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Transcript of the Governor's interview

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Following is a transcript of an interview with the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, today (Thursday) on RTHK's (Chinese) programme simultaneously translated:

Speaker: Rifkind has said Chris Patten upholds the interests of Hong Kong. What does Patten want to do before 1997, and what can he do? Everybody says that he works according to his conscience. But whenever you are in the quiet of night, would you ask yourself whether you can really face up to everything?

The programme today is 'Across the Heart'. This afternoon at 3 o'clock, Leung Ka-wing and Cheng Shu-yan have invited the Governor, Chris Patten, to review the work for '96. It is now nine-minutes-past-three and this afternoon we've got Leung Ka-wing, Cheng Shu-yan and Leung Ying-ye. Hello colleagues. Well, the arrangement is rather special today because Ho Yin-ye is in Broadcast Drive, and I, Leung Ka-wing and Cheng Shu-yan are in the Queensway Government Offices in readiness to interview the Governor.

Yes, I can see that the two of you are very serious and cautious and very nicely dressed to meet Mr Patten.

Yes, of course, whenever we do anything we are always very serious and today we are interviewing a very important person, the Governor of Hong Kong - although we are separated by distance - but our programme still starts from 3.00 and goes on until 6.00. Every Thursday we have 'Across the Heart' and today our honoured guest is Mr Patten.

Perhaps I should tell you what other programmes we have in store for you later. On Thursday we have 'Across the Heart', and after 'Across the Heart' we will have a satirical talk-show 'Ka Sai Tong'. After that we will also have the Financial News and we will have an analyst, Mr Tso Chin, analysing situations for us. And from Holland, we've got a Dutch analyst to analyse the international situation. We also have a segment where the audience are welcome to call-in and have a talk-show about matters pertinent to Hong Kong. As I have mentioned, the specialist for this afternoon is Mr Tso, on political issues and analysis.

For our newscast we have, oh, good news about cheap bargains. Where? Where? Taxis of course. That's strange. Yes, and taxi drivers will also give you discount cards so that they can keep their regulars. Is that a course against the law and is everybody in favour of it?

I think I don't understand the question.

Well, it doesn't matter. Tune-in at 5 o'clock and you will know all the details.

Yes, that is Newsfile. And after 5.30 we will also have a legal talk-show on international affairs.

Well, I have been listening to our interpreters and they are interpreting everything that we have said. I admire them and I thank them because they have also done the interpretation for the Newsfile. We hope they also interpreted whether Mr Patten will be greeting our colleagues in Cantonese, and our audience. Well, I'll try my best to ask Mr Patten to greet us in Chinese. But I'd also like to know about Mr Patten's dress and how he looks.

Well, Mr Patten is dressed as usual, dark-grey jacket with a blue tie with squares. It seems very sharp. Before the programme started, I had a chat with Mr Patten to ask him whether he knows of our programme and he said yes. I was quite shocked because there is no reason why he would have heard it because it is all in Cantonese. Maybe we have interpreters for him. Of course a lot of people work for him. But he told us that he heard some excerpts and this is the first time that he will be using an interpreter to listen to the programme.

In that case, let's go ahead with our interview.

Alright, Mr Patten please.

Governor: Good afternoon. Nice to see you. I'm glad you think I'm dressed sharply. I'm dressed entirely Hong Kong; everything I'm wearing is made in Hong Kong, so I'll be alright in Hong Kong Fashion Week next week.

Speaker: Governor, good afternoon.

Governor: Good afternoon.

Speaker: Our colleague, Miss Ho, has suggested that maybe you should greet our audience in Cantonese. Would you like that?

Governor (In Chinese): Audience of News Salon, how are you?

Speaker: Yes, how are you Sir?

Governor: I'm very well and I'm pleased to be on this programme.

Speaker: Mr Patten, 1996 is a key year for Hong Kong. As the Governor of Hong Kong, you personally, how would you rate as the highest item of priority to be dealt with?

Governor: I think the highest item is to give people as much reassurance as possible that 1997 isn't going to disrupt Hong Kong's way of life or Hong Kong's prosperity. A lot of people have said that 1996 is a year of decision. Well, in a sense, every year is a year of decision. But what do they really mean about 1996 being a year of decision? I think what they mean is that there are a lot of people here who have foreign passports - it's reckoned that there may be as many as half-a-million and that a lot of those people will be wondering whether 1997 and the transition to Chinese sovereignty is going to be good for them or not.

I think it's just as important that there are five-and-a-half million or more people who don't have a foreign passport who may be a bit concerned from time to time about what the future holds.

Now, I think that all of us have, during this year, to give the maximum reassurance first of all to ensure that those with foreign passports don't use them, that they choose to stay in Hong Kong. I'd like, also, many of those who have already left Hong Kong to come back and spend their lives here. That's what I always say to Hong Kong students when I meet them overseas. And I hope that we - and it's increasingly going to be a job for Chinese officials and those who advise Chinese officials - can give those who don't have a foreign passport, who will live in Hong Kong and want to make a success of 1997, I hope we can give them the reassurance as well.

Speaker: Well, it would appear that getting the confidence of the people of Hong Kong on the passport issue would be your top priority. However, in the past few days another matter of great concern to the people of Hong Kong is the question of Boat People. In 1996, what do you think will be the progress in resolving this problem?

Governor: I think we've got to remember that the progress over the years has been astonishing. Hong Kong has a marvellous record of dealing competently, firmly and humanely with a problem which has bedeviled the region for 15-16 years, ever since late 1970. Since then, I suppose it's true to say that about 200,000 or so Vietnamese Boat People have passed through Hong Kong. Many of those have been reckoned to be refugees and have been found homes elsewhere, in America, in the United Kingdom, in Canada and so on. Others have been screened-out as refugees, they're not refugees they're economic migrants, and we've been settling them, steadily, back in Vietnam.

