such as Tuen Mun Road, West Kowloon Highway, North Lantau Highway, San Tin Highway, Yuen Long Highway, Shenzhen Bay Bridge, Kong Sham Western Highway, Tolo Highway, Fanling Highway and roads leading to the boundary crossings.

The CCTV systems' coverage will be extended further to cover Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. The project is expected to be completed in October 2008.

To further enhance the work on traffic surveillance and traffic information dissemination, the Transport Department is planning to install CCTV cameras in the urban and New Territories areas. This CCTV Project will involve the provision of new CCTV cameras in the Tseung Kwan O area, along Strategic Road Network and major roads; and renewal of existing obsolete CCTV cameras in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin. In addition, the CCTV Project will include installation of new cameras for traffic information dissemination to the public. Work on this project will start in early 2008 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

Images captured by CCTV cameras at 43 strategic locations were first shown to the public on the Internet in 1999. This was well received, prompting the Transport Department to expand the service to cover 120 locations. In early 2007, the Transport Department and mobile network operators joined forces to capture images which people can view on their mobile phones as well.

The Transport Department went the extra mile in 2006 by setting up a mobile CCTV system that can relay images to traffic control centres for taking swift action to reduce traffic disruption.

The Transport Department also operates a computerised Area Traffic Control (ATC) system that is connected to the traffic signalling system in a district, enabling better control of changing conditions on the road. ATC systems are now in operation in the urban areas and in the new towns at Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Sha Tin, Ma On Shan, Tai Po and North District. Upgrading of the ATC system on Hong Kong Island was completed in mid-2006. In addition, the installation of ATC systems in Tuen Mun

and Yuen Long commenced in early 2006 and the system will be in operation by late 2008. A project of replacement of ATC systems for Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin and expansion of the system to Tseung Kwan O commenced early this year. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of 2011.

At year-end, 1 732 signals at road junctions were in operation, 1 343 of which were linked to ATC systems.

To facilitate traffic monitoring and incident management, traffic control and surveillance (TCS) facilities, such as CCTV, emergency telephones and lane signals, have been provided in all tunnels and the Tsing Ma Control Area. To further enhance operational efficiency, more comprehensive TCS facilities such as variable message signs, variable speed limit signs and automatic incident detection systems have been installed, or are being retrofitted in some tunnels. The Tsing Ma Control Area and the new Shenzhen Bay Bridge and Kong Sham Western Highway. Comprehensive TCS facilities are currently being installed on Route 8 between Sha Tin and Tsing Yi, which is under construction.

Automatic Toll Collection

Automatic toll collection (autotoll) systems were first installed at the Cross-Harbour Tunnel and Aberdeen Tunnel in August 1993, and then subsequently in all tunnels and at the Lantau Link. The systems allow motorists with tags on their vehicles to drive through designated toll booths without having to stop to pay. Since October 1998, these autotoll systems have been unified so that a subscriber needs only one tag to use all tunnels and toll roads fitted with the system. About 48 per cent (between January and October 2007) of motorists use autotoll when passing through the tunnels and toll roads.

Parking

On-street parking is provided where there is parking demand and where traffic conditions permit. At year-end, Hong Kong had about 17 900 metered parking spaces with electronic parking meters in operation. These parking spaces are managed and operated by a private operator.

The Government owns 14 multi-storey car parks plus the Sheung Shui Park-and-Ride Public Car Park and an open-air car park near the Lantau Link View Point, which together provide about 7 900 parking spaces. They are run by two private operators under management contracts with the Government.

In addition to government car parks, off-street public parking is provided by the Airport Authority at the Hong Kong International Airport, the Housing Department and The Link REIT in some public housing estates, and the private sector in multi-storey commercial/residential buildings and open-air public car parks. Park-and-ride facilities are operated by MTRCL at Choi Hung Station on the Kwun Tong Line, at Hong Kong, Kowloon and Tsing Yi Stations on the Airport Express, Kam Sheung Road Station on the West Rail Line, and at some commercial car parks located near Olympic Station on the Tung Chung Line and Hang Hau Station on the Tseung Kwan

O Line. In all, there are 199 000 off-street public parking spaces (excluding those in government car parks).

Road Safety

Traffic accidents involving injury rose by 3.1 per cent in 2007. There were 15 315 traffic accidents, of which 2 376 were serious and 153 fatal accidents. This compares with 14 849 accidents in 2006, of which 2 315 were serious and 135 fatal.

In-depth investigations were carried out at 100 traffic accident blackspots to identify common accident causes. Remedial measures were recommended for 89 of these locations.

To deter red light jumping, the Government has embarked on a project to further expand the red light camera system to facilitate action against offenders. The project provides for 155 road junctions to have red light cameras by 2010. A new law has also been approved to make installation of speed display devices in public light buses a standard requirement. This will go into effect on May 1, 2008. Providing safer seats in newly-registered student service vehicles will also be mandatory from May 1, 2009.

Road safety campaigns, including the promotion of Hong Kong's Road Safety Vision: 'Zero Accidents on the Road, Hong Kong's Goal', and 'Smart Driving with Courtesy', continued to play an important role in the department's publicity strategy. Other road safety publicity and education campaigns, especially on drink driving, safe cycling, safe vehicle reversing and pedestrian safety, have continued.

Public Transport and Environment

Government planning for public transport infrastructure projects is based on sustainable development principles. It strives for the best possible integration of land use, transport and environmental planning. It is also the Government's policy to accord priority to railways which it sees as the backbone of the passenger transport system. Six new railway lines, or extensions of existing lines, were opened between 2002 and 2007, with another two to be opened in the next two years.

Less reliance on road-based transport will alleviate the pressure on transport systems and, in turn, lessen the impact on the environment. At the same time, the rationalisation of bus routes and bus stops and the introduction of pedestrian schemes will continue. These will help reduce the adverse effect of vehicle emissions and noise pollution.

Since late 1998, about 4 200 daily bus trips have been eliminated from the busy traffic corridors of Hong Kong Island's northern shore through service cancellation, frequency reduction, route truncation and route amalgamation. On Nathan Road in Kowloon, about 1 200 daily bus trips have been eliminated since August 2002, enhancing the efficiency of bus operations along that busy road. Bus stops have also been rationalised to reduce the number of stops along busy corridors.

