

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 travel on a wide choice of carriers.

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.

Rail is the backbone of the public transport system. The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) was formed following the merger of the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) and the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) in December 2007. The network was further integrated in September through the introduction of an integrated ticketing system for single journey tickets and replacement of the former MTR/KCR interchange ticket gates by a barrier-free interchange.

Railway projects progressed smoothly in 2008. The Kowloon Southern Link, which will connect the East and West Rail Lines at the southern tip of Kowloon Peninsula, and the LOHAS Park Station, which will extend the Tseung Kwan O Line, will be completed as scheduled in 2009.

Progress was also made in the development of road networks. The section of Route 8 between Cheung Sha Wan and Sha Tin was commissioned in March and the remaining section between Tsing Yi and Cheung Sha Wan will be completed in late 2009.

The feasibility study report for the Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao Bridge (HZMB) was submitted to the Central Government for approval in December. The governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will finalise the financing arrangements for the HZMB Main Bridge. Its preliminary design is expected to commence in April 2009 for construction to start no later than 2010.

Implementation of the Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy continued during the year. This scheme calls for the deployment of advanced information and telecommunication technologies to improve the safety, efficiency, reliability and environmental friendliness of the transport system. It comprises two core projects — the Transport Information System, which was being commissioned in phases from mid-2008, and the Journey Time Indication System, which is already operating on Hong Kong Island and is being expanded to Kowloon.

In aviation, the passenger and cargo throughput at the Hong Kong International Airport were 47.14 million and 3.63 million tonnes respectively, while 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 the Civil Aviation Department, the Highways Department, the Marine Department and the Transport Department.

Transport Strategy and Policy Objectives

The Government helps 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. It does this by:

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

The Government also ensures these objectives are environmentally sustainable by researching 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: the Kowloon Southern Link and the LOHAS Park Station of Tseung Kwan O Line.

In addition, the West Island Line, the Shatin to Central Link, the Kwun Tong Line Extension, the South Island Line (East), the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Northern Link, and the Hong Kong — Shenzhen Airport Rail Link are in the planning stage while the Port Rail Line, South Island Line (West) and North Hong Kong Island Line are under review.

Transport Infrastructure

Road Network

Hong Kong had 2 040 kilometres of roads and 1 014 road structures, 15 road tunnels (including the three immersed-tube cross-harbour tunnels) and four major cable supported bridges.

Major projects completed during the year included:

- Route 8 (between Cheung Sha Wan and Sha Tin section): a dual three-lane carriageway linking Sha Tin and Kowloon.
- Trunk Road T3: a dual two-lane trunk road in Tai Wai linking Route 8 (between Cheung Sha Wan and Sha Tin) with the existing Tai Po Road, helping to relieve several congested sections of Tai Po Road.

Tunnels

The Government owns ten road tunnels. They are the Cross-Harbour, Lion Rock, Aberdeen, Kai Tak, Shing Mun, Tseung Kwan O, Cheung Tsing, Tai Wai, Sha Tin Height and Eagles' Nest tunnels.

The last three tunnels are located in the Tsing Sha Control Area. They are managed and operated by private companies under management contracts. Use of the Kai Tak Tunnel and Cheung Tsing Tunnel is free of charge. Tolls for the rest are set by the Government.

Four other tunnels are operated by private companies under 'Build, Operate and Transfer' agreements. They are the Eastern Harbour Crossing, Tate's Cairn Tunnel, Western Harbour Crossing and Tai Lam Tunnel.

There is also a private tunnel, the Discovery Bay Tunnel Link, built by Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited. This is operated and maintained by the company and 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 68 per cent of land-based cross-boundary passenger trips to the Mainland. They are being extended to various parts of Hong Kong. The map below shows the existing railway network, two railway projects under construction and the indicative alignments of the ten railway projects in planning stage or under review.

Railway Projects under Construction

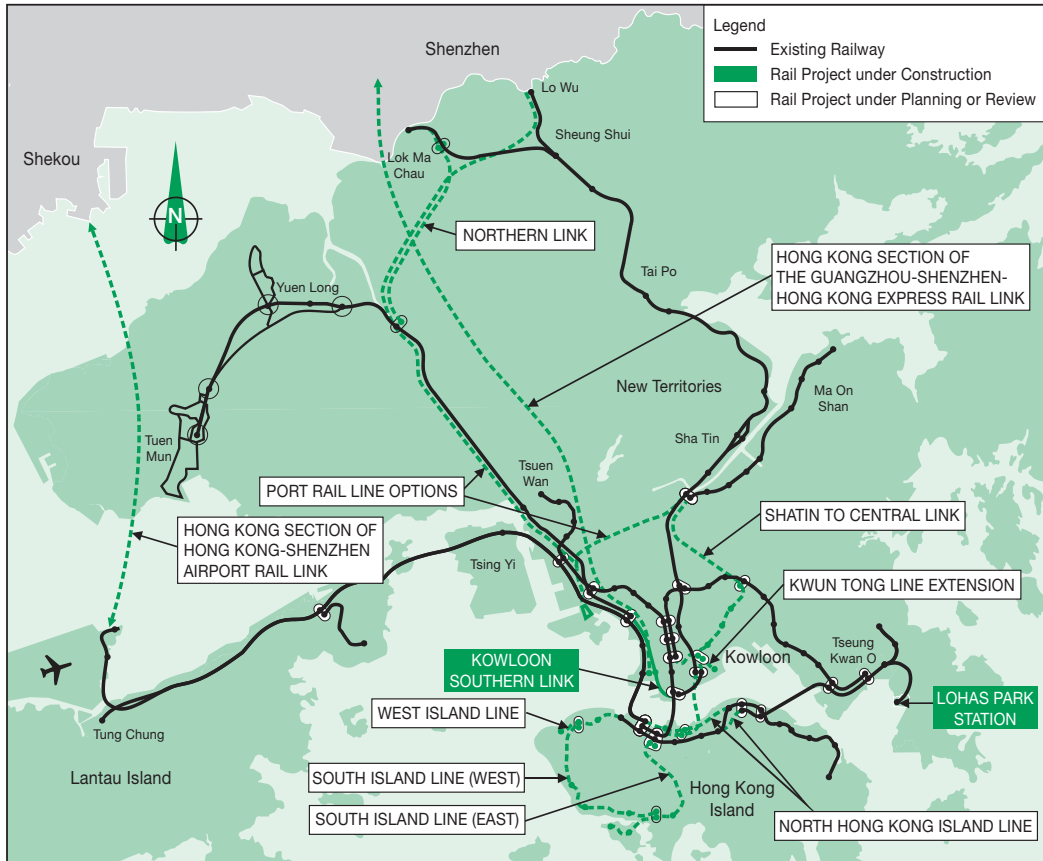
The 3.8-kilometre Kowloon Southern Link will connect the East Rail and West Rail Lines at the southern tip of the Kowloon Peninsula. Upon completion in the second half of 2009, passengers will be able to interchange between the two lines at Hung Hom Station.