Now, it hasn't been an easy process. It's involved tough work for officials and it's been a very difficult job for our Correctional Services Department and our Police who I think handle it extremely well. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that we were making particularly good progress in 1992-1993, even in the first months of 1994, we were transferring back to Vietnam about 12,000 a year and we'd got the figure down from about forty-odd thousand just before I arrived as Governor, to just over 20,000 by 1994. We then started to get more problems, particularly recently, because a lot of people in the camps have got the impression, entirely erroneously, that if they stay in Hong Kong they'll at some stage in the future be resettled in the United States, and that's an impression which they've got because of the legislation which some American Congressmen have put through Congress.

Now that's giving people a very wrong impression. I don't want anybody to get the wrong end of the stick. I want all of them to recognise that the only option for them is to return to Vietnam. If they stay, they're not going to find themselves with homes in America or homes in Europe or homes in Britain or homes in Australia. The only option they have is to return to Vietnam and we will be pursuing that policy as vigorously and effectively, and of course humanely as we can. People in Hong Kong have shown --

Speaker: Governor, while you are reviewing the achievements we have made in this respect over the years, I think what we are most concerned about is that the problem will not be resolved before 1997. In the last few years -- Mr Rifkind has said -- in the last few days we're told that we are actually the victims. I mean do you think that the interests of Britain and the interests of Hong Kong are unanimous on this issue?

Governor: Yes, I do actually. And what Mr Rifkind was doing, and what I'm always keen to focus on, is the extremely ill-advised nature of those arguments which suggest that if the Vietnamese migrants simply hang around in the camps they're going to be able to go somewhere else other than Vietnam in 1997. They're not. It gives them entirely the wrong impression to say now or to suggest now that if only they stay till the middle of 1997 then they can go to Europe or then they can go to the United States. Those options don't exist, so they should go home.

Speaker: But the question is that, are the interests of Britain and those of Hong Kong unanimous on the question of the Boat People? You said yes just now.

Governor: I think our interests are the same. What we are all keen on doing is dealing for once and for all with this problem, which we've been very successful in dealing with in the past. What we want to see is all the Vietnamese migrants returned as soon as possible. That's what the UNHCR is working for, that's what Hong Kong is working for, that's what Britain and the international community is working for. We'll soon, I think, be having another international meeting to review progress and I hope that that will give some more impetus to the return of migrants. As I said earlier, we were making very good progress in 1992 and 1993 and we want to see that progress resumed.

Speaker: Yes, I understand that both the UK and Hong Kong would like to get the problem resolved as soon as possible. But what about the question of responsibility, is Britain and you, Hong Kong, on the same side?

Governor: I think we're on exactly the same side but everybody recognises that the decisions that we've been making since, for example, the late 1980s, have been decisions made here in Hong Kong. There is nobody in the camps who was here before the Executive Council took its decisions on policy on Vietnamese migrants in 1988. I want to see the problem resolved as rapidly as possible. And I don't think, as I've said to the Legislative Council in the past, I don't think it's helpful to give the impression to the Vietnamese migrants that if only they hang about they'll be able to go somewhere other than Vietnam. That's not the situation.

I tell you one thing which I think people in Hong Kong really wonder about. Hong Kong is the biggest investor in Vietnam. It's investing in Vietnam's economic success. So why don't the people who are at present in our camps and costing money, why don't they go back and take part in that economic success story in Vietnam which we're helping to finance?

Speaker: But you say that the responsibilities and the duties of the British and Hong Kong are the same. But a lot of people think that the British people are being generous with Hong Kong people's money. And you're talking about humanity, but in taking care of the Vietnamese it is the Hong Kong people who are shouldering it. Do you agree?

Governor: I totally agree that the people of Hong Kong have shown very considerable humanity and very considerable patience in the way that they have handled the problem over the years. Let me give a more practical example - and I hope Legislators sometimes think about this. You consider the problem which the people in the Correctional Services Department, which our Police, have to face every time that they are trying to deal with those in the camps who are having to be moved from one camp to another, who are having to be mandatorily repatriated. Every time they do that it's a very difficult tough exercise for them and my heart goes out to them, my sympathy goes out to them, and they have my unequivocal support, and I don't want to do or say anything which makes their job more difficult.

Speaker: Recently, Foreign Secretary Rifkind has said something in Hong Kong about the Vietnamese people and that has caused a lot of havoc and anger. Some of the angrier citizens have suggested that if the Vietnamese migrants cannot be sent back before 1997, then they should charter some vessels to take them to the English Channel for the British Government to resolve the matter. How would you respond to that?

Governor: Well, I think that's the sort of thing that people say who don't actually have any regard for the consequences of their remarks. As I said earlier, if you want the Vietnamese Boat People to return to Vietnam, and if you want them to do that sooner rather than later, you don't give them the impression that if they don't return to Vietnam then they're going to be able to find a home somewhere else. They're not.

Speaker: But the question is, if the problem cannot be resolved before the exchange of sovereignty and the possibility does exist, then as a Governor, what would you ask the British Government to do to resolve the matter?

Governor: What I am going to do as Governor is to do everything within my power to resolve the problem before 1997. As I've said very often, in Hong Kong we have enough problems to deal with without endlessly imagining hypothetical problems and concentrating our argument on them. If we spend the whole time discussing what will happen to Vietnamese Boat People who haven't returned before the middle of 1997, and if we give the Vietnamese Boat People, if we give those economic migrants the impression that they can go somewhere else but Vietnam if only they hang around in Hong Kong, then we're not doing them a service and we're not doing ourselves a service because we're actually suggesting that there is an Eldorado for them which simply doesn't exist.