The environmental impact of new transport projects, during both their construction and operation phases, is also carefully monitored. Environmental

mitigation measures are implemented where necessary to reduce their impact on the environment.

To make it easier for people to make their way through busy and congested roads, pedestrian schemes have been introduced to reduce congestion in a number of streets. These schemes are in operation in Central, Wan Chai, Causeway Bay, North Point, the Peak, Stanley, Tsim Sha Tsui, Jordan, Mong Kok, Sham Shui Po, Yuen Long and Sheung Shui. These schemes have been well received by the public, and more will be set up. A detailed study is also being conducted for improvements to pedestrian environment, urban design, streetscape and landscape in Mong Kok.

Franchised bus companies have been purchasing buses with environmentally friendly engines that meet the European emission standards (known as Euro engines) since 1993. About 89 per cent of franchised buses are equipped with Euro engines while the remaining buses have all been retrofitted with catalytic converters. To help improve the environment, the franchised bus companies have been deploying buses with Euro II, or more environmentally friendly, engines on routes along Yee Wo Street in Causeway Bay, the busiest shopping area on Hong Kong Island. The Government is working with the companies to deploy cleaner vehicles along other busy corridors.

The franchised bus companies and the Government have also been working to improve the overall quality of public transport interchanges to make them more user-friendly for passengers. Electronic route information panels and customer service centres have been set up at some interchanges. Other improvements included refurbishing some of the interchanges and their ventilation systems.

Since August 2001, all newly registered taxis have been required to run on LPG to meet stricter emission standards to reduce air pollution. Incentive schemes to encourage the early replacement of diesel light buses with LPG or electricity-driven vehicles were implemented between August 2002 and December 2005. Almost 100 per cent of taxis and 55 per cent of PLBs have switched to LPG. An incentive scheme was also introduced in April to encourage replacement of Pre-Euro and Euro I commercial vehicles with more environmentally friendly ones to comply with prevailing emission standards. By the end of October, 2 258 applications had been approved under the scheme. A reduction in first registration tax was also offered to new buyers of cars that run on petrol instead of diesel. A total of 2 552 applications for joining the scheme were processed by the end of October.

Cross-boundary Traffic

Overall Cross-boundary Traffic

Cross-boundary vehicular traffic increased by 1.7 per cent in 2007 over the previous year, averaging 41 800 vehicles a day whereas the total cross-boundary passenger traffic by rail, road and ferry increased by about 7.8 per cent, reaching 514 000 passengers a day

The Shenzhen Bay Port and Shenzhen Bay Bridge (previously known as the Hong Kong–Shenzhen Western Corridor), which is the fourth road boundary crossing, was opened on July 1 connecting the northwestern part of Hong Kong with Shekou in

Shenzhen. Moreover, the second rail passenger crossing at Lok Ma Chau/Futian and the extension of the East Rail Line to Lok Ma Chau opened on August 15.

Rail Services to Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau

Lo Wu, one of the two rail boundary crossings into the Mainland, operates between 6.30 am and midnight every day. It handled an average of 260 000 passengers daily during the year, and more than 389 000 on festive days.

The extension of the East Rail Link to Lok Ma Chau, the second rail boundary crossing into the Mainland, commenced operation on August 15, and operates between 6.30 am and 10.30 pm every day. Passengers can reach this crossing either by rail or local public transport. In 2007, the crossing at the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line handled an average of about 35 300 passengers daily, and more than 50 100 on festive days (including rail and local public transports).

Road Crossings

There are four road crossings between Hong Kong and the Mainland: Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok and Shenzhen Bay. The Lok Ma Chau crossing operates round the clock for goods and passenger vehicle traffic. The Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok crossings are opened daily to goods and passenger vehicle traffic from 7 am to 10 pm and from 7 am to 8 pm respectively. The Shenzhen Bay Port commenced operation on July 1 and is opened daily to goods and passenger vehicle traffic from 6.30 am to midnight.

The daily average number of vehicle trips recorded at Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok and Shenzhen Bay crossings during the year were 31 000, 6 900, 2 300 and 3 200 respectively.

The daily average numbers of cross-boundary travellers who used the Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok and Shenzhen Bay crossings were 131 700, 7 200, 7 600 and 23 700 respectively. These travellers crossed the boundary mainly by taking cross-boundary coaches, while travellers crossing the boundary via the Lok Ma Chau and Shenzhen Bay crossings may also choose to take the shuttle buses that ply between Huanggang in Shenzhen and the Public Transport Interchange at San Tin, and the local public transport services to the Public Transport Interchange at the Hong Kong Port Area of the Shenzhen Bay Port respectively. In 2007, about 90 400 passengers took the cross-boundary coaches provided by some 100 companies, while 46 800 and 13 900 passengers took the shuttle buses at Lok Ma Chau and the local public transports to the Shenzhen Bay Port each day respectively.

A trial scheme for taxis and green minibuses to operate at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point between midnight and 6.30 am was introduced in March 2003. During those hours, northbound passengers may take taxis and green minibuses to the control point directly and then cross the boundary by shuttle buses, while southbound passengers may board taxis and green minibuses at the control point after immigration clearance. The starting time of the trial scheme was advanced from midnight to 11 pm in January 2005.

New Boundary Crossings under Construction or Planning

To meet the continuous growth in cross-boundary traffic, new road and rail crossings have been planned in coordination with the Mainland authorities.

The proposed Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao Bridge (HZMB) will link Hong Kong direct with the Pearl River West. The governments of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macao are actively carrying out the project's advance work. A study is being conducted on the design of the Hong Kong section of the HZMB, its related connecting infrastructure and a site for the Hong Kong boundary crossing facilities.

The Northern Link will connect the West Rail Line at Kam Sheung Road to the boundary crossing point at Lok Ma Chau, and together with the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, will form a strategic corridor connecting the West Rail Line and the East Rail Line in the northern New Territories.

The Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong Express Rail Link is expected to reduce the rail travel time between Guangzhou and Hong Kong from the present 100 minutes to less than 60 minutes. It will also link Hong Kong with Beijing and other major Mainland cities via the Beijing–Guangzhou Passenger Line and the Hangzhou–Fuzhou–Shenzhen Passenger Line. In addition, it will connect Hong Kong to cities in the Pan-Pearl River Delta via the Rapid Transit System now under development on the Mainland. The Government has decided that a dedicated corridor should be built for the Hong Kong Section and is now examining the proposed project.

Cross Boundary Ferries

Cross-boundary ferry services to about 12 Mainland ports and Macao are provided by seven operators at the Hong Kong–Macao Ferry Terminal in Sheung Wan, the China Ferry Terminal in Tsim Sha Tsui and the Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal. The number of cross-boundary travellers using these services to travel to and from Mainland ports totalled 6.7 million, and the number to and from Macao was 16.8 million in 2007.

The Port

Hong Kong set a record in its container throughput in 2007 by handling 23.9 million TEUs (20-foot equivalent units of containers), maintaining its status as the largest container port serving southern China and one of the busiest ports in the world.

Some 456 000 vessels arrived in and departed from Hong Kong during the year, carrying 243 million tonnes of cargo and about 25 million passengers. Most of these passengers commuted on a highly efficient fleet of high-speed ferries, including jetfoils and jet catamarans, to and from Macao and ports on the Mainland, making Hong Kong a port with one of the world's largest number of speed craft.

Hong Kong is a modern, well equipped deep-water port serving two main types of maritime transport — large ocean-going vessels from all parts of the world and the smaller, coastal and river trade vessels from the Pearl River. Hong Kong is the focal

point of all maritime trading activities in the region. On an average day there are around 100 ocean-going vessels working in the port; nearly 520 river trade vessels entering or leaving the port; and many river ferries and local craft working in, or passing through, the harbour. Ship turnaround performance is among the best in the world: container ships at terminals are routinely turned around in less than 10 hours.

Port Development

Container handling facilities are a key part of the infrastructure of the logistics sector, one of the four pillar industries of Hong Kong. The nine container terminals at Kwai Chung–Tsing Yi area have 24 berths with a total handling capacity of over 19 million TEUs per year.

Competition between the container terminals and alternative modes of container handling motivates the operators to improve their efficiency and quality of service. The investment in upgrading equipment and systems in the terminals at Kwai Chung–Tsing Yi over the past few years has enabled the port to enhance its productivity, as well as to handle the world's largest container ships.

The container port is vital, not only for Hong Kong, but also for southern China – one of the fastest industrialising areas in the world. Over 70 per cent of container traffic handled by Hong Kong is related to southern China.

Strategic Planning

The Government completed in 2004, a report entitled 'Study on Hong Kong Port – Master Plan 2020' to make sure sufficient port facilities are available in Hong Kong to handle the port's cargo growth following China's accession to the World Trade Organisation. The master plan recommended a package of immediate and long-term initiatives to increase the port's competitiveness. Following its recommendations, the Government has been updating the port cargo forecasts to work out the optimal timing for constructing a new container terminal. In the meantime, it has completed an ecology study on a site on Northwest Lantau to assess its environmental suitability for building a container terminal there. The studies' finding will form the basis for the Government to formulate the optimal port expansion option.

Hong Kong Port Development Council

In Hong Kong, all container terminal facilities are financed, developed, owned and operated by the private sector. The Government's role is to undertake long-term strategic planning for port facilities and to provide the necessary supporting infrastructure, such as roads and channels to the terminals.

The Hong Kong Port Development Council (PDC), chaired by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, is a high-level advisory body comprising the industry's key players in the private sector and the Government. The PDC advises the Government on port development strategies and port facility planning to meet future demands. It also assists the Government in promoting Hong Kong as a regional hub port and a leading container port in the world.

A Port Development Advisory Group, formed under the PDC, assists the council in examining port cargo forecasts and assessing port development needs in the light of changing demand, port capacity, productivity, performance and competition, in Hong Kong and the region.

Hong Kong Maritime Industry Council

The Hong Kong Maritime Industry Council (MIC) is a high-level advisory body chaired by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, and is made up of key players in the industry in private sector and of government officials. It advises the Government on the formulation of measures and initiatives to develop further Hong Kong's maritime industry. It also assists the Government in promoting Hong Kong's maritime services and Hong Kong's status as an international maritime centre.

There are two task forces under the MIC: the Human Resources Task Force handles education, training and manpower supply issues, while the Maritime Services Task Force deals with promoting the industry and strengthening its competitiveness.

The MIC launched a Hong Kong Maritime Scholarship scheme during the year to attract local and Mainland graduates with an aptitude for maritime development to participate in a full-time postgraduate degree programme in Hong Kong. The council also conducted shipping missions to different cities on the Mainland, including Dalian, Shanghai and Ningbo, to promote Hong Kong's quality maritime services and to exchange views on the latest developments in the maritime industry.

Maritime Industry

Some 80 international shipping lines have offices in Hong Kong. Their ships account for about 500 sailings weekly to 500 destinations around the world. In addition, there are about 900 shipping-related companies operating in Hong Kong, providing a great variety of quality maritime services, ranging from marine insurance, legal services, arbitration, ship financing, brokerage, management and registration to ship survey services. Hong Kong is the world's seventh largest maritime centre. Its shipowners own, manage or operate more than 1 200 vessels, which represent over 8 per cent of the world's merchant fleet in terms of deadweight tonnage.

Some of the world's largest and oldest shipping companies are based in Hong Kong providing professional services not only to Hong Kong-registered ships, but also to ships calling here. Other international maritime service providers have also set up offices in Hong Kong, providing various supplies and support services including ship maintenance and repair, bunkering, ship replenishment, waste disposal, information technology and communication services, auditing and tax advisory services, and training services. The shipping and maritime sectors contribute significantly to Hong Kong's economy and the job market.

Hong Kong is proactive in negotiating double taxation relief arrangements covering shipping income with its trading partners. Hong Kong has so far succeeded in making such arrangements with 14 tax administrations, including the Mainland, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway,

the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Port Administration

The Marine Department administers the port. Its principal task is to ensure safety of navigation and efficiency of shipping activities in Hong Kong waters. This is achieved through comprehensive traffic management, harbour patrols, vessel traffic services, provision of mooring buoys and strict enforcement of major international maritime convention rules and standards.

