

# 2004: a year of robust recovery in Hong Kong

HONG KONG experienced its highest growth rate in four years, reaching 8.1% in 2004, Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mr Henry Tang said. That is well above the average annual growth rate of 4.8% over the past 20 years and suggests the economy is back on an upward trend following the adjustments over the past few years.

Presenting his annual Budget add-ress in the Legislative Council on March 16, Mr Tang presented the following highlights from the financial year:

- external trade remained buoyant, as the total exports of goods and off-shore trade both surged by 15%;
- the number of visitor arrivals for the year reached an all-time high of 21.81 million;
- private consumption increased 6.7%;
- investment in industrial machinery, after falling for several years, resumed positive growth, with an overall increase of 20% for the year, the highest since 2000;
- property values rebounded, and the number of homeowners with negative equity fell drastically from about 106,000 in the middle of 2003 to around 19,000 at the end of 2004;
- the number of bankruptcy petitions also fell from more than 22,000 in 2003 to about 12,000 in 2004, and was the lowest in four years;
- the unemployment rate fell steadily from its peak of 8.6% in the middle of 2003 to a three-year low of 6.4% earlier this year;
- the total employed population rose to an all-time high of 3.34 million, up by about 154,000 over the trough in 2003, as there was a surge in vacancies across many sectors;
- in July 2004, the deflation that had persisted for nearly six years finally came to an end;
- in the first half of the year, the Composite Consumer Price Index still experienced a 1.3% year-on-year decline, but in the second half of 2004 this reversed to an increase of 0.5%, while for the year as a whole, the average price decline was only 0.4%.



Banner year: In 2004, total exports of goods and offshore trade both surged by 15%, private consumption increased 6.7%, and visitor arrivals for the year reached an all-time high of 21.81 million.

### Fiscal balance will be achieved sooner

Revenue from various sources was higher than expected as the economy bounded ahead, Mr Tang said. He estimates the Consolidated Account will see a surplus of HK\$12 billion in 2004-05, equivalent to 0.9% of Gross Domestic Product.

"This is the first time since 1999-2000 that the Consolidated Account has recorded a surplus, and is mainly due to lower-than-expected expenditure and higher-than-expected revenue this year, capital revenue in particular," he said.

Land premiums amounted to HK\$31.3 billion — more than two and a half times the original estimate. Operating revenues, such as salaries tax, profits tax and stamp duty, were also higher than expected, with increases ranging from 9% to 40%.

"The main reason for the surplus is that revenue from land premiums is far greater than expected. As such, revenue is volatile and is affected by a number of factors, so we cannot rely too heavily on it to fund operating expenditure. Moreover, the sums raised by issuing bonds in 2004-05 will have to be repaid. Discounting the proceeds from bond issuances, the Consolidated Account will still record a deficit of HK\$13.4 billion," Mr Tang said.

# Hong Kong focuses on economy and harmony

Meanwhile, Hong Kong will consolidate and build on the economic revival, help the needy and poor, promote social harmony and stability and more firmly entrench 'people-based' governance.

The above plans were outlined by then Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mr Tung Chee Hwa in his Policy Address, "Working Together for Economic Development and Social Harmony", delivered on January 12.

Hong Kong would continue to consolidate development of the four core industries of financial services, producer services, logistics and tourism.

In the Policy Address 2005, new economic growth areas in cultural and creative industries, urban renewal and revitalisation, and attracting talented people from the Mainland and overseas to develop their careers in Hong Kong were identified.

In keeping close to the community and following consultations for this year's Policy Address, the Government had also pinpointed 11 areas of greatest public concern. These were: increasing employment; helping the poor and needy; environmental protection; developing education; municipal projects; business environment; fair competition; goods and services tax; healthcare financing; population policy; and the West Kowloon Cultural District.

In addition, the Government will take forward democratic development in a gradual and orderly manner, in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law.

More information on the 2005 Policy Address and the Hong Kong Budget 2005-2006 can be accessed via the following links respectively: http://www.policyaddress.gov.hk and http://www.budget.gov.hk ◊



#### West Kowloon Cultural District: An icon for culture and leisure

**OVERSEAS** visitors and Hong Kong residents alike can enjoy the most spectacular art and cultural displays in the world set against the magnificent backdrop of Victoria Harbour when the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) opens.