Speaker: Of course there is no reason why we should only worry about the future and not care about the present but as the Governor you should have a vision. If the matter cannot be resolved by '97, what would you do? You said that the responsibility of Britain and Hong Kong are the same here. If we should assume that there are migrants here, would you be willing to say here that Hong Kong and Britain will take half of them if their duties are the same?

Governor: My job is to do everything I can to resolve the problem before the middle of 1997. I would be certifiably barmy if I was to spend my time suggesting to the Vietnamese Boat People that if only they hang around until the middle of 1997 they can go to the United Kingdom or the United States. They can't and they won't. That isn't an option.

Speaker: Well, let's look at the Sino-British relationship, Governor. Both the Chinese and the English Foreign Ministers have reached a consensus in the past two days. What do you think about that and what will happen in 1996 in the light of that consensus?

Governor: I think that Malcolm Rifkind's visit to Hong Kong and his subsequent visit to Peking - which hasn't quite finished yet, he's seeing the President, Mr Jiang Zheming this afternoon, and also seeing Director Lu Ping this afternoon - I think his visit to Hong Kong and his visit to Peking have been extremely successful. Of course it is true to say that not all the outstanding problems that we want resolved have been resolved. Of course there are still disagreements and arguments about issues like human rights and the future of the Legislative Council and those are very important points. But I don't think we should always focus on what hasn't been achieved, I think it's important to focus on what has been achieved as well.

And I think, without exaggerating, you can reasonably say that at the beginning of this, as I said earlier, decisive year for Hong Kong, at the beginning of this year we've seen more progress in reaching hard, practical concrete agreements between Hong Kong, Britain and China than we've seen for very many years - on passports, on right of abode, on the container terminal, on the arrangements for co-operation between the Preparatory Committee and the Hong Kong Government, on Air Service Agreements. I think that all those agreements, all those moves forward are to be very welcome and I very much hope that they will give people a little more reassurance.

Speaker: (inaudible) suggested that it's a case of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours". How do you say to that?

Governor: I missed the beginning part of your question but I don't actually think that back-scratching comes into it. What Malcolm Rifkind has done, both in Hong Kong and in Peking, is to make absolutely clear how committed we are, how committed the Hong Kong Government is to the defence of people's human rights and civil liberties and to the defence of all the values which are enshrined in the Joint Declaration. At the same time we've managed to move the agenda forward, principally on economic issues, but also on issues which touch profoundly on people's day to day lives, affecting, for instance, the passport and permanent residence in Hong Kong. So I think it's been a very, very valuable visit.

I don't deny that we could have ideally, in an ideal world, perhaps achieved more. But I don't think anybody should belittle what has been achieved and has been agreed. I think the extent of agreement has surprised --- Can I just finish? --I think the extent of the agreement has surprised people.

Speaker: You find the visit very successful and that it has surprised many people. Have both sides made any concession, at least in the case of the CT-9?

Governor: Well, I don't think that it's necessarily helpful to discuss or analyse visits like this in terms of whether or not people have made concessions or U-turns. But on the CT-9 we've always wanted, as you know, to ensure that we developed the port as effectively as possible and at the same time that we were able to increase competition in the port, because we think that's in the interests of those who use the port.

At their meeting last autumn, Mr Qian Qichen and Malcolm Rifkind agreed that we should all redouble our efforts to find an agreement on the CT-9 issue. What they've now accepted is the way forward for doing that, which involves, I hope, the operators, the consortia, reallocating the ownership of the berths between them - berths in terminals 1-9 - in order to achieve the objectives that we've set of greater competition and effective development of the port. I don't think that that's at all a bad way forward and if the consortia can reach an agreement soon, that will be in the interests of Hong Kong.

Speaker: Mr Rifkind had met with the Chinese Foreign Secretary and had resolved the long-standing issue, namely Container Terminal 9. There were no signs before the visit and therefore some comments made in Hong Kong is that back-room diplomacy is a lot better than diplomacy in the form of a lot of noisy fanfare. Do you agree to that?

Governor: Well, I think that those who were taken by surprise by the agreement perhaps hadn't been looking sufficiently closely at what has been done and what has been discussed between Britain and China and Hong Kong over recent weeks or months, because what was agreed in Peking was a development of the discussion that took place in London. But it is true to say that there have been talks going on, quietly, on this commercial issue over the last weeks and months and obviously whenever you have an agreement - the same is true of the Agreed Minute on the SAR passport - whenever you have an agreement like that, it's the result of a lot of painstaking work done by experts and officials - including the Governor of Hong Kong - before the meetings take place.

Speaker: For those who hold this view, I think they are implying that noisy fanfare with lots of smoke and no fire is the type of diplomacy that you have employed in the past. Would you agree that you have been excessively high-key in the past?

Governor: No, I certainly wouldn't. And most of the noise and smoke has not come from me but has come from those who attack me. I have been my usual serene, quiet, calm self and will continue to be. But you know, people have a tendency to apply a sort of moral equivalence or a political equivalence when one is attacked, even if you've been conducting an argument in a reasonable, quiet, calm, rational way.

I will continue to speak up courteously but firmly for all those things which I think have made Hong Kong special - like the rule of law, like the development of representative government which Hong Kong has been promised, like the defence of freedom of speech, like the defence of all those other freedoms which have made Hong Kong successful. I'll continue to argue for those things.

What I find fascinating is that some of my critics, some of my most vigorous critics want those things for themselves - that's why they've got foreign passports - but presumably don't think that Hong Kong deserves the same. I don't accept that that is a reasonable position for them to take.

Speaker: On the question of passports, Governor, in 1996, one of the issues that the British and the Chinese Governments have to deal with will be the question of passports. Some people feel that the visa-free arrangement for the SAR passport has not been granted by Britain for a long time because this is one of the chips that they want to use for discussions with China. What do you say to that?