The department liaises closely with shipping and commercial organisations through a number of advisory and consultative committees. Through these channels, users and operators of port facilities can advise the Government on port administration matters. The Port Operations Committee advises on all matters related to efficient operation of the port, the Pilotage Advisory Committee on matters related to pilotage services, and the Port Area Security Advisory Committee on port security. In addition, the Local Vessel Advisory Committee deals with matters related to local vessels, while the Shipping Consultative Committee advises on the operation of the Hong Kong Shipping Register (HKSR) and Hong Kong's participation in the International Maritime Organisation.

The Marine Department's website (www.mardep.gov.hk) provides a wide range of information on the port and the HKSR, such as Marine Department notices and details of the department's services and facilities. Special features include the application of Really Simple Syndication to publish frequently updated Merchant Shipping Notices; the Hong Kong Shipping Directory in which Hong Kong-based marine services companies are listed; real-time movements of ocean-going vessels and river-trade cargo vessels in port; examination schedules for seafarers and verification of Port Clearance Permits issued to ocean-going vessels; and port and maritime statistics providing the latest monthly and quarterly statistics on vessel arrivals, cargo and container throughput.

The Marine Department eBusiness System, which permits online submission of port formality documents, is being improved to provide more eBusiness facilities, such as one-stop lodgment, online processing, e-printing of permit and e-payment, so as to offer a total e-Business solution.

Vessel Traffic Management

The department's Vessel Traffic Centre monitors and regulates the movements of vessels using the Vessel Traffic Service through a computer-aided radar network, VHF radios and a database information system, which together provide full surveillance of all navigable waters in Hong Kong.

Harbour Patrol and Local Control Stations

The Harbour Patrol Section operates a fleet of 20 patrol launches and provides on-site support for the Vessel Traffic Centre. Apart from responding to maritime emergencies, the patrol launches help enforce marine legislation and maintain port and shipping safety.

The department's local traffic control station at Kwai Chung Container Terminal 8 operates round the clock. Equipped with a dedicated patrol launch, the station provides navigational assistance to vessels in the vicinity of the Kwai Chung–Tsing Yi container port area.

Carriage of Dangerous Goods

The department conducts random shipboard inspections of vessels in Hong Kong waters in accordance with international and local standards. The dangerous goods legislation is being revised to conform with the new requirements of the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code.

Pilotage Service

Pilotage is compulsory in Hong Kong waters for vessels of 3 000 gross tonnes and more, oil tankers of 1 000 gross tonnes and more, and all gas carriers.

The Director of Marine is the pilotage authority, who regulates and monitors pilotage services with the assistance of the Pilotage Advisory Committee, The committee's membership covers a wide spectrum of port users and shipping interests. Pilotage services are provided round the clock throughout the year by a commercial company.

Local Vessels

In 2007, 14 000 local vessels — including passenger, cargo, fishing and pleasure vessels — were licensed in Hong Kong to provide a variety of efficient services for the port and the community. To improve the licensing and management of these vessels, the new Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance was enacted and came into force in the early part of 2007.

Hydrographic Service

The Hydrographic Office carries out hydrographic surveys and produces nautical charts and publications in Chinese and English. It also produces Electronic Navigational Charts. It issues Notices to Mariners for updating the charts once every two weeks, and also provides real-time information about tides, tidal stream and Ma Wan transit tidal window predictions through the Internet (www.hydro.gov.hk).

Planning, Development and Port Security

The department's Planning, Development and Port Security Branch provides professional advice on port and marine projects, and coordinates publicity on all marine development works. These include developments in Tuen Mun Area 38, Central, Wan Chai, Southeast Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O, and the proposed new link to cities in the Pearl River Delta.

The branch is also the executive arm of the designated authority for implementing the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code of the International Maritime Organisation for port facilities in Hong Kong. Its tasks include monitoring security exercises and drills conducted at the port facilities and carrying out annual audits of port facility security arrangements.

The department's statistical unit compiles and analyses port statistics on vessel movements and container throughput, and publishes them on the department's website (<http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/publication/portstat.html>.)

Marine Industrial Safety

Hong Kong Harbour has become busier due to China's rapid economic growth. To maintain Hong Kong's reputation as a safe harbour for cargo-handling, ship-repair and marine construction, the new Shipping and Port Control (Works) Regulation and Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Works) Regulation were implemented during the year. Among other measures, the new regulations introduced mandatory safety training, and the requirement for every vessel engaging in works to appoint at least one trained works supervisor, which has effectively raised workers' safety awareness. In addition, codes of practice were introduced to provide the maritime industry with practical guidelines. The Marine Department's Marine Industrial Safety Section conducts safety checks on works carried out on vessels and promotes safe working practices and regulations for frontline workers.

Port Services and Facilities

Mainland and Macao Ferry Services

The department operates two cross-boundary ferry terminals: the Hong Kong–Macao Ferry Terminal with 12 berths and the China Ferry Terminal with 13 berths. The Hong Kong–Macao Ferry Terminal operates round the clock. The China Ferry Terminal is open from 7 am to 10 pm from Monday to Friday, and from 7 am to 2 am on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. The Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal, operated by a tenant under a tenancy agreement, opened for service on November 3, 2006. It has three berths and operates daily from 7 am to 10 pm. The department controls and regulates the use of these three terminals under the Shipping and Port Control (Ferry Terminals) Regulations.

Immigration and Quarantine Services

Immigration and quarantine services are available at the Western Quarantine and Immigration Anchorage and the Eastern Quarantine and Immigration Anchorage. Shipping agents may apply for immigration and quarantine services, including advance clearance, for ships.

The Tuen Mun Immigration Anchorage operates round the clock for river trade vessels plying between Hong Kong and Pearl River Delta ports. Pre-arrival clearance has been extended to all Mainland river and coastal trade vessels. Operators of such vessels may submit pre-arrival clearance applications to the Immigration Department's Harbour Control Section.