The WKCD will be a landmark development that enhances Hong Kong's position as a world city. The new cultural district will bring together a vibrant mix of performing and visual arts. The 40-hectare waterfront site will be both a showpiece for urban design and a meeting point for local and international artists.

In this cluster of venues and open space, commercial, community and cultural facilities will foster a lively arts scene for generations to come. Based on the principle of "partnership", the WKCD will be "community-driven" and "people-oriented".

Core facilities of the WKCD include three theatres with at least 2,000, 800 and 400 seats respectively; performance venue with at least 10,000 seats; a cluster of four museums over 75,000 square metres in size; an art exhibition centre over 10,000 square metres in size; a water amphitheatre; and several piazzas.

An automated people mover will link the major facilities within the district while public transport will link the district with the business centre of Kowloon.

A large-scale canopy, providing shade and shelter for the facilities below, will make the complex a new Hong Kong icon. With its flowing form, the canopy was chosen in 2002 by an international jury from over 160 entries as the winner of an international concept plan competition. It was adopted as the



(from left to right) Secretary for Housing. Planning and Lands, Mr Michael Suen; Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Donald Tsang and Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho speaking on WKCD.

basis for inviting development proposals in September 2003. By June 2004, five proposals had been received, three of which met the basic requirements. These proposals are now being assessed. The period for public consultation on those proposals will end on June 30, 2005.

The successful proponent will design, finance and complete the development of the project and operate, maintain and manage the core arts and cultural facilities for 30 years. Construction is expected to begin in April 2007, with the first phase of the project opening in 2011.  $\Diamond$ 

### Hong Kong Disneyland to open on 12 September 2005

**THE** Financial Secretary Henry Tang says the opening of Hong Kong Disneyland in September will be a driving force for the growth of tourism in Hong Kong, particularly family tourism.

On November 22,2004, Disney and the HKSAR Government jointly announced that Hong Kong Disneyland would officially open on Monday, September 12, 2005

"The announcement of the opening day marks a key milestone for the development of Hong Kong tourism and the economy as a whole," Mr Tang said.

Mr Tang said the whole economy would continue to benefit from Hong Kong Disneyland.

"The project has already created 11,400 jobs during construction and another 18,000 are expected to be created in phases by the opening," he said.

"Over a period of four decades, it is estimated Hong Kong Disneyland will generate economic benefits to Hong Kong of HK\$148 billion."

The Financial Secretary noted that the project would be completed less than six years after its commencement in late 1999.

"Never has a Disneyland been built so fast, achieving the same quality as other Disney theme parks and resorts. And, it will be completed within budget," Mr Tang said.



Financial Secretary, Mr Henry Tang and Hong Kong Disneyland Group Managing Director Don Robinson flank Disney's popular Mickey Mouse at a press conference to announce the opening day of the local theme park.

Disney also announced the admission price to Hong Kong Disneyland of HK\$295 per adult during the week and HK\$350 for weekends and peak days. Children's tickets (between three and 11 years) will be HK\$210 and HK\$250

The admission ticket will include a full day's programme of fun and excitement across Main Street USA and three sections
— Fantasyland, Tomorrowland and Adventureland.

Opening on September 12, Hong Kong Disneyland will comprise a theme park and two hotels. About 1,000 rooms are on offer with rates ranging from US\$128 to US\$230 per night. Reservations for these two hotels are now accepted.

Under the agreement with Disney, the HKSAR Government is spending HK\$22.45 billion, including infrastructure works, equity and loans. ◊



# Hong Kong remains Asia's aviation hub

HONG KONG is Asia's hub, and the Government is committed to enhancing Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub, said the Permanent Secretary for Economic Development, Ms Sandra Lee, at the Aviation Forum on October 21, 2004.

"Today, over 70 airlines operate 4,500 weekly scheduled flights between Hong Kong and 140 destinations around the world. This extensive network forms the backbone of our hub," she said.

Ms Lee firmly believed that Hong Kong could, and would, remain Asia's hub, provided the right formula is adopted. The formula is the three I's infrastructure, investment, institution.