Governor: I don't think it's a chip and I think it's too important to discuss in that context. As you will know, I've been arguing for a long time that once we had an agreement on the SAR passport which we could sell not only to Britain but to the rest of the world, as guaranteeing the integrity of the SAR passport, then Britain and other countries should agree to visa-free access for that passport. Now when I was back in London last autumn, you'll remember I was arguing among other things the case for visa-free access after an agreement for SAR passport holders. I did that in public on the television, just as I did it in private. And now that we've got that Agreed Minute, I hope that Mr Rifkind will go back and ensure that his colleagues in the British Cabinet consider the matter as soon as is reasonably possible. I think that it's important that we have visa-free access for SAR passport holders, not only in Britain but elsewhere too.

Speaker: Well, every Hong Kong person will agree with that: visa-free arrangements are very important for SAR passports. Right now, in Singapore and Australia they have already indicated that they will be making certain arrangements for SAR passport holders. Britain, however, is the sovereign country for Hong Kong now, and right now people feel that you are still hithering and thithering and you say you have to consider whether there are problems. Wouldn't it be acting inconsiderately?

Governor: First of all I'm interested in what you say about Australia. I'd seen about Singapore and I'd noticed that Australia welcomed the Agreed Minute but I didn't know that the Australians had gone as far as to say that they would give visa-free access to SAR passport holders. I think we both better check on that. I think that there have been discussions --

Speaker: What I mean is Australia has already issued an announcement saying that they will be working towards visa-free arrangements for SAR passports.

Governor: That's a slightly different matter. I don't think that what you said originally is what the case is. But I repeat what I said earlier, I will be arguing and arguing vigorously that the British Government should give visa-free access to SAR passport holders. And one reason why I will be doing that is because in my view if Britain gives visa-free access then it will be easier to try to persuade other countries to give visa-free access as well.

Speaker: There is one point that I'm very close to you Mr Patten, that is I am more interested in political reforms rather than passports.

Governor: No, I think they both matter a very great deal. And for a lot of people in Hong Kong, the question of permanent residency in Hong Kong and the question of passports are absolutely crucial and they matter a great deal to Hong Kong's commercial life.

Speaker: Well, my personal interest is on the political reform package. You have promoted a political reform package but in reality we all know that the three-tier government system will not be able to transcend into 1997. So even if you have the best ideal and it cannot be put into practice that would be empty words. If you are allowed to start again from scratch would you change your tactics for promoting political reform?

Governor: No, because the question wasn't one of tactics, the question was whether or not you had free and fair elections or not. People talk, which is rather flattering, about my quote "political reform package". What it actually consisted of and I'm sorry in many respects that it hadn't been agreed before - was the attempt to implement what the Joint Declaration promises, the steady process of democratisation here in Hong Kong. We tried for the best part of a year to agree a way forward with China. Why weren't we able to agree a way forward? Was it because Chinese officials wanted more democratic elections, or was it because they wanted less democratic and fair ... why for the district boards or the municipal councils, or for the Legislative Council itself, anybody should tamper or dismantle those arrangements. I think if those arrangements are dismantled it will be very bad for confidence in Hong Kong.

Speaker: Well, a real problem is after the package came out the Chinese refused to communicate with you. But before the package was promoted, had you ever realised that there would be such angry responses from China?

Governor: Well, I think all of us know that if you stick to your principles in dealing with China, in talking to China, there is sometimes a fuss. But I don't think that is an argument for abandoning your principles. Consider what the consequences would have been.

What would have been the consequences if we had agreed to electoral arrangements which were unfair or if we'd agreed to arrangements under which some legislators, some democratic legislators were turfed out of the Legislative Council in 1997 with the connivance of the Government of Hong Kong. Would that have produced stability? Would that have produced a quiet and peaceful atmosphere in Hong Kong? It would have produced substantial social and political turbulence. And I think people should remember that the alternative to having an argument from time to time over a matter of principle with Chinese officials isn't a quiet life; the alternative is anything but a quiet life in Hong Kong because it would let down people in Hong Kong, it would break promises made to people in Hong Kong and it would lead to political instability.

Speaker: It is now 3.40 so whether we are Chinese or English it is time for tea. While we have produced some refreshments for Mr Patten, he doesn't have the opportunity yet to taste them, so let's take a short break.

Speaker: We're back on to the News Salon Programme and in the studio we have, other than myself, Leung Ka-wing and Cheng Shu-yan interviewing Mr Patten. We're now in the Government Offices at Admiralty and today we have a live interview with Mr Patten. We've spent about half-an-hour discussing the political system of Hong Kong, the issue of Boat People, and also the meetings between the two Foreign Ministers. Let's come back to some domestic affairs now.

Coming back to the domestic issues of Hong Kong. Even those who criticise the Governor severely would agree that you, the Governor, has brought some new styles to Hong Kong. You are accessible, you have built a system of accountability and you have your performance pledges. Do you have confidence that these will survive beyond '97?

Governor: I very much hope so because I think they represent what our civil servants and what our public service enjoy doing, which is making certain that they provide a better service to the public. I've worked with civil servants elsewhere, in the European Community and in Britain, and I don't think that in Europe the civil service is as responsive to change and responsive to public concerns as it is here in Hong Kong. Of course not everything is perfect but I think that what has happened in Hong Kong, both in terms of accountability to the Legislative Council and the wider community, and in terms of trying to sharpen up the quality of our services, I think that is absolutely in tune with what the best of our civil servants want. And I think it's going to continue and I think it's here to stay.

Speaker: Well, the question just now was about accessibility, accountability and new performance pledges and whether these can survive after '97, and you said that you hope very much that this would be the case. But that is different from it will actually happen. Do you think that such styles if they cannot survive '97, I mean what would be the causes of that?