LOHAS Park Station, an extension of the Tseung Kwan O Line, is expected to be completed in mid-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 railway scheme was first gazetted in October 2007, with amendments gazetted in September. Work on the project is expected to start in mid-2009.

The Shatin to Central Link will extend Ma On Shan Rail Line to Hung Hom via Diamond Hill and the southeast Kowloon and the East Rail Line across the harbour to Hong Kong Island. The Government has entrusted the design works to the MTRCL to enable construction to commence in 2010.



The Kwun Tong Line Extension will extend the existing Kwun Tong Line from Yau Ma Tei to Whampoa with one intermediate station at Ho Man Tin. The Government has asked the MTRCL to proceed with planning and to draw up a preliminary engineering design to enable construction to commence in 2010 and for completion by 2015.

The South Island Line (East) will be a medium capacity railway link running from Admiralty to South Horizons with three intermediate stations at Ocean Park, Wong Chuk Hang and Lei Tung Estate. The MTRCL has drawn up a preliminary engineering design and is proceeding with further planning to enable construction to commence in 2011 and for completion 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 about 50 minutes. The Government

has asked the MTRCL to proceed with further planning and design. Construction is expected to commence by end 2009 for completion by 2014-15.

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

The Chief Executive announced in his 2007-08 Policy Address an initiative to foster closer Hong Kong-Shenzhen Airport Co-operation and to study the feasibility and economic benefits of establishing the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Airport Rail Link, with a view to exploiting the synergy of their complementary flight networks. The joint preliminary study of the rail link proposal, commissioned by the governments of both sides, was completed in 2008. Further study on key enabling operational issues will be conducted in 2009.

Road Projects under Construction

Major road projects under construction include:

- Route 8 (between Tsing Yi and Cheung Sha Wan section): this dual three-lane carriageway will provide an alternative route to Route 3 (Tsing Yi and Kwai Chung section) and serve as an access route to Container Terminals 8 and 9. Construction commenced in April 2002 and is scheduled for completion in late 2009.
- Tung Chung Road between Lung Tseng Tau and Cheung Sha: this will be upgraded into a single two-lane road to improve Lantau Island's north-south access with an increase in capacity and enhancement of safety compared to the existing substandard road. Construction started in June 2004. The northern section was opened to traffic in early 2008 and the southern section will be completed and opened to traffic in early 2009. The remaining works are scheduled for completion in the third quarter of 2009.
- Reconstruction and improvement of Tuen Mun Road: this 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. Construction will commence in phases for completion by 2014 with the first contract commenced in October. The widening of the Tuen Mun Road Town Centre section is scheduled to start in late 2009 for completion by the end of 2012.
- Widening of Tuen Mun Road at Tsing Tin Interchange: this project comprises widening about 240 metres of Tuen Mun Road to dual three-lane operation, installation of noise barriers, laying of low noise surfacing, and completion of associated works. Construction started in mid-2008 for completion by the end of 2009.