She said: "On infrastructure, we already have one of the best airports in the world. To stay ahead, we are continuously improving its hardware, enhancing its service quality, and adding value to its business model. Within two years, the AsiaWorld-Expo will open to provide a world-class exhibition facility right next to the cabin door of the aircraft. In the vicinity of the airport island, new tourist attractions such as the Hong Kong Disneyland and the cable car system will

be completed also in the next two years. In short, the airport will soon be the focal point of a cluster of trade, tourism and commercial facilities."

"Our population of 7 million is relatively small to support a super hub, and we have to develop the vast potential market of transfer traffic. We are therefore taking a multi-pronged approach to expanding our catchment area through developing cross-boundary intermodal connections. As far as the Pearl River Delta (PRD) is concerned, quite a number of infrastructure projects are being built or are under planning. The Western Corridor, the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, an express rail link with Guangzhou and the Hong Kong - Zhuhai - Macau bridge, and so on. Meanwhile, cross-boundary coach and ferry services provide seamless connections between the airport and major cities in the PRD. We are also working closely with our Mainland counterparts to further streamline customs and immigration formalities. Together, these projects will greatly improve our airport's connectivity with the PRD. To further stretch the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA)'s reach beyond the PRD, we are taking steps to

better link our international and Mainland air networks.

Infrastructure provides the necessary platform for private sector investment. The Government is doing its part to create a favourable environment for the private sector to invest. We have put in place a robust and transparent regulatory regime and a comprehensive set of bilateral air services agreements for the aviation industry to operate under. In return, our private sector is making a strong commitment to the Hong Kong hub and its future, by investing in aviationrelated facilities and human resources including fleet, aircraft maintenance, catering, ground handling, intermodal connections, etc," Ms Lee said.

She added that Hong Kong's aviation policy is clear and consistent, namely that Hong Kong should continuously expand its aviation network through progressive liberalisation. "These liberalisation efforts are clearly bearing fruit. Since the opening of the HKIA in 1998, we have achieved remarkable growth both in traffic volume and network size. Passenger traffic has grown by 34%, cargo traffic by 77%, number of scheduled services by 50%, and number of destinations by 40%."  $\diamond$ 

# AsiaWorld-Expo to host more exhibitions and events

ASIAWORLD-EXPO, Hong Kong's newest and most advanced exhibition and events centre opened its doors on January 17 to selected quests to witness the progress made thus far. Construction is on track for completion this December. The roof erection process is one of the many innovative construction techniques that are introduced to Hong Kong to create a world class facility.

Guests were also offered

a trial ride to the new addition on the Airport Express Line — the AsiaWorld-Expo Station, which is a short all-weather ride from the Airport, provides door-to-door access from Central to the new centre in only 25 minutes. The new station will enable convenient connections to all train and free shuttle services serving the Airport. It will be in service with the opening of the Asia World-Expo.

On seeing the progress made on site, the Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology, Mr John Tsang, commented: "The achievements made to date mark an important step forward in the construction of a world class centre that will contribute significantly to Hong Kong's position as Asia-Pacific's convention and exhibition hub. AsiaWorld-Expo, at the very heart of Asia with direct and frequent links to the Mainland and the rest of the world, will ensure Hong Kong has a top quality facility to accommodate



AsiaWorld-Expo is located at the centre of an extensive and efficient air, land and marine transport network connecting Hong Kong with the Pearl River Delta and the world's business capitals.

large events.

AsiaWorld-Expo will provide more than 70,000 square metres of flexible, totally column-free space, all located on the ground level with high ceiling clearance. It is also Hong Kong's most advanced facility in terms of information technology infrastructure, providing a state-of-the-art fiber optics network and wireless connections for seamless communications; environmentally-friendly

E&M infrastructure which includes a thermal storage airconditioning system; a fully computerised building management system; plus a digital CCTV network that features a sophisticated security and crowd control management software.

The centre also boasts a world-class, purpose-built 13,500 entertainment arena — AsiaWorld-Arena, which will be the biggest and best specified in the city, with impressive acoustic architecture and excellent rigging capabilities. The Arena will offer the ideal platform for all types of international events, from mega scale superstar concerts to magnificent sporting and entertainment extravaganzas.