Governor: The cause, if they don't survive '97, is that somebody will be breaking the promise that Hong Kong people can go on running Hong Kong. I think that one of the crucial factors in the next 18 months - and it's a matter, I suppose, which the Preparatory Committee is going to have to address - one of the crucial matters is whether the high degree of autonomy which Hong Kong has practised for years and which Hong Kong has promised for the future will actually be guaranteed and will actually survive. Why do I say that? For this simple reason: Hong Kong runs its affairs extremely well. I don't run a British Government in Hong Kong. I've only got one senior official who's an expatriate. This is a largely local Hong Kong Chinese Government pursuing policies that we make here and pursuing policies which by and large are very successful. Of course there are things we could do better and things we would like to do better. But I think that to interfere with that autonomy - which I hope won't happen - to interfere with that autonomy would mean that we would do things less well.

And that's why I think people were disturbed by what a Chinese official said - I think it was a mistake - about our welfare spending, before Christmas. Yesterday I took particular heart from what Premier Li Peng said about the importance of Hong Kong's autonomy in managing its own affairs and I hope that we won't see anything in the coming months which erodes that.

Speaker: You have made certain promises in terms of the performance pledges. In your latest policy address you mentioned that the UK had already given preliminary consideration to provide assistance to the SAR Chief Executive Designate. What exactly is the methods you have considered in terms of offering assistance to the Chief Executive Designate of the SAR Government?

Governor: Well, as one would say in English slang: "Hang on a bit" we've first of all got to devise ways of co-operating effectively with the Preparatory Committee which we want to do. And Malcolm Rifkind was discussing that with Qian Qichen earlier in the week in Peking. Once the Preparatory Committee has chosen the Selection Committee and once the Selection Committee has in due course chosen the Chief Executive Designate, then we'll have to find ways in which we can co-operate successfully with the Chief Executive Designate. But I think you will find that both the Chief Executive Designate and the Governor and my senior officials will want very much to co-operate and to work closely together because it will be in our mutual interests to do so. So I want to see the best possible co-operation between the Administration and the Preparatory Committee, and the Chief Executive Designate in due course, and I also want to see of course during that period, the best possible co-operation between the Administration and the Legislative Council.

Speaker: Of course the Preparatory Committee has just been appointed and the Election Committee has not yet been formed. Of course sooner or later we will have the Chief Executive Designate but we don't know who that person is yet. However, an interesting point arises: in your latest Policy Address at page 137 you have already said that we, meaning the British Government, have initially considered the methods or formats by which we can provide assistance to the designate. In other words, you have already considered the initial format of assistance. What formats are you talking about?

Governor: First of all just on one correction, the we in that case doesn't refer to the British Government it refers to the Hong Kong Government which I lead. The sort of practical things that one is talking about: our administrative and staff support, our logistical support. Those are things which I know that everybody in Hong Kong will expect us to provide for the Chief Executive Designate. The Chief Executive of Hong Kong will have just as difficult a job to do as the last British Governor of Hong Kong and I think that just as I do appreciate all the help I get, so the Chief Executive will appreciate all the help that she or he can receive.

Governing Hong Kong is, by common consent, one of the most difficult jobs in the world. Not because people in Hong Kong are difficult, not because this isn't a successful community, but for I suppose political and strategic and historical reasons, and it's particularly difficult at this point in our history when we're on a sort of high-wire between two historical points. So I think everybody would expect the Governor and the Chief Executive to lean over backwards to be co-operative and to help one another and that is what I intend to do.

Speaker: Facing '97 we have a lot of issues to deal with. A lot of people say a glorious retreat is one of the most important considerations for Britain in handing over sovereignty. As the representative of Britain in Hong Kong, how do you see this problem?

Governor: Well, I don't think that glorious retreat is the way that a British politician or public servant would see it. I'm not sure that the concept of face is tremendously important to somebody like me. What does matter isn't glorious retreat --

Speaker: You could lose face?

Governor: Sorry?

Speaker: You mean you can lose face?

Governor: I think if you've been a democratic politician you know quite a lot about losing face. If you lose an election, that's quite a lot of face to lose. And it's very good for you, let me tell you.

I think that what matters much more to me is what happens in the long term. Whether we manage to do what we're supposed to do in Hong Kong, honourably. Nothing to do with glory. What will matter is what Hong Kong is like in 1998 or 1999 or 2000. Does it still have a free press? Are you still able to ask the Chief Executive any question you want? Do our institutions of government still work? Do we still have a clean civil service? Are we suffering from problems of corruption? Does the rule of law still operate? Do we still have a vigorous and effective Legislative Council? Do people still regard Hong Kong as a free and open society? Because if they don't, it won't be as successful economically.

Those are the sort of things that are going to me my judgments and the judgments of Britain's inheritance. And whether or not you describe it as a glorious retreat, it's certainly that long term historical judgment which matters to us, matters today and will continue to matter. And that was a point that Malcolm Rifkind made very clear when he was answering questions from the Legislative Council the other afternoon.

Speaker: You said just now that whether or not there is a glorious retreat is not what you are most concerned about. But if I were to ask you this: if Britain wants to retreat with honour, I mean what are the necessary prerequisites?

Governor: Oh, the necessary prerequisites are to have every assurance that the sort of Hong Kong described in the Joint Declaration, in the Treaty between Britain and China, is what Hong Kong is like after 1997. Hong Kong has been an astonishing success story. It's a decent, successful open society. If it's less successful and less open after 1997, and if people can pin some of the blame for that on what Britain has done before 1997, then we wouldn't regard our job as being done as well as we would have liked. But if you look back over the last five decades, if you look back at what Hong Kong has achieved in that period, I think that even the harshest critics would be bound to say that that had been an astonishing success story and I hope that the next 50 years are even more successful.