Road Projects in the Planning Stage

A number of road construction/improvement projects are being planned to expand further 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 are under way. The project will provide a dual two-lane strategic road connecting Kong Sham Western Highway with Hong Kong International Airport and Lantau to meet the anticipated traffic demand of the Northwest New Territories and Lantau after 2016. The new road will also help strengthen Hong Kong's logistics development and serve as an alternative road to and from the airport. Construction is scheduled to start in 2011 for completion by 2016.
- Planning of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass is under way. This dual three-lane carriageway 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 with the existing Island Eastern Corridor at North Point to relieve congestion along the Connaught Road Central/Harcourt Road/Gloucester Road corridor and improve the network reliability of the east-west link. Construction is scheduled to start in late 2009 for completion by 2017.
- Investigation and preliminary design of the Central Kowloon Route are under way. This proposed 3.7-kilometre-long dual three-lane route with about 3.9 kilometres in tunnel, will connect West Kowloon with the future Kai Tai Development and road network in Kowloon Bay. It will form the strategic Route 6 running from West Kowloon to Tseung Kwan O together with Trunk Road T2 and Tseung Kwan O–Lam Tin Tunnel.
- Trunk Road T2 is planned to be a dual two-lane carriageway of about 2.5 kilometres connecting Central Kowloon Route at the Kai Tak Development and Tseung Kwan O–Lam Tin Tunnel at the Cha Kwo Ling waterfront. The detailed design of the project will start in the third quarter of 2009.
- The investigation and preliminary design studies of Tseung Kwan O–Lam Tin Tunnel and the Cross Bay Link are scheduled to commence in early 2009. The Tseung Kwan O–Lam Tin Tunnel will provide an additional external land route connecting Tseung Kwan O with Kowloon, while the Cross Bay Link will provide relief to the anticipated congestion in Tseung Kwan O town centre.
- Detailed design of the widening of Tolo Highway/Fanling Highway between the Island House Interchange and Fanling is in progress. This project will 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 dual three-lane to dual four-lane. The Stage 1 road scheme was authorised in June. Construction of Stage 1 is scheduled to start in the first half of 2009 and for phased completion by 2013. Construction of Stage 2 is under planning.

- Trunk Road T4 is a proposed dual two-lane carriageway, which will connect Sha Tin Road with 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 is under review.
- Improvement of Hiram's Highway: Stage 1 Improvement works for the Hiram's Villas and the Marina Cove sections will be gazetted in early 2009. An investigation study for Stage 2 Improvement between Marina Cove and Sai Kung Town Centre commenced in 2007. Several improvement concepts have been developed for the improvement of the road section with a view to enhancing road standard and traffic capacity to cater for the increasing traffic after 2016. Public consultation has been held to obtain the public's views and suggestions for the improvement concepts. The investigation study is scheduled for completion by 2009.

Tsing Ma Control Area

The Tsing Ma Control Area 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 56 414 vehicles used the Lantau Link in 2008.

Tsing Sha Control Area

The Tsing Sha Control Area connects the Tsing Ma Control Area in the west with Tai Po Road in Sha Tin. Part of the Tsing Sha Control Area covering the Route 8 Cheung Sha Wan to Sha Tin section has been in operation since March 2008. It comprises a six-kilometre highway with viaducts and tolled tunnels. The flat toll charge is \$8 for all vehicles. The highway provides a direct link between Sha Tin and West Kowloon as well as additional road capacity to cope with the increasing traffic in the Lion Rock, Tate's Cairn and Shing Mun tunnels.

The remaining section of the Tsing Sha Control Area from Tsing Yi to Cheung Sha Wan will be open in late 2009. When completely operated, the Tsing Sha Control Area will include West Tsing Yi Viaduct, Nam Wan Tunnel, East Tsing Yi Viaduct, Stonecutters Bridge, Ngong Shuen Chau Viaduct, Lai Chi Kok Viaduct, and the Eagle's Nest, Sha Tin Heights, and Tai Wai tunnels.

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 account for some 35 per cent of the total daily public transport volume. Since the merger of the MTR and KCR in December 2007, Hong Kong's railways have been operated by one railway corporation, the MTRCL, which was formerly wholly owned by the Government but was privatised in 2000 to become a listed company with the Government retaining a major shareholding.

The MTR system comprises:

- 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.

The MTRCL also operates a 35.3-kilometre Airport Express Line.

The entire system carries an average of 3.8 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 376 000 passengers daily. Light Rail feeder bus services are also operated to provide passengers with a more comprehensive service network.

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

Tramway

Electric trams have been running on Hong Kong Island since 1904. Hongkong Tramways Limited operates six routes on 13 kilometres of double tracks 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 220 000 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 line began operation in 1888 and was modernised in 1989. The Peak Tram records an average of 13 200 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. 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 320 bus routes in Kowloon and the New Territories and 60 cross-harbour routes on its own. It also operated 29 and 21 cross-harbour routes jointly with Citybus Limited (CTB) and New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB) respectively.

At year-end, the company had a licensed fleet of 3 925 buses, of which 3 733 were air-conditioned and 1 872 were wheelchair-accessible. KMB recorded 990 million passenger trips (a daily average of 2.7 million passenger trips) covering 325 million kilometres of roads during the year.

Bus services on Hong Kong Island are provided by NWFB and CTB. At year-end, NWFB was operating 50 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 692 air-conditioned buses, of which 548 were wheelchair-accessible.

NWFB recorded 175 million passenger trips (a daily average of 479 400 passenger trips) covering 49.4 million kilometres of roads.

CTB operates two bus networks under two franchises. One of the franchises covers 62 bus routes on Hong Kong Island, one bus route in the New Territories and 29 cross-harbour routes, 21 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 918 air-conditioned buses, of which 216 were wheelchair-accessible. The company recorded 209 million passenger trips (a daily average of 571 000 passenger trips) covering 82.7 million kilometres of road.

The Long Win Bus Company Limited provides services between the New Territories and Lantau Island and the airport. The company made 28.9 million passenger trips (a daily average of 78 900 passenger trips) covering 25.6 million

kilometres of roads in 2008. At year-end, 157 air-conditioned buses were serving a total of 18 routes of which 154 were wheelchair-accessible.

The New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited mainly provides bus services on Lantau Island. The company recorded 17.2 million passenger trips (a daily average of 47 000 passenger trips) covering 5.8 million kilometres of road. It ran 22 routes with a licensed fleet of 102 vehicles.