AsiaWorld-Expo had already achieved significant success in establishing an attractive future calendar of events. Over 20 exhibitions have been secured for 2006. ◊



# Pan-PRD co-operation offers more opportunities to investors

**SINCE** the first "Pan-PRD Regional Co-operation and Development Forum" and the signing of the "Pan-PRD Regional Co-operation Framework Agreement" by the Pan-PRD ("9+2") governments in June 2004, progress has been made on a number of fronts in taking forward Pan-PRD regional co-operation.

Cooperation of the Pan-PRD region embracing Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Hong Kong and Macao, will further expand Hong Kong's economic hinterland, provide more opportunities for development, and facilitate economic recovery.

In order to facilitate early implementation of the various co-operation initiatives under the Framework Agreement, provinces/regions concerned have started discussions in respect of the co-operation in commerce and trade, tourism, environmental protection, education, health and prevention of infectious disease, labour and agriculture, and have reached broad consensus on the future direction and work plans.

To promote better understanding of the business sector on the opportunities and challenges that Pan-PRD regional co-operation may bring, the Central Policy Unit of the HKSAR Government releases monthly reports of a consultancy study on Socio-Economic-Political Trends in Pan-PRD Region. The Reports collate information and analyse the socio-economic and political trends of these provinces and autonomous region in the Pan-PRD region, and are available via the following link: http://www.gov.hk/cpu \( \rightarrow \)

#### **CEPA II enters into force in 2005**

**ECONOMIC** links between the Mainland China and Hong Kong are strengthening further with the implementation of the second phase of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) on January 1.

With CEPA II coming into effect, Hong Kong origin products covered in 1,108 Mainland 2005 tariff codes (previously 1,087 items according to the 2004 classification) may enter the Mainland tariff free. For trade in services, Hong Kong service suppliers may gain preferential access to the Mainland market in 26 service areas.

Further trade liberalisation under CEPA II was agreed on August 27, 2004, just over eight months after the full implementation of the first phase of CEPA on January 1, 2004. So far, CEPA has been running smoothly. Applications for CEPA Certificates of Origin, or CO (CEPA), and Certificates of Hong Kong Service Supplier (HKSS) are increasing steadily.

CEPA is a continuous arrangement and adopts a buildingblock approach which provides a mechanism for further liberalisation measures.

Free one-stop enquiry and certification services are offered to Hong Kong companies to help them gain access to the Mainland market. The Trade and Industry Department, with five other Government Approved Certification Organisations, issue CO(CEPA)s to Hong Kong products for obtaining zero-tariff benefits under CEPA.

A special CEPA website (www.tid.gov.hk/english/cepa/) was launched to disseminate CEPA-related information to help Hong Kong investors understand more about the investment environment and market opportunities in the Mainland, and about the application and approval procedures.

With these business opportunities brought by CEPA, overseas companies will have greater access to the Mainland market through Hong Kong.  $\Diamond$ 

# Mega entertainment event sparkles in March

ON March 21, the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang inaugurated the Grand Opening of Entertainment Expo Hong Kong — the first of its kind — pulling together the film, video, digital entertainment and music industries into one mega-event.

Mr Tsang said that this Entertainment Expo would be a celebration of the ingenuity and creativity of the people of Hong Kong, as well as a tribute to the talent of Asia's entertainment industries. It would also be a tremendous platform for cultivating business and cultural exchanges.

Mr Tsang said in Hong Kong, the film industry generated some HK\$1.4 billion a year, the broadcasting sector another HK\$3.7 billion. In 2003, the value of our exports of audiovisual products reached HK\$1 billion. These are impressive figures by any standard, and there is plenty of room for further growth.

Take the digital entertainment industry, for example. According to a recent survey, Hong Kong people's total spending on digital game products is predicted to reach HK\$5 billion a



Acting Chief Executive Mr Donald Tsang officiates at Entertainment Expo Hong Kong Gala Opening.

year. Hong Kong now has about 200 companies engaged in digital video game development, computer animation and digital special effects.

In today's globalised knowledge economy, the many cultural and creative industries are becoming increasingly important economic drivers. The HKSAR Government recognises this fact, and we will continue to build a favourable environment for these industries to flourish. At the same time, we will keep up our rigorous efforts to protect intellectual property rights, Mr Tsang said.