Speaker: When you launched your political reform package many people in the pro-China camp had suggested that for the past one-and-a-half centuries Hong Kong never had any form of democracy. Why is it that in the final days the British Government is so keen to promote a democratic political system in Hong Kong? Some people therefore concluded that this is actually one of the strategies or part of the package of the so-called glorious retreat. How do you respond to that?

Governor: Well, it's a pretty odd criticism for those United Front activists to make because after all, they were party - China was party to an agreement - in which the steady development of democracy in Hong Kong was agreed. Why was it agreed? In order to underpin, in order to secure all the promises that were made to people in Hong Kong. China entered into those agreements freely. And if you look at what has been agreed, the process of democratisation doesn't finish in 1997, it's supposed to speed up after 1997. So the question is not whether the process of democratisation is a last minute British effort, because it's actually an agreement between China and Britain. The question is this: is China committed to real democratisation or is it committed to a sort of cardboard cut-out version? Is it committed to a counterfeit version? The question is are we to have elections which are genuinely fair? Or are we to have elections, the main purpose of which is to secure a given objective?

Let me ask you this question. People sometimes say the Chinese are going to dismantle the Legislative Council, they want to put other arrangements in its place. Do you suppose they want, if that is true, to put arrangements in its place which are more fair, which are more free, which give us an even more democratic Legislature? If that's what they want, then it would be very nice to hear that. But what we all know is they're committed to one step after another towards democratisation, leading eventually to a wholly directly elected Legislative Council, either eight years after 1997 or shortly thereafter if the Legislative Council wants. That's what they are committed to.

Speaker: Governor, you are very concerned about the future of the people of Hong Kong and the people of Hong Kong are very concerned about your future.

Governor: Ha, ha, that's why you gave me the biscuit.

Speaker: You have said that whoever would ask whether you would stay until 30 June 1997, you would punish him for \$500 donation for the Hong Kong Journalist's Association. We don't want to be punished and we do not want an answer which is worth only \$500. I would like to ask you, however, on the hand-over ceremony itself, which position will you be taking?

Governor: I don't know. And I don't know which position Chinese officials will be taking. What I do know is that the question of which Chinese officials take part in particular aspects of the hand-over ceremony is a matter for China, and the question of which British officials take part in the hand-over ceremony, in particular parts of the hand-over ceremony, is a matter for Britain. I wouldn't be so impertinent as to suggest who was going to represent China and I'm sure the reverse is true as well. But what I promise you is that I will be part of the British team and party and that I will be leaving Hong Kong just before midnight on 30 June 1997, sad at having to leave but I trust optimistic about the future which Hong Kong can look forward to after that.

Speaker: Are you sure that you will be taking part in the ceremony?

Governor: Well, you have to say, when you're answering a question like that, "God willing", because otherwise there may be somebody polishing thunderbolts up above to cast them down. But bearing that in mind, yes I am absolutely sure, absolutely confident that I will be part of the British team taking part in the hand-over ceremony. And frankly, I think it is undignified as well as rude for people to start making propaganda points about that sort of thing. It's not worth even discussing because it's just impertinent.

Speaker: The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Chen Jian, has said that on the question of the hand-over of sovereignty the Government has no special role to play. But according to what you have said, Mr Chen is rather rude isn't he?

Governor: Well, I leave it for others to say that. China is a great nation and I think those who are spokesman for a great nation should bear that in mind, and bear in mind the importance of speaking and acting with courtesy, with dignity and with restraint.

Speaker: We are moving towards the end of the interview, let's do some summing-up. Oh no, let me ask another question first. We all know that the Governor is a very important person in the British political scene but if the British political scene is such that your presence is required, would you be happy to go back and accept the invitation?

Governor: No.

Speaker: Not?

Governor: No. I've said ever since I arrived in Hong Kong, and I dare say I'll be being asked this question at five-minutes-to-midnight on 30 June 1997, that I intend to stay and complete my tour of duty and public service in Hong Kong. That is the position. The Prime Minister and other officials know that that's the position. The Opposition Leader knows that's the position. The Opposition in Britain have made it clear that if they were to win the next election before 1997 they would keep me as Governor. So the position is absolutely plain and isn't going to change.

Speaker: At the start of our interview, the Governor has already told us about a lot of his achievements whilst in office. But can you tell us, Sir, which is your area of greatest regret or greatest failure for the past three years.

Governor: Oh, I will regret it if by 1997 Chinese officials still haven't learnt to trust the people of Hong Kong and to recognise that political development in Hong Kong is an inevitable consequence of economic development, that it isn't threatening to anybody and that the people in Hong Kong should be trusted. I think if, by the middle of 1997, some Chinese officials haven't learnt to trust Hong Kong, to be relaxed about what Hong Kong can contribute and offer to the further development of the economic revolution in China, if that hasn't happened then it will be extremely sad and very disappointing.

Speaker: In the past three-and-a-half years, what sort of experience have you learnt which could help you in the next one-and-a-half years?

Governor: I think that I've learnt, above all, the importance of believing in yourself - I don't mean that about me, I mean that about people in Hong Kong - of believing in progress --

Speaker: But I believe everybody must have confidence in himself. I thank you very much Mr Patten for spending the past hour with us, accepting our interview.

It is now almost 4 o'clock, so please prepare for the time-tone. Thank you Mr Patten.

Governor: Thank you very much indeed.

End

Transcript of FS's media session

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Following is a transcript of the remarks by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, at the media session after attending the luncheon meeting of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association this (Thursday) afternoon:

Question: ...inaudible...?