Different forms of fare concessions are provided by the franchised bus companies during the year. 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-to-bus interchange schemes are being implemented to encourage more efficient use of resources and limited road space, and to provide more choice for passengers. Fare discounts are offered to passengers when interchanging between designated bus routes. At year-end, a total of 229 bus-to-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 7 071 registered non-franchised buses of which 6 957 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 2008. The measures aim at co-ordinating the change in non-franchised bus services with demand; strengthening control over non-franchised bus operation; and enhancing effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement actions.

Public Light Buses

Hong Kong's public light buses (PLBs) are licensed to carry a maximum of 16 passengers. At year-end, there were 4 350 PLBs.

There are two types of PLBs—green and red minibuses. Green minibuses provide scheduled services with fixed routes, fares, vehicle allocation and timetables as stipulated by the Transport Department. During the year, there were 2 921 green minibuses operating 350 routes, which recorded a daily average of 1 481 000 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 1 429 red minibuses in operation and they recorded a daily average of 399 400 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 strengthen communication between passengers, the trade and the Government, the department publishes a PLB Newsletter regularly.

The department continued to encourage and facilitate the provision of onboard facilities for PLB passengers. As regards road 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 safety. 'Project Safe-ride', a joint road safety project run by the trade, the Police and the department, was launched in mid-March in the Kowloon East Police District. It was extended to the whole territory from November. 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'.

All PLBs were equipped with speed display devices by the end of June 2006. Since May 1, speed display devices must be installed on PLBs in accordance with legal provision. Any unauthorised alteration to these devices is an offence. To encourage the trade to retrofit old PLBs with seat belts, the department provided the trade with specifications and plans on retrofitting seat belts and high-back seats in 2006. 83 PLBs have now been retrofitted.

Taxis

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

To improve the operating environment for taxis, the Transport Department has extended a temporary arrangement, which was first introduced in May 2003, to January 31, 2010. This allows 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 240 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 information on light emitting diode display panels and providing additional taxi information plates at appropriate taxi stands. It also published and distributed 40 000 free copies of every issue of 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 14 ferry operators provided 24 licensed passenger ferry services to outlying islands, new towns and the inner-harbour. These franchised/licensed services were supplemented by about 74 'kaito' or small boat routes, which provide services to relatively remote parts of Hong Kong. Ferries recorded a daily average of about 81 600 passenger trips within the harbour and about 65 500 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 1 756 779 licensed drivers, 568 811 licensed private vehicles and 6 295 government vehicles. There were 383 141 licensed private cars, of which 34 614 were new vehicles registered during the year. Registered goods vehicles totalled 117 592, of which 74 363 were light goods vehicles, 40 075 medium goods vehicles and 3 154 heavy goods vehicles. On average, there were 3 183 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 2008, around 16 000 drivers attended the driving improvement course which they found very useful. About 72 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 safe, roadworthy and properly maintained. All public service vehicles, goods vehicles exceeding 1.9 tonnes, and trailers must undergo annual inspections. In 2008, 193 000 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 225 000 vehicle examinations.

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 must be examined to make sure they meet statutory requirements before they can be registered and licensed. In 2008, of 590 vehicle types approved, 572 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, the Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre and 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, 168 cameras are 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 the first digital CCTV system in Hong Kong. The new system improves monitoring and will reduce operating costs in long run.

There are also 97 cameras operating on major highways including 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 was extended further to cover Tuen Mun and Yuen Long in 2008. The project to install 48 cameras was substantially completed in October.

To further enhance the work on traffic surveillance and information dissemination, the department plans 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 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 started in January 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 department to expand the service to cover 120 locations. In early 2007, the department and mobile network operators joined hands to allow people to view these images on their mobile phones as well.

The department's mobile CCTV system can be deployed to remote areas or minor roads within one hour. It relays visual and real time images of incidents and traffic situations to traffic control centres for taking swift action to reduce traffic disruption.

The 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 ATC systems in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long has been in operation since October. A project to replace ATC systems in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin and extend the system to Tseung Kwan O commenced in early 2007. Construction works is expected for completion by the end of 2011.

At year-end, 1 748 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. To enhance operational efficiency further, more 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, Tsing Sha Control Area and Kong Sham Western Highway are also equipped with TCS facilities.

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. They 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 of motorists used autotoll when passing through the tunnels and toll roads in 2008.

Parking

On-street parking is provided where there is demand and where traffic conditions permit. At year-end, Hong Kong had about 17 900 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, together providing 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 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 203 000 off-street public parking spaces (excluding those in government car parks).

Road Safety

Traffic accidents involving death and injury reduced by 6.4 per cent in 2008. There were 14 332 traffic accidents, of which 2 004 were serious and 138 were fatal accidents. This compares with 15 315 accidents in 2007, of which 2 376 were serious and 153 were fatal.

In-depth investigations were carried out at 100 traffic accident blackspots to identify common accident causes. Remedial measures were recommended for 83 of these locations.

With a view to combating and deterring drink driving and other inappropriate driving behaviour, the Government introduced the 'Road Traffic Legislation (Amendment) Ordinance 2008'. Apart from imposing heavier penalties for a number of traffic offences such as drink driving and causing death by dangerous driving, the ordinance introduced random breath test to achieve stronger deterrent effects to drink driving. The ordinance also included the extension of probationary driver licence scheme to novice drivers of private cars and light goods vehicles to further enhance road safety.

The Government's strategy on road safety campaigns focused on the promotion of the road safety vision: 'Zero Accidents on the Road, Hong Kong's Goal', and 'Smart Driving with Courtesy'. Other road safety publicity and education campaigns have continued on the above new amendment legislation, safe and responsible driving, safe cycling and pedestrian safety.