The Entertainment Expo Hong Kong was held from March 22 to April 6 to bring together eight leading fixtures in Hong Kong's entertainment calendar. Its grand opening was attended by more than 1,000 film and entertainment industry leaders.  $\Diamond$ 



# Hong Kong to host WTO MC6

**THE** World Trade Organisation (WTO) General Council, at its meeting on 20 – 21 October 2004 held in Geneva decided that the Sixth Ministerial Conference (MC6) should be held in Hong Kong from 13 to 18 December 2005. The Conference will be held in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai.

It is anticipated that MC6 will be attended by about 11,000 participants. While trade negotiations will be the core activities of MC6, as the host, Hong Kong will provide hospitality and social programmes and take these opportunities to showcase the different facets of Hong Kong as an Asia's world city.

Hong Kong pledges to work very closely with the WTO membership and the WTO Secretariat to stage a conference which is successful in both substantive and logistical terms.  $\Diamond$ 

## ITU to host Telecom World 2006

**THE** International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has selected Hong Kong as the host city of the ITU TELECOM WORLD 2006. It will be held on 4 to 8 December 2006.

The previous nine TELECOM WORLD events since 1971 were held in Geneva. Hong Kong is very pleased to have been given the privilege to host the first TELECOM WORLD outside ITU's home base in Geneva.

TELECOM WORLD is the largest and most significant telecommunications event in the world, and therefore known as the "Olympics in telecommunications". It is attended by heads of states, ministers from governments as well as CEOs of top notch and emerging companies.

The event would be a golden opportunity for telecommunications companies to network and do business with companies from China and elsewhere. They can capitalise upon the unique business facilitation service provided by Hong Kong to access the Mainland China market.

Policy makers, regulators, academics and industry players would benefit from the highly focused and pertinent discussion at the event about opportunities and challenges in telecommunications development worldwide from the human, technical and market perspectives.

Telecommunications companies are therefore strongly recommended to sign up early so as not to miss this unprecedented opportunity to showcase their latest technology. Countries and economies are also encouraged to take part, and in particular to set up national pavilions with public and private sector participants to display their products, policies, services and other achievements.

# Hong Kong remains world's freest economy

**THE** Financial Secretary, Mr Henry Tang welcomed the ranking of Hong Kong as the freest economy in the world for the 11th consecutive year by the Heritage Foundation (HF), which released its "2005 Index of Economic Freedom" on January 4.

"I am pleased that the virtues we have been upholding to keep Hong Kong flourish as a free market economy have once again been reaffirmed by the international community," Mr Tang said.

According to HF, Hong Kong's virtues lie with its duty-free port with no barriers to trade, low level of government intervention in the economy, very low level of inflation, very low barriers to capital flows and foreign investment, very low level of restrictions in banking and finance, low level of intervention in wages and prices, strong property rights, very low level of regulation, and a low level of informal market activity.

"We see the Government's roles as those of a facilitator which provides a business-friendly environment for all firms to compete on a level-playing field while maintaining an appropriate regulatory regime to ensure the integrity and smooth functioning of a free market. The Government will also take a leading role in government-to-government interactions, for instance, on market access arrangements," Mr Tang said.

Mr Tang said the Government remained firmly committed to maintaining Hong Kong as a free market economy that accords maximum scope to the private sector and would continue to pursue a prudent fiscal strategy and strictly control public sector expenditure.

He added that the Government would spare no efforts in preserving its strengths and in further improving other aspects where there was room for further improvement.  $\Diamond$ 

# Brand Hong Kong video wins film festival award

HONG KONG has won a prestigious award at the 2004 Columbus Film and Video Festival in the United States. The festival is a long-established event with a 52-year history and its Chris Award is highly respected by film and video makers around the world.

The video 'Hong Kong — Asia's world city' was commissioned in 2004 by the Information Services Department as part of ongoing efforts to promote Hong Kong internationally.

Video production house Directors Network Asia (DNA) carried out the production work, while brand communications



Director of Information Services, Miss Yvonne Choi, is presented with the prestigious Chris Award by Mr C.F. Ho, Chief Executive Director of Directors Network Asia.

agency Motiv-8 developed the creative concept and script. The music score was composed, arranged and conducted by renowned Hong Kong musician Joseph Koo.