Financial Secretary: So we have been talking to the various interests involved in separate sessions. They have tossing of a few ideas around. But I think the time for them now to concentrate their mind, quite clearly the two Ministers and two governments are quite anxious they come to a successful conclusion. I would have thought that this is a feasible scheme that could bring greater throughput to our ports that would open up CT9 and then open up the subsequent development in CT 10 and 11. I hope they would conclude their discussions very quickly.

End

Early rationalisation of CT ownership important: FS

* * * * *

The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, today (Thursday) reiterated the importance of an early and successful conclusion of the discussions between the consortia regarding the rationalisation of the ownership of container terminals 1 to 9.

Speaking at a luncheon of the Hong Kong Ship Owners Association, Mr Tsang said this would not only be in the consortia's own longer term commercial interests but also in the interests of the strength of Hong Kong's port and the greater prosperity of Hong Kong.

He said significant progress had been achieved in that the British and Chinese Foreign Ministers had supported openly the discussions taking place between the parties concerned with the object of achieving more effective, rapid and competitive development of Hong Kong's container port.

He urged the consortia to work harder now.

On the part of the Government, Mr Tsang said it was committed to providing infrastructure and road communications to the port.

"For it is only by continuing the very successful partnership between the Government and the private sector that Hong Kong can sail confidently into the future as one of the leading maritime centres, not only in the region, but in the world," he emphasised.

Last year, Hong Kong's port had handled some 12.6 million twenty-foot-equivalent units or TEUs, retaining its position as the world's busiest container port. The Port Development Board forecasts that by the year 2011 there will be a demand on the port to handle 32 million TEUs a year.

"To meet this demand we must build a new port on Lantau with twice the capacity of the present container port at Kwai Chung," Mr Tsang said.

"Just to meet the demand in the next four years we will need to complete Container Terminals 9, 10 and much of Terminal 11 by the end of the year 2000."

Meanwhile, existing operators have, by investing heavily in new equipment and improved working methods, increased their productivity by as much as two million TEUs a year. They are confident in further increasing their output.

Mr Tsang pointed out that although all of Hong Kong's container facilities were built and operated by the private sector, there was considerable government input in these facilities.

"The planning of Lantau Port has been underway since 1989 and has involved many government departments as well as port and shipping industry representatives," he said.

"The Government is also committing billions of dollars in financial resources to providing infrastructure and road communications to the port."

Outlining some of the measures that the Government had taken to ensure Hong Kong remained one of the world's leading and safest maritime centres, Mr Tsang said one was the setting up of the Hong Kong Shipping Register, now in its sixth year.

"Since December 1990, Hong Kong has its own autonomous register separated from that of the United Kingdom. This register will continue to operate beyond 1997," he said.

"It now includes 600 vessels totalling nearly nine million gross tons. This is an increase of about 40 per cent since December 1990 and puts Hong Kong in fourteenth place in the world in terms of gross tonnage.

"Hong Kong has also entered into a double taxation relief agreement with the United States. Under this agreement Hong Kong residents or Hong Kong incorporated companies are not subject to United States tax on income derived from the international operation of ships."

He said another major attraction of Hong Kong as a maritime centre was its free and fair market, sound legal and financial framework, fully convertible and secure currency, well-educated and industrious workforce and excellent network of international communications.

"It is a combination of all these positive features that has enabled the Hong Kong register to operate so successfully," Mr Tsang noted.

End

Conciliation services for retrenched workers

* * * * *

The Labour Department is providing conciliation services following the retrenchment of 239 workers imported from China under the Special Labour Importation Scheme for the Airport Core Programme projects.

The Chief Labour Officer (Labour Relations) is now holding a tripartite meeting with representatives of the workers, the principal contractor and the subcontractor at the Labour Department Headquarters.

A government spokesman said he understood that in this case, the workers were made redundant because the works contract of the subcontractor, Success, had been terminated by BCJ Joint Venture, the principal contractor.

"Under the Employment Ordinance, employers may terminate the employment contract of their employees by giving the required notice or payment in lieu of notice, and all sums due to an employee such as wages for work done, overtime pay, statutory holiday pay, pro-rata annual leave pay and where appropriate, travel costs etc."

The spokesman said the Labour Department's role in such cases was to ensure that the employer had acted in accordance with the law and that employees were given the benefits due to them under the law and under their employment contracts.

"If any of these workers have reasons to believe that they have not been given all the entitled benefits, they may lodge a claim with the Labour Department," he said.

He pointed out that under the normal rules of the Labour Importation Scheme, imported workers made redundant or dismissed would not be allowed to take up further employment in Hong Kong because they were approved to take up work for specific jobs.

"This is to protect the local workforce," the spokesman said.

End

Retrenched worker conciliation meeting

* * * * *

The conciliation meeting between representatives of the affected imported workers, the principal contractor and the sub-contractor at the Labour Department Headquarters concluded shortly before 9.30 pm this (Thursday) evening. Views on the retrenchment were exchanged during the meeting.

Both sides agreed to adjourn the meeting to 10 am tomorrow (Friday) at the Labour Department Headquarters.

End

September employment and vacancy statistics released

* * * * *

According to the figures released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department, there was continued growth in employment in most of the major service sectors between September 1994 and September 1995. Meanwhile, employment in the manufacturing sector declined further. But employment at construction sites registered a further significant increase.

Vacancies in the manufacturing sector remained on a downtrend in September 1995 over a year earlier, while those at construction sites registered a substantial increase.

Over the same period, vacancies in the various service sectors recorded decreases of different magnitudes. Nevertheless, there were still around 51,000 vacancies for all major sectors taken together.

In terms of the number of persons engaged, the wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels sector was the largest, employing 1,030,900 persons in September 1995.