Public Transport and the 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 2008, with another two to be opened in 2009.

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 4 300 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 1 500 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 this impact.

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. They have been well received by the public, and more will be set up, including the shared surface construction on the section of Lockhart Road between Cannon Street and East Point Road, traffic calming measures on the sections of Saigon Street between Shanghai Street and Parkes Street and Bowring Street between Nathan Road and Parkes Street. Detailed studies are also being conducted for improvements to pedestrian environment, urban design, streetscape and landscape in Mong Kok, Causeway Bay and Yuen Long areas.

Franchised bus companies have been purchasing buses with environmentally friendly engines that meet the European emission standards (known as Euro engines) since 1993. About 92 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 were 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 Liquefied Petroleum Gas (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 all taxis and 60 per cent of PLBs have switched to LPG. An incentive scheme was also introduced in April 2007 to encourage replacement of Pre-Euro and Euro I commercial vehicles with more environmentally friendly ones to comply with prevailing emission standards. By year-end, about 6 000 applications had been approved under the scheme. A reduction in first registration tax was also offered to buyers of new cars that run on petrol instead of diesel. A total of 3 100 applications to join the scheme were processed during the year.

Cross-boundary Traffic

Overall Cross-boundary Traffic

Cross-boundary vehicular traffic increased by 0.6 per cent in 2008 over the previous year, averaging 42 000 vehicles a day whereas the total cross-boundary passenger traffic by rail, road and ferry increased by about 2.4 per cent, reaching 526 500 passengers a day.

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 244 400 passengers daily during the year, and more than 358 200 on festive days.

The second rail boundary crossing into the Mainland is the extension of the MTR East Rail Line to Lok Ma Chau. Having commenced operation on August 15, 2007, the crossing operates between 6.30 am and 10.30 pm daily. Passengers can reach this crossing either by rail or local public transport. In 2008, the crossing at the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line handled an average of about 29 100 passengers daily, and more than 46 500 on festive days, plus a daily average of about 21 500 passengers who arrived at the crossing by public transport.

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, 2007 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 27 900, 5 800, 2 400 and 5 900 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 103 600, 5 500, 6 500 and 34 200 respectively. These travellers crossed the boundary mainly by coach, 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, or the local public transport services to the Public Transport Interchange at the Hong Kong Port Area of the Shenzhen Bay Port respectively.

In 2008, about 78 900 passengers took the cross-boundary coaches provided by some 100 companies, while 33 000 and 18 200 passengers took the shuttle buses at Lok Ma Chau and the local public transports to 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 co-ordination 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 pursuing actively the project. Guangdong Province submitted the feasibility study report for the Central Government’s consideration in December. Investigation and preliminary design are being conducted respectively for the design of the Hong Kong Link Road and Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities with a view to synchronizing their commission with that of the HZMB Main Bridge.

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

The Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong Express Rail Link will reduce the rail travel time between Guangzhou and Hong Kong. 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. It will also connect Hong Kong to cities in the Pan-Pearl River Delta via the Rapid Transit System now under development in the Mainland. Planning and design for the project are proceeding under a tight programme with the construction expected to commence in 2009.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People’s Government completed in 2008 the joint preliminary study of the Hong Kong–Shenzhen Airport Rail Link. The Hong Kong International Airport ranks among the busiest international airports in the world in terms of passenger and cargo traffic, while the Shenzhen Airport handles far more domestic flights than Hong Kong. The rail connection, supplemented by efficient passenger and baggage handling arrangements, will be very convenient to passengers transiting between the two airports. Further study on the key enabling operational issues will be conducted in 2009.

The proposed Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (BCP), by connecting with the Eastern Corridor in Shenzhen will provide efficient access to the eastern part of Guangdong, Fujian and Jiangxi Provinces via the Shenzhen–Huizhou and Shenzhen–Shantou Expressways. This will significantly shorten the distance between Hong Kong and Shenzhen and the nearby provinces and greatly facilitate future regional co-operation and development. It will also help redistribute the

cross-boundary traffic among the existing boundary crossings in the eastern part of the territories (Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok BCPs).

Cross-boundary Ferries

Cross-boundary ferry services to about 13 Mainland ports and Macao are provided by eight 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 5.4 million, and the number to and from Macao was 18.6 million in 2008.

The Port

In 2008 Hong Kong handled a total 24.5 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units of containers (TEUs), maintaining its status as the largest container port serving southern China and one of the busiest ports in the world.

Some 435 400 vessels arrived in and departed from Hong Kong during the year, carrying 260 million tonnes of cargo and about 27 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 high 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 500 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 about 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 the 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 'Study on Hong Kong Port—Master Plan 2020' completed in 2004 recommended a package of immediate and long-term initiatives to increase the port's competitiveness. Following its recommendations, the Government has updated the port cargo forecasts which estimated that, the port's container throughput will continue to grow in the years ahead. An ecology study on a site on Northwest Lantau was also completed to assess its environmental suitability for building a container terminal. Taking into account the findings of both studies, the Government is now actively studying the feasibility of developing a new container terminal at an alternative site at Southwest Tsing Yi.

To strengthen Hong Kong's position as a regional hub port in the Asia-Pacific region, the Government is also planning to dredge the container port basin and its approach to ensure that future ultra-large container ships will be able to call at the port without any draft restriction at anytime.