Mooring Buoys

The department provides a total of 31 mooring buoys for ship operation, 21 Class 'A' buoys for vessels of up to 183 metres long and 10 class 'B' buoys for vessels of up to 137 metres long. Buoy bookings may be made through the Vessel Traffic Centre.

Bunkering and Potable Water Supply

Bunkering is readily available at commercial wharves and oil terminals or from a large fleet of private bunkering barges. Bunker supplies meet the latest requirements under Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (also known as the MARPOL Convention). Fresh water can also be obtained alongside berths or from a private fleet of water boats.

Local Vessels' Safety Certification Service

The Local Vessel Safety Section provides survey and certification services for local vessels to make sure they comply with safety and pollution prevention requirements. Plan approval and ship survey work for certain types of local vessels may be carried out by recognised authorities, private organisations or professionals authorised by the Marine Department.

Public Cargo Working Areas

The department manages eight public cargo working areas where licensed cargo handlers are allowed to load and unload cargo onto and from barges and coasters. The combined length of berths in these working areas is 7 044 metres.

Collection of Marine Refuse and Waste

The department's contractors collect domestic refuse from both ocean-going vessels and local vessels. Sewage and oily chemical waste are collected from ships by registered collectors. The collected sewage is taken to the sewage treatment facility in the harbour for disposal, and the oily chemical waste is shipped to the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre on Tsing Yi Island for treatment.

Combating Oil Pollution

The department maintains a maritime oil spill response plan to ensure a timely and effective response to oil spills in Hong Kong waters.

A regional maritime oil spill response plan is also in place for the Pearl River Estuary to enhance regional cooperation in the event of a major oil spill occurring in Hong Kong or in any of the neighbouring ports in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Macao and Guangzhou.

In October, the department's Pollution Control Unit organised a large-scale, oil-spill clean-up drill in which all government departments concerned and local oil companies took part.

Shipping

Hong Kong Shipping Register

The Hong Kong Shipping Register, administered by the Marine Department, is regarded highly as a world-class register providing excellent services. It continues to maintain its status as a quality flag under the US Coast Guard's QUALSHIP 21 Scheme.

Hong Kong continued to attract quality ships in 2007. The total weight of ships calling at Hong Kong in 2007 amounted to 36 million gross tonnes, making the Hong Kong Shipping Register one of the top five shipping registers in the world.

To maintain high standards, the Marine Department conducts a Pre-registration Quality Control (PRQC) assessment of ships intending to join the register, as well as a Flag State Quality Control (FSQC) System to ensure ships on the register comply with international standards. During the year, the department's surveyors and auditors carried out a total of eight PRQC inspections and made 42 FSQC visits to ships and related companies. As a result of these quality control measures, the detention rate of Hong Kong-registered ships remained well below the world average.

The department implemented the annual tonnage charge reduction scheme in 2007. A total of 800 Hong Kong-registered ships benefited from the scheme during the year.

Marine Accident Investigations

The department's Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) investigates all marine accidents involving vessels in Hong Kong waters. The department also investigates all serious accidents outside Hong Kong involving Hong Kong-registered ships. The purpose of the investigation is to identify the root causes of the accidents to prevent them from happening again.

Investigation reports of all serious accidents are posted on the department's website and copies are made available to the public on request to promote maritime safety.

Depending on the seriousness of the accident and public interest, a public inquiry by a Marine Court may be ordered by the Chief Executive. In the case of an accident involving a licensed pilot, a Board of Investigation may be ordered by the Director of Marine. In 2007, the MAIB investigated 15 serious accidents.

Seafarers

The department's Shipping Registry and Seafarers Branch supervises the registration, employment, competence, discipline, health, safety and welfare of Hong Kong seafarers, as well as seafarers working on board Hong Kong-registered ships. During the year, some 22 000 seafarers of different nationalities served on board Hong Kong-registered ocean-going ships. About 1 300 officers and ratings served on high-speed passenger vessels plying within the Pearl River Delta Region.

A Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme was launched in July 2004 to boost the supply of local professionals with sea-going experience to meet the increasing demand of the maritime industry. The scheme provides financial incentives to school leavers to take up sea-going cadetship training, which paves the way for them to become shore-based professionals in the maritime industry. By year-end, a total of 71 cadets had joined the training scheme.

Participation in International Shipping Activities

International Maritime Organisation

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, under the name 'Hong Kong, China', is an associate member of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and has a permanent representative in London. The Hong Kong maritime industry is consulted on, and kept well informed of, all issues discussed at IMO meetings that may affect Hong Kong. In 2007, HKSAR government officials attended an IMO Assembly and 22 other IMO meetings. Topics discussed included requirements to enhance maritime safety and security, measures to reduce marine pollution, matters related to maritime laws, seafarers' training and certification of standards, facilitation of international maritime traffic, and other maritime matters.

Port State Control

Hong Kong is a member of the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (PSC) in the Asia-Pacific Region. The Marine Department participated actively in its various activities, and is the leader of two working groups. Hong Kong hosted the 17th Meeting of the Port State Control Committee in the Asia-Pacific Region from September 3-6, 2007.

The department's PSC officers are well known for their professionalism and impartiality in conducting ship inspections. In 2007, the department continued to conduct daily PSC inspections, even at weekends whenever practicable. The officers conducted 670 inspections on ocean-going vessels, or 15 per cent of all ocean-going vessels that visited Hong Kong. About 3 per cent of ships inspected were detained because of serious deficiencies that needed immediate attention.

Maritime Search and Rescue

The Marine Department's Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) coordinates search and rescue operations for serious incidents occurring in Hong Kong waters and within a large part of the South China Sea, covering some 450 000 square nautical miles of sea.

The centre is manned round the clock by professional staff and equipped with modern communication equipment. It is also aided by a shore-based Global Maritime Distress and Safety System.

In 2007, the centre handled 276 vessel-related emergencies, 66 of which involved search and rescue operations. A total of 163 people were rescued.

In recognition of its expertise, the Hong Kong MRCC was chosen as a member of the International Maritime Organisation/International Civil Aviation Organisation Joint Working Group for Harmonisation of Maritime and Aeronautical Search and Rescue.