The Award was presented to the Director of Information Services, Miss Yvonne Choi on January 25, by DNA's chief executive director, Mr C F Ho.

The video received the award in the 'Business and Industry' category. To achieve a Chris Award — the highest given to a film or video production — videos must receive a '7 out of 7' rating for superior quality production.

'Hong Kong — Asia's world city' was the only video in the category to receive a Chris Award, edging out at least 14 other productions from the US and Canada for the top honour.

Using the theme of kite building, it illustrates what makes Hong Kong great — its people. The video and script can be viewed at http://www.brandhk.gov.hk/brandhk/vidmus\_e.htm  $\Diamond$ 



# K K Lam, new HKETO Director, aims high



Director of HKETO, Mr K K Lam speaks to some 300 guests at his welcome reception in Singapore.

**MR** K K Lam, a veteran administrative officer with the HKSAR Government, took up the post of Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office based in Singapore on January 20.

In January and February, welcome receptions were held in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok to introduce him to the office's key contacts in various sectors of the capitals.

Mr Lam has a wealth of experience in public service. He has helped to formulate Hong Kong government policies in many areas including economic services, investment, social services, education and manpower, civil service, municipal services, and district administration. Prior to coming to Singapore, he was the Research Director of the Central Policy Unit, the defacto government thinktank. Between 1992 and 1995, Mr Lam served as Representative, Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Tokyo. Between 1996 and 1998, he coordinated the large-scale works project for the construction of a state-of-the-art Sheung Shui Abattoir in HK.

During the welcome receptions, Mr Lam, apart from introducing himself, also briefed guests on the business opportunities offered to this region as a result of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and the Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Co-

Kong as a springboard," Mr Lam said. ♦

Events to promote

ASEAN-Hong Kong ties

operation Framework Agreement. He also highlighted the HKSAR Government's new initiatives in fostering cultural and creative

Mr Lam noted that there would be ample opportunities for Hong Kong and the ASEAN region to collaborate, synergise and

"I hope I can help promote closer economic and trade ties between ASEAN countries and Hong Kong, and assist businesses in the region to access the Mainland China market using Hong

HKETO joined hands with the Singapore International Chamber of Commerce and the Hong Kong-Singapore Business Association (HSBA) in November 2004 to organise a networking event in Singapore to cultivate closer working relationships between the three organisations. The event was well attended by more than 230 guests who were business executives representing major local and multinational companies in Singapore.

industries in Hong Kong.

co-prosper in many fronts.

In February, Director of HKETO in Singapore, Mr K K Lam gave a keynote speech to members of the Federation of Hong Kong Business



Chairman of HKGCC, Mr Anthony Nightingale promotes business opportunities in Hong Kong to business executives in Singapore.

Association Worldwide at the Asia Forum 2005 in Bangkok. His speech, entitled "Hong Kong: Your perfect Partner for Doing Business in Mainland China," highlighted Hong Kong's unique position vis-à-vis the rising Mainland economy, the implementation of the Pan-Pearl River Delta (PPRD) Co-operation Forum and CEPA. Mr Lam emphasised Hong Kong's role as the gateway to the Mainland, collaboration and cooperation between Hong Kong, Macao and the nine Chinese provinces under the framework of the PPRD Forum and the business opportunities for Hong Kong as well as overseas companies arising from CEPA.

At the spring dinners co-hosted by the HKETO, the Hong Kong Tourism Board and Cathay Pacific Airways in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Manila and Jakarta, Mr Lam said that in 2004, Hong Kong's visitor arrivals reached a record of 21.8 million, and with the opening of Hong Kong Disneyland in September this year, 2005 looked like another record year.

In March and April, Mr Lam hosted a series of talks in Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Jakarta for leaders in the business and financial sectors as well as the local media. Apart from briefing the audiences on the 2005-06 Budget, Mr Lam also took the opportunity to explain the exciting prospects arising from PPRD co-operation.

To mark the visit to Singapore of a high-level delegation of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, led by its Chairman Mr Anthony Nightingale, HKETO on April 12 co-organised a networking reception with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Hong Kong Singapore Business Association in honour of the distinguished visitors. The event, supported by the Singapore Business Federation, was well attended by almost 300 business leaders and executives from a wide spectrum of companies in Singapore.  $\Diamond$ 

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