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 key players in the industry and senior government officials concerned. 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 and senior government officials concerned. 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 its 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 also launched, in addition to the Hong Kong Maritime Scholarship Scheme, an Academic Collaboration Scheme between the University of Hong Kong

and the Dalian Maritime University, which aims at equipping their law graduates for the specialised field of maritime law.

Maritime Industry

Some 100 international shipping lines offer ocean liner services in Hong Kong. Their ships account for about 450 sailings weekly to over 500 destinations around the world. In addition, there are about 750 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 eighth largest maritime centre. Its shipowners own, manage or operate more than 1 500 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. It has so far succeeded in making such arrangements with 15 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, the United States and Vietnam.

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 rules and standards of the major international maritime conventions.

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 all 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 department's website (<http://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; 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 provides a one-stop solution to simplify and speed up the submission and processing of port formalities, has been enhanced to offer e-Business services such as online submission of applications, online issuance of permits/certificates, auto-approval for online application, online payment via auto-pay and online enquiry for application status.

Vessel Traffic Management

The Marine 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 Marine 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 Marine 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 tones 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 2008, 13 500 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 January 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 and Ma Wan transit tidal window predictions through the Internet (<http://www.hydro.gov.hk>).

Planning, Development and Port Security

The Marine Department's Planning, Development and Port Security Branch provides professional advice on the planning of port and marine related projects, and co-ordinates publication of Marine Department Notices on all marine works. These include developments in Tuen Mun, 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 to administer the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code of the International Maritime Organisation for port facilities in Hong Kong. Its tasks include monitoring the training and qualifications of the port facilities' security personnel, 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 maritime and 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

In 2008, the Hong Kong Harbour has become busier due to China's continuous 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 in 2007. 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 Marine 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 midnight daily. 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 Marine Department provides a total of 29 mooring buoys for ship operation, including 19 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. Under the new Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance, plan approval and ship survey work for certain types of local vessels may be carried out by recognised authorities, organisations or professionals authorised by the Marine Department.

Public Cargo Working Areas

The Marine Department manages eight public cargo working areas which are opened to cargo operators for loading and unloading. 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 6 672 metres.

Collection of Marine Refuse and Waste

The Marine Department's contractors collect domestic refuse from both ocean-going 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 Marine Department maintains a maritime oil spill response plan to ensure a timely and effective response to oil spills in Hong Kong waters.

The department has signed a co-operation agreement with the port administration of Guangdong, Macao and Shenzhen to adopt the Regional Maritime Oil Spill from Ship Response Plan for the Pearl River Estuary as the action guide for regional co-operation on response to major maritime oil spills from ships.

In November, the department's Pollution Control Unit organised a large-scale, oil spill clean-up drill to test the readiness and preparedness of government departments concerned and local oil companies in handling major oil spill from ships.

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. For six consecutive years, the register continues to maintain its status as a quality flag under the US Coast Guard's QUALSHIP 21 Scheme.

The Hong Kong Shipping Register continued to attract quality ships in 2008. The total gross tonnage of ships registered in Hong Kong in 2008 exceeded 39 million tonnes, making the Hong Kong Shipping Register one of the top five shipping registers in the world.

To maintain high standards, the department conducts the Pre-registration Quality Control (PRQC) assessment of ships intending to join the register; and implements 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 10 PRQC inspections and made 45 FSQC visits to ships and related companies. As a result of these quality control measures, the Port State Control detention rate of Hong Kong-registered ships remained well below the world average, which enabled the Hong Kong flag to maintain its position amongst the top performance flags in the white list established by both the Paris and Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding of Port State Control.

Marine Accident Investigations

The Marine Department's Marine Accident Investigation & Shipping Security Policy Branch (MAISSPB) 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 2008, the MAISSPB investigated 17 serious accidents.

Hong Kong is a member of the Marine Accident Investigators Forum in Asia (MAIFA). The department has participated actively in its various activities. Hong Kong hosted the 11th Marine Accident Investigators Forum in Asia between September 17 and 19. This Forum provides a good opportunity to foster co-operation and communication between MAIFA members in conducting marine accident investigations.

Seafarers

The Marine 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 23 000 seafarers of different nationalities served on board Hong Kong-registered ocean-going ships. About 1 600 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 109 cadets had joined the training scheme.

Participation in International Shipping Activities

International Maritime Organisation

The 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 2008, HKSAR government officials attended a total of 21 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.

International Conference

A Capacity Building Workshop of the Information Sharing Centre of the Regional Co-operation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia was held between November 4 and 6.

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.

The department's PSC officers are well known for their professionalism and impartiality in conducting ship inspections. In 2008, the department continued to conduct daily PSC inspections, even at weekends whenever practicable. The officers conducted 681 inspections on ocean-going vessels, or 15 per cent of all ocean-going vessels that visited Hong Kong. About 4 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 Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) co-ordinates search and rescue operations for serious incidents 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 2008, the centre handled 227 vessel-related emergencies, 66 of which involved search and rescue operations. A total of 74 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 121 major mechanised vessels and large-type high speed craft, 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 specially built vessels. The Marine Department controls and manages 81 vessels of which 47 are provided with manning by the department. These include 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 fleets.

Since 1999, the 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 22 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 and repair sheds and over 22 open-yard docking cradle spaces, supported by a ship-lift system and three ship-hoists capable of dry docking vessels of up to 750 tonnes.

During the year, 40 new vessels, costing \$57 million, were built for the Government and five new shipbuilding contracts, worth \$121 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 2008, the department continued the planning of a new public landing facility at Lei Yue Mun, and the construction of Sai Kung Public Pier No. 2. The department also completed the construction of Seawall Upgrading Works for Ma On Shan Waterfront Promenade.