Government Fleet and Dockyard

Government Fleet

The government fleet, with over 700 vessels of different types and sizes, including 126 major mechanised vessels, serves 14 government departments such as the Hong Kong Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department and the Fire Services Department. Some user departments manage their own fleets of purposed-built vessels. The Marine Department controls 82 vessels, including patrol launches, conveyance launches, pontoons and some specialised vessels, such as hydrographic survey launches and explosives carriers. These vessels either support the department's own port operations or serve other departments that do not have their own fleet.

Since 1999, the Marine Department has been awarding contracts to private operators to provide conveyance launches, tugboats and other marine transport services for the department. At present, it has a total of 23 contracted vessels.

Government Dockyard

The Government Dockyard is responsible for the design, procurement and maintenance of all government vessels. It occupies a site of 9.8 hectares on Stonecutters Island and has a protected water basin of 8.3 hectares as one of the operational bases of the Marine Department. For repair and maintenance of vessels, the dockyard has 12 covered docking sheds and over 22 open-yard docking spaces, supported by a ship-lift system and three ship-hoists capable of dry docking vessels of up to 750 tonnes.

During the year, 28 new vessels, costing \$122 million, were built for the Government and eight new shipbuilding contracts, worth \$16 million, were awarded to shipbuilders in Hong Kong and overseas.

Marine Facilities

The Civil Engineering and Development Department is responsible for the planning, design and construction of public marine facilities including piers, beacons, offshore helipads, breakwaters, seawalls, navigation channels and anchorage areas. In 2007, the department commenced the planning of a new public landing facility at Lei Yue Mun, and the construction of Seawall Upgrading Works for Ma On Shan Waterfront Promenade and Sai Kung Public Pier No. 2.

Hong Kong is one of the world's busiest ports, and the department plays an important role in keeping the port running smoothly. As the maintenance authority for all civil engineering marine works, the department carries out maintenance work on ferry piers and other public and government marine facilities, as well as maintenance dredging of the harbour and some major river channels. The department currently maintains 506 hectares of typhoon shelters, seven kilometres of quay at public cargo working areas, 120 kilometres of seawalls and breakwaters, 312 public piers and landing steps, 96 dolphins (mooring structures), 14 100 hectares of fairways and 3 590 hectares of anchorage areas.

International Transport and Logistics Hub

Logistics is an important sector of the economy, accounting for 5 per cent of Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product. Given its strategic location, world class infrastructure and business-friendly environment, Hong Kong has long established itself as a preferred transport and logistics hub in Asia. It is also the world's busiest international air cargo centre and one of the world's busiest container ports. These achievements are attributed to the operators of the services and facilities – the investors and the efficient workforce, as well as the constructive partnership and cooperation between the private and public sectors.

Efficient, reliable and well-connected, Hong Kong's airport and port are vital to the territory's logistics industry. The airport handles an average of more than 72 000 tonnes of cargo every week. The Airport Authority will build a new air cargo terminal to provide additional capacity to meet anticipated demand from growth.

Hong Kong is also home to the most productive and efficient container terminals and to the biggest private terminal operator in the world. A comprehensive network of container line services connects the port of Hong Kong with over 500 destinations across the globe. Coupled with its round-the-clock operation, the nine container terminals at Kwai Chung-Tsing Yi provide a total handling capacity of more than 19 million TEUs.

Development of Hong Kong Logistics Industry

The Government is committed to maintaining and strengthening Hong Kong as Asia's preferred international transport and logistics hub.

The Government provides the necessary infrastructure and environment for Hong Kong's logistics sector to grow. It also promotes closer cooperation with the Mainland, in particular, the Pearl River Delta region to achieve synergies in logistics development.

The Hong Kong Logistics Development Council, chaired by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, provides a forum for the private and public sectors to foster logistics development to strengthen Hong Kong's position as the leading logistics hub in Asia. Five project groups have been set up under the council to develop and implement work programmes for physical infrastructure, information connectivity, human resource development, support for small- and medium-sized enterprises, and marketing and promotion.

To enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong's trucking sector and the logistics industry in general, the Government sponsored a pilot project on the development of an On-Board Trucker Information System (OBTIS). OBTIS is an information and communications technology platform, which helps enhance efficiency in fleet management and connectivity between truckers and stakeholders along the supply chain. The first phase of the pilot was launched in 2007 to test the system's basic features on 50 trucks. A full exercise, involving 450 trucks, will be conducted in 2008.

To promote the use of information technology in logistics operations, the council and the Hong Kong Productivity Council jointly organised training programmes,

workshops and a forum for logistics practitioners in small- and medium-sized enterprises.

With the support of the council, the Government continued to set up sites for port back-up and logistics uses in Hong Kong, particularly in the vicinity of container terminals.

On marketing and promotion, the Government led a logistics promotion delegation to Slovakia, Hungary and Estonia in April 2007 to inform those emerging markets about Hong Kong's strong position as a premium logistics hub.

Civil Aviation

Hong Kong is a major international and regional aviation centre. The Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) is one of the busiest in the world. At year-end, there were 85 airlines providing about 5 700 weekly services between Hong Kong and more than 155 cities worldwide. In addition, an average of about 84 charter flights were made to and from HKIA each week.

Air Traffic in 2007

2007 was another record-breaking year for HKIA. A record 46.29 million passengers passed through the airport during the year, 7 per cent up on 2006. The number of flights to and from Hong Kong rose to 295 342, a rise of 5.3 per cent. Air cargo throughput also set new records: the airport handled 3.74 million tonnes of cargo, representing an increase of 4.5 per cent over 2006. In dollar terms they represented a jump of 11.5 per cent to 1 946 billion.

In 2007, HKIA ranked number one and number five worldwide in terms of international cargo and international passenger throughput respectively. The ranking was based on figures from the Airports Council International.

Air transport continues to play an important role in Hong Kong's external trade. Goods carried by air accounted for 38.5 per cent, 30.3 per cent and 31.4 per cent in value terms of Hong Kong's total imports, exports and re-exports respectively in 2007.

Home Market Expansion

As a leading international airport in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, HKIA has been serving not only Hong Kong's residents and guests, but also travellers to and from the PRD region. In 2007, 3.4 million HKIA passengers used cross-boundary ferry, coach and limousine services at HKIA for connections between the PRD region and HKIA, up 13 per cent from last year. PRD-related traffic is a fast growing part of the HKIA's passenger traffic, thanks to the region's rapid economic growth.

In his Policy Address in October 2007, the Chief Executive announced that a study was being carried out on the feasibility and economic benefits of a direct rail link between HKIA and Shenzhen International Airport. The proposal is to foster closer cooperation between the two airports. Meanwhile, the Government has decided to build the Tuen Mun Western Bypass and the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link

which will reduce substantially the travelling distance between HKIA and the eastern side of the PRD region.

During 2007, the Airport Authority (AA) introduced another cross-boundary ferry route which links HKIA with Zhuhai Jiuzhou Port. HKIA's ferry network now covers a total of six major PRD ports. Upstream check-in facilities were extended to Shenzhen Fuyong and Macao in 2007 in addition to Shekou. Transit passengers from these ports can check in their luggage and travel baggage-free to HKIA for their onward journey to overseas destinations. With the commissioning of the Shenzhen Bay Boundary Crossing Facilities (BCF) in July 2007, some of the cross-boundary coach routes were diverted to the new BCF to take advantage of the more convenient route and boundary crossing arrangements

Airport Services

HKIA is recognised widely for its excellent services. Indeed, it is one of Hong Kong's most successful brand names, thanks to the dedication and commitment of the whole airport community. In 2007, HKIA was voted the World's Best Airport in the annual Skytrax Survey for the sixth time in the past seven years. During the year, it also received Travel Trade Gazette's Best Airport Award, for the fifth time in a row, and many other prestigious awards. HKIA does not rest on its laurels. It is always looking at ways to further improve its already best-of-the-world services. The official opening of HKIA's second passenger terminal, Terminal 2 (T2), in June 2007, has raised the service bar even higher. With 56 airline check-in counters, the spacious T2 now caters to 12 airlines. Designed to be an inter-modal transport hub, T2 houses a cross-boundary coach terminal and is connected to the SkyPier (under construction) by automated people movers. The four entertainment areas, numerous restaurant and shopping outlets at T2 together with the newly opened SkyCity Nine Eagles Golf Course offer travellers a unique airport experience.

HKIA is committed to providing excellent services on good as well as on bad days. In July this year, the airport command centre was moved into the Integrated Airport Centre to strengthen further its ability to detect and respond to emergencies more rapidly, efficiently and effectively.

Preparation for Growth

AA envisages handling up to 80 million passengers and 8 million tonnes of air cargo each year by 2025. AA, in conjunction with the Civil Aviation Department (CAD), has engaged an internationally renowned expert to seek ways to enhance the use of Hong Kong's airspace and its two existing runways and to assess a third runway's incremental benefit to the HKIA. The expert findings should be known by mid-2008 following which the AA will decide on whether or not to proceed with studies on the engineering and environmental feasibility of building a third runway.

The AA is also enhancing other essential airport facilities to meet further growth. Eight additional cargo stands were completed in 2007 and two more will come on stream soon. Several enhancement projects were launched in 2007, including reconfiguration of the passenger building to increase immigration and security channels and enlarge circulation areas, construction of a new passenger concourse

for narrow-body aircraft, expansion of the baggage handling system, and construction of new taxiways. These projects will be completed in phases before 2012. Meanwhile the AA is building a new air cargo terminal at HKIA. It is expected to be operating by 2011 at a time when demand for space in the existing terminals will surpass supply.

To ensure an uninterrupted supply of aviation fuel, the AA is building a permanent aviation fuel facility at Tuen Mun Area 38. The Director of Environmental Protection gave the go-ahead to build the facility after an extensive risk assessment study showed the proposed facility was safe. The facility has to be in place by 2009 when the existing facility can no longer meet the needs of the fast growing aviation traffic.

Air Services

Under the specific authorisation of the Central People's Government, the HKSAR Government continues to negotiate and conclude bilateral air services agreements with aviation partners to provide the legal framework for scheduled air services between Hong Kong and other places. At present, there are a total of 58 such agreements.

The Government also reviews actively the traffic rights arrangements with its partners to expand Hong Kong's aviation network and to allow more competition in the market. In 2007, the Government expanded traffic arrangements with 14 aviation partners.

During the year, the Air Transport Licensing Authority (ATLA) granted 27 new licences: two to Cathay Pacific Airways (CPA), four to Hong Kong Dragon Airlines (HDA), two to AHK Air Hong Kong (AHK), one to Hong Kong Airlines (HKA), eight to Hong Kong Express Airways (HKE), nine to Oasis Hong Kong Airlines (Oasis) and one to Heli Express. The Procedural Guide on ATLA's procedures for processing licence applications is available on: www.thb.gov.hk/eng/boards/transport/air/atla_procedural_guide.pdf.

CPA took delivery of two Airbus A330-300, three Boeing B747-400 and five B777-300ER aircraft during the year. With the expanded fleet, CPA increased the frequency of its long haul services to destinations in North America, Australia and New Zealand. The airline also increased freighter services to destinations in Europe, and Dallas and Atlanta in the United States using its newly added B747-400BCF freighters, converted from passenger aircraft. By the end of the year, CPA operated scheduled services to 53 destinations worldwide.

HDA continued to focus on regional routes after its integration with CPA. The airline launched scheduled passenger air services to Busan, Fukuoka and Kathmandu in January, October and December respectively. It also resumed operations to Sendai in October. Its all-cargo services to New York and passenger services to Tokyo were, however, suspended in April and October respectively. By the end of the year, HDA operated scheduled services to a total of 30 destinations, including 19 cities on the Mainland.

AHK expanded its all-cargo services to the Mainland this year. It started new scheduled all-cargo services to Shanghai and Beijing in May and August respectively. The airline operated scheduled services to a total of 10 destinations in Asia.

HKA received three Boeing B737-800 aircraft in 2007 and expanded its scheduled services network to cover Fuzhou, Qingdao and Xiamen in February, Hanoi in April, Shijiazhuang in May, Nanchang in July, Ho Chi Minh City in August, and Hefei in December. By the end of the year, Hong Kong Airlines operated scheduled services to a total of 14 destinations in Asia.