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, 122 kilometres of seawalls and breakwaters, 313 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 co-operation 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 almost 70 000 tonnes of cargo every week. A new air cargo terminal is being planned and would be available in early 2010 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 per year.

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 co-operation 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 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 500 trucks, will be conducted in 2009.

To ensure that employees of the logistics sector are kept abreast of new technology for and development of the trade, the council jointly organised training programmes, workshops and forums with industry associations for logistics practitioners. It also sponsored a number of events for the sharing of experience by stakeholders.

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

Civil Aviation

Hong Kong is a major international and regional aviation centre. Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) is one of the busiest in the world. At year-end, there were 85 airlines providing about 5 800 weekly services between Hong Kong and about 150 cities worldwide. In addition, an average of about 142 charter flights was made to and from HKIA each week.

Air Traffic in 2008

The global financial crisis had an adverse impact on air traffic in the last quarter of 2008. As a result, the total number of passengers passing through the airport in 2008 was 47.14 million, a rise of 1.8 per cent over 2007. The airport handled 3.63 million tonnes of cargo, a drop of 3.1 per cent over 2007. The number of flights to and from Hong Kong was 301 142, a rise of 2 per cent over 2007.

Air transport continues to play an important role in Hong Kong's external trade. Hong Kong's total imports, exports and re-exports by air accounted for 38.3 per cent, 32.4 per cent and 32.4 per cent respectively in value terms in 2008.

Home Market Expansion

As a gateway hub of China, Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) is committed to strengthening the integrated, multi-modal transport network with the Pearl River Delta (PRD). Some 320 coach trips carry passengers between HKIA and 90 PRD cities and towns every day while the SkyPier cross-boundary ferry service connects PRD passengers with international destinations via HKIA. The ferry service now covers six PRD ports — Shekou and Fuyong in Shenzhen, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Zhuhai and Macao. Passengers can even pre-check their baggage and obtain their boarding passes at Fuyong, Shekou, Macao and Dongguan Humen. A new permanent SkyPier is under construction.

In October, HKIA and Shenzhen International Airport (SZIA) jointly launched the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Airports Link, a service that enables passengers at HKIA or SZIA to check in and obtain boarding passes for connecting flights at either airport. The two airports also provide designated waiting lounges and cross-boundary coaches to take the transfer passengers to the counterpart airport. To foster closer co-operation between the two airports, the governments of HKSAR and Shenzhen are studying a proposal to connect the two airports with a direct rail link.

Airport Services

With the support of the airport community, HKIA is widely recognised for its excellent services and has been voted the world's best airport in 2008 for the seventh time in eight years in the annual Skytrax survey.

HKIA is undergoing a HK\$4.5 billion terminal and airfield enhancement programme. Projects under way include the reconfiguration of the North and South

Departure Immigration halls in Terminal 1; expansion of the East Hall transfer area; consolidation of the two Arrivals Immigration halls; and construction of a new North Satellite Concourse. These projects are scheduled for completion before 2011. In addition, a total of 42 'Self check-in' kiosks were installed at Terminal 1 in 2008 to further enhance passenger flow.

To encourage airlines to add new destinations, HKIA has extended the New Destination Incentive Arrangement for one year to the end of 2009. Airlines operating scheduled flights to new destinations can enjoy a rebate on the landing charge.

Preparation for Growth

To ensure HKIA continues to meet increasing demand for aviation services and serve the best interests of the community, the airport appointed a consultant in July to draw up the *Hong Kong International Airport Master Plan 2030* — a 20-year blueprint that will assess the operational requirements and constraints of HKIA. The study will also look into the feasibility of building a new runway at HKIA.

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 58 such agreements.

The Government also reviews the traffic rights arrangements with its partners to expand Hong Kong's aviation network and to allow more competition in the market. In 2008, the Government expanded traffic arrangements with 16 aviation partners.

During the year, the Air Transport Licensing Authority (ATLA) granted six new licences: three to Cathay Pacific Airways, one to Hong Kong Dragon Airlines, one to Air Hong Kong, and one to Oasis Hong Kong Airlines. The Procedural Guide on ATLA's procedures for processing licence applications is available at: www.thb.gov.hk/eng/boards/transport/air/atla_procedural_guide.pdf.

Cathay Pacific Airways (CPA) added three Airbus A330-300 and four Boeing B777-300ER passenger aircraft to its fleet and started to take delivery of two B747-400ERF freighters during the year. With the expanded fleet, CPA launched scheduled all-cargo services to Hanoi and Dhaka in March and to Miami and Houston in September. The airline also enhanced its regional services to India and Japan by increasing frequency of services. However, in response to the high fuel prices in the first half of the year, CPA implemented capacity redeployment measures in the winter season by reducing frequencies to North America while increasing services to Australia and Europe. As of the end of the year, CPA operated scheduled services to 59 destinations worldwide.

Hong Kong Dragon Airlines (HDA) continued to focus on regional routes. The airline launched scheduled passenger air services to Bangalore, Hanoi and Manila in July, October and December respectively. It suspended its passenger services to Sendai and Haikou in March and July respectively and its all-cargo services to Osaka

in October. At year-end, HDA was operating scheduled services to 29 destinations, including 18 cities in the Mainland.

Air Hong Kong expanded its services in Asia and added Manila to its network in January. As of the end of the year, the airline operated scheduled services to 11 destinations.

Hong Kong Airlines launched new services to Sanya, Hangzhou and Guiyang in October. It suspended its services to Fuzhou, Nanchang, Ho Chi Minh City, Shijiazhuang, Qingdao and Tianjin during the year. At year-end, it was operating scheduled services to 11 destinations in Asia.

Hong Kong Express Airways continued to develop regional scheduled air services and commenced services to Kagoshima and Okinawa in April; Beijing and Shanghai in June; Seoul in July; Manila, Osaka, Denpasar and Phuket in September; and Sapporo and Harbin in October. It suspended passenger services to Chiangmai, Chengdu, Hangzhou, Kathmandu, Yangon, Xian and Ningbo during the year. At year-end, it was operating scheduled services to 14 destinations in Asia.

Oasis Hong Kong Airlines ceased operations in April due to commercial reasons.

Six non-Hong Kong airlines commenced scheduled services to Hong Kong during the year, four operating passenger services and two operating all-cargo services. For passenger services, Royal Jordanian Airlines launched services on the Amman-Bangkok-Hong Kong route in January. Jet Airways commenced services between Mumbai and Hong Kong in April. In May, AirAsia started its services between Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong, while Thai AirAsia launched a service between Bangkok and Hong Kong in October. For all-cargo services, Shanghai Airlines Cargo took over the route between Shanghai and Hong Kong from Shanghai Airlines in May, and Donghai Airlines commenced services between Shenzhen/Chengdu and Hong Kong in September. In addition to its existing passenger services, Ethiopian Airlines started all-cargo services between Addis Ababa and Hong Kong in September.

Eight airlines suspended their services to Hong Kong in 2008. Thai Global Airlines, Ocean Airlines and Gemini Air Cargo suspended their cargo services between Bangkok, Milan and the United States and Hong Kong in January, May and August respectively. Passenger services were suspended by Transaero Airlines on the route Moscow-Hong Kong-Sydney in March; by Sichuan Airlines between Chengdu and Hong Kong in May; by Continental Micronesia between Guam and Hong Kong in July; and by Shandong Airlines and Siem Reap Airways International between Yantai and Hong Kong and Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Hong Kong respectively in October.

The development of helicopter services continues. For cross-boundary traffic the Hong Kong – Macao Ferry Terminal Heliport was undergoing expansion and the construction of a new helipad is expected to be completed in 2009. The Government has also reserved a site at the Kai Tak Development Area for another cross-boundary heliport. For domestic helicopter services, the Government is

consulting the industry and other stakeholders on the intention to allow commercial helicopters to share the use of the Wan Chai Temporary Helipad, with the Government Flying Service.

Updating of Aviation Legislation

To implement the latest international standards and applicable international practices in relation to airworthiness, aircraft equipment, safety management, data preservation and personnel licensing, the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 was amended in 2008 and the amendments took effect on January 1, 2009.

Air Traffic Control

The air traffic control system has been enhanced through improvements in the use of airspace, flight procedures design and an increase in manpower for air traffic control. It handled 302 541 movements at HKIA and 154 728 overflights, including traffic to and from Macao, representing a 2.19 per cent increase and a 1.44 per cent drop over 2007 respectively. The average daily movement at HKIA was 827 and a record high of 971 movements was handled on April 20.

To meet the long-term air traffic demand and resolve airspace congestion over the PRD Region, a PRD Air Traffic Management Planning and Implementation Plan was produced by the Tripartite Working Group (TWG) formed by the Civil Aviation Administration of China, HKSAR's Civil Aviation Department (CAD) and the Macao Civil Aviation Authority. The arrangements for the implementation of the plan is being discussed by the TWG.

Aircraft Operation and Airworthiness

The HKSAR's CAD and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore signed a 'Technical Arrangement on Aviation Maintenance' on August 29 in Singapore. This agreement is an extension of the one signed by both parties in December 2004, and it expands the scope of mutual recognition of approvals of maintenance organisations to cover all aircraft, engine and component maintenance.

Aviation Security

The CAD ensures that the aviation security measures adopted in Hong Kong meet international standards. The HKIA was fully geared up to receive thousands of visitors and spectators during the Equestrian Events of the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympics Games. With the close rapport developed between the Equestrian Company, Government departments and the airport community, reinforced by a series of drills over the year, the CAD enabled athletes, officials, dignitaries and competition horses to arrive at and depart from Hong Kong safely and comfortably. Restricted flying zones, special handling of flights of competition horses and other procedures were established to achieve the smooth running of the equestrian events.

ICAO Safety Oversight Audit

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will conduct a safety oversight audit in Hong Kong from February 26 to March 6, 2009. In September 2008, the CAD set up a Task Force to co-ordinate and oversee the preparatory work being undertaken by various divisions of the department and the Hong Kong

Observatory. The audit will benefit our aviation industry by providing a comprehensive health check on our safety oversight system.

Enhancing Aviation Services

To maintain Hong Kong's status as a regional aviation centre, the Government plans to replace the CAD's air traffic control system and to develop a new headquarters on the Airport Island to support the long-term needs of the aviation industry. Funding approval for the project was obtained from the Legislative Council. Separately, the department took up the work of schedule co-ordination at HKIA on July 6.

Websites

Transport and Housing Bureau: <http://www.thb.gov.hk>

Transport Department: <http://www.td.gov.hk>

Highways Department: <http://www.hyd.gov.hk>

Marine Department: <http://www.mardep.gov.hk>

Civil Aviation Department: <http://www.cad.gov.hk>

Airport Authority Hong Kong: <http://www.hkairport.com>