HKE replaced its fleet of Embraer ERJ-170 aircraft with four B737-800 aircraft during the year. The airline focused on developing regional scheduled air services and commenced services to Xian in April, Guiyang and Nanjing in July, Bangkok in September, and Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur and Yangon in November. By the end of the year, HKE operated scheduled services to a total of 11 destinations in Asia.

Oasis operated with four Boeing B747-400 aircraft. By the end of the year, the airline operated scheduled services to London Gatwick Airport and Vancouver, the latter was added to its network in June.

Regarding non-Hong Kong airlines, eight airlines commenced scheduled services to Hong Kong during the year, six operating all-cargo services and two operating passenger services. For all-cargo services, Airbridge Cargo Airlines took over the route – between Russia and Hong Kong – from Volga-Dnepr Airlines in March. Yangtze River Express Airlines commenced all-cargo services on the Qingdao–Hangzhou–Hong Kong and vice versa route in April. Air China Cargo took over the all-cargo operations on the route between Beijing and Hong Kong from Air China in May. Jett8 Airlines Cargo started services between Singapore and Hong Kong in June. In September, China Cargo Airlines started new all-cargo services between Shanghai and Hong Kong, and Thai Global Airlines between Bangkok and Hong Kong. For passenger services, East Star Airlines commenced services between Wuhan and Hong Kong in November. Transaero Airlines commenced services on the Moscow–Hong Kong–Sydney and vice versa route in December.

On the other hand, three airlines suspended their services to Hong Kong in 2007. Sky Express Cargo suspended its all-cargo services between Athens and Hong Kong in March. Gulf Air suspended its passenger services from Bahrain and Bangkok to Hong Kong and vice versa in June. Sichuan Airlines suspended its Chengdu–Hong Kong and vice versa, and Chongqing–Hong Kong and vice versa passenger services in October.

To facilitate the development of cross-boundary helicopter services in Hong Kong, the Government has moved forward the project to expand the existing cross-boundary heliport at the Hong Kong–Macao Ferry Terminal through an open tender exercise. The tender was completed early this year and work on the heliport is expected to be completed in 2009. In addition, the Government has reserved a site at the Kai Tak Development Area for another cross-boundary heliport. Also, the Government has agreed to allow commercial helicopter operators to share the use of the proposed government heliport near the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition

Centre to provide domestic helicopter services. A technical feasibility study, completed at the end of 2007, showed that the shared-use of the government helipad was technically feasible. After consulting further with the industry and other stakeholders, the Government will seek approval of funds from the Legislative Council to go ahead with the project.

Updating of Aviation Legislation

To ensure aviation safety and to align Hong Kong's aviation legislation with the latest international standards governing the transport of dangerous goods by air, the Dangerous Goods (Consignment by Air) (Safety) Regulations and the Air Navigation (Dangerous Goods) Regulations were amended in 2007 and will go into force on January 1, 2008.

Air Traffic Control

The air traffic control system continued to perform well. It handled 295 342 aircraft movements at HKIA and 156 356 overflights, including aircraft flying to and from Macao Airport, representing a 5.3 per cent and a 10.1 per cent increases over 2006.

The Tripartite Working Group, formed by the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China, the Macao Civil Aviation Authority and CAD, endorsed an initial Air Traffic Management Plan for the Pearl River Delta Region in 2007. The plan is being reviewed by Mainland authorities. If endorsed, it will be implemented in phases. The plan was drawn up to improve usage of the PRD's airspace and air traffic management.

The Legislative Council's Finance Committee approved in May funding for replacing the existing air traffic control system. The new system, which will go into operation in late 2012, will be able to handle traffic projected up to 2025.

Air traffic control coordinated and facilitated special aviation activities during the year. On September 3, an Airbus A380, the largest airliner in the world, conducted flypasts over Victoria Harbour as part of the Asian Aerospace International Expo and Congress 2007. Filming for the 4th edition of the Batman film series took place during November 7-12, 2007. It involved several manoeuvres by helicopters and a Hercules L382 transport aircraft over Victoria Harbour. Both events were well coordinated with other government departments and helped obliquely to promote Hong Kong as a metropolitan city.

Aircraft Operation and Airworthiness

In November, a meeting on 'Technical Arrangement on Aircraft Maintenance' was held between Hong Kong's Civil Aviation Department and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore to discuss the mutual recognition of aircraft and engine maintenance approval. This cooperation arrangement is an expansion of a previous one signed in December 2004 that covered only aircraft component maintenance. It is expected to be signed in the first quarter of 2008.

Aircraft Noise Management

The CAD continued to monitor closely the flight tracks and the noise impact on Hong Kong and to implement all practical aircraft noise mitigating measures. These measures include the adoption of procedures to reduce noise created by incoming and outgoing planes by requiring them to use flight paths that cross over fewer residential areas at night, and by prohibiting flights by aircraft whose noise level exceeds that tolerated by the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

Aviation Security

The CAD ensures that the aviation security measures adopted in Hong Kong meet international standards. The CAD started implementing stricter security measures at HKIA on March 21 to comply with those laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation which require all liquids, aerosols and gels taken on board airliners to be placed in containers with a capacity not greater than 100 millilitres, and that all containers should be put inside a re-sealable plastic bag with a maximum capacity not exceeding one litre.

14th Asian Aerospace International Expo and Congress

The 14th Asian Aerospace International Expo and Congress was held in Hong Kong with great success on September 3-6, 2007, the first time Hong Kong hosted such a large civil aviation Expo.

The prestigious event included an aircraft exhibition in which nine planes, including an Airbus A380, took part. The planes were displayed on the airport's cargo apron and at its Business Aviation Centre.

Websites

Transport and Housing Bureau: www.thb.gov.hk

Transport Department: www.td.gov.hk

Highways Department: www.hyd.gov.hk

Marine Department: www.mardep.gov.hk

Civil Aviation Department: www.cad.gov.hk

Airport Authority Hong Kong: www.hkairport.com