This was followed by the manufacturing sector, with an employment of 386,100; the financing, insurance, real estate and business services sector, 375,400; the community, social and personal services sector, 298,300; the transport, storage and communications sector, 170,000; and the construction sites (for manual workers only), 65,800.

In terms of growth rate, employment at construction sites (for manual workers only) recorded the fastest increase, by 9% in September 1995 over September 1994; followed by the financing, insurance, real estate and business services sector, by 4%; the transport, storage and communications sector, by 2.4%; and the community, social and personal services sector, by 2.3%.

On the other hand, employment in the wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels sector showed a slight decrease of 1.9%, while that in the manufacturing sector fell by 11.9%. The respective employment figures are shown in greater detail in Table 1.

Vacancies at construction sites continued to record a very substantial increase in September 1995 over a year earlier.

The marked increases in both employment and vacancies at construction sites reflected the heavy demand for construction workers by the new airport and related projects.

However, vacancies in manufacturing sector and in all major service sectors decreased. Job vacancy figures are shown in greater detail in Table 2.

Of some 51,000 vacancies (other than those in the Civil Service) in September 1995, the majority fell into four major occupation groups, viz associate professionals, clerks, service workers and shop sales workers, and elementary occupations. They together accounted for 75% of the total number of vacancies in all the major sectors surveyed.

Vacancy figures broken down by major occupation group are shown in Table 3. As these figures are compiled starting from June 1995, year-on-year comparisons are not yet available.

The above statistics for September 1995 were derived from the Quarterly Survey of Employment and Vacancies, the Supplementary Survey of Job Vacancies and the Quarterly Employment Survey of Construction Sites conducted by the department.

In the former two surveys, some economic activities (for example, those where self-employment are predominant, such as taxi operators, hawkers and freelance authors) are not covered and hence the respective employment and vacancy figures relate only to those selected industries included in the surveys.

In the latter survey on the construction sites, employment and vacancy figures relate to manual workers only.

Detailed breakdowns of the above statistics are available from the Quarterly Report of Employment, Vacancies and Payroll Statistics, September 1995, and the Quarterly Report of Employment and Vacancies at Construction Sites, September 1995.

They are available at \$44 per copy and \$20 per copy (both exclusive of postage) respectively at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, and at the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department on the 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Table 1 : Employment figures and percentage changes by selected major sector

<u>Selected major sector</u>	<u>Persons engaged (employment)</u>			<u>Percentage change</u>	
	<u>Sep. 94</u>	<u>Jun. 95</u>	<u>Sep. 95</u>	<u>Sep. 95 over Sep. 94</u>	<u>Sep. 95 over Jun. 95</u>
Manufacturing	438 400	397 800	386 100	-11.9	-2.9
Construction sites (manual workers only)	60 400	64 000	65 800	+9.0	+2.8
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	1 051 200	1 024 600	1 030 900	-1.9	+0.6
Transport, storage and communications	166 000	166 300	170 000	+2.4	+2.2
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	361 100	373 900	375 400	+4.0	+0.4
Community, social and personal services	291 700	295 600	298 300	+2.3	+0.9

Table 2 : Vacancy figures and percentage changes by selected major sector

<u>Selected major sector</u>	<u>Number of vacancies</u>			<u>Percentage change</u>	
	<u>Sep. 94</u>	<u>Jun. 95</u>	<u>Sep. 95</u>	<u>Sep. 95 over Sep. 94</u>	<u>Sep. 95 over Jun. 95</u>
Manufacturing	12 090	7 640	6 860	-43.3	-10.2
Construction sites (manual workers only)	980	3 460	2 550	+161.3	-26.3
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	34 650	20 060	21 950	-36.7	+9.4
Transport, storage and communications	4 540	3 220	3 120	-31.4	-3.2
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	12 270	9 160	8 570	-30.2	-6.4
Community, social and personal services	10 570	8 030	7 810	-26.1	-2.7

Table 3 : Vacancy figures and percentage distribution by major occupation group

<u>Major occupation group</u>	<u>Number of vacancies in September 1995</u>	<u>Percentage distribution (%)</u>
Managers and administrators	1 030	2.0
Professionals	2 810	5.5
Associate professionals	7 280	14.3
Clerks	11 510	22.6
Service workers and shop sales workers	11 800	23.2
Craft and related workers	4 560	9.0
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	4 340	8.5
Elementary occupations	7 640	15.0

End

Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries released

According to statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department, business receipts in many service industries showed notable increases in value terms in the third quarter of 1995 over a year earlier. The hotels and banking industries registered the fastest growth, both by 20% in value terms. The storage industry also grew by 19%.

The strong growth in the hotels industry was brought about by an accelerated growth in tourist arrivals, while the surge in the banking industry was mainly attributable to an increase in net interest income.

The growth in the storage industry was related to a continued rapid increase in imports and re-exports.

Meanwhile, considerable increases in business receipts were also registered in the following service industries: transport (+16%); insurance (+16%); communications (+15%) and import/export (+10%).

On the other hand, business receipts in the financing (except banking) and wholesale industries recorded decreases, by 23% and 5% respectively in value terms. The sharp decrease in the former was in line with the decline in stock exchange turnover in the quarter compared with a year earlier.

Compared with the second quarter of 1995, business receipts in most industries recorded increases of various magnitudes.

Among them, business receipts in the business services and transport industries registered the most rapid increases in value terms, by 11% and 10% respectively.

The storage, retail, import/export, insurance and restaurants industries registered moderate growth, by 8%, 8%, 6%, 6% and 5% respectively in value terms.

Table 1 presents the provisional business receipts indices for service industries for the third quarter of 1995. Revised indices for the second quarter of 1995 are also included. The quarterly average of business receipts in 1992 was taken as 100.

Table 2 shows the time series of quarterly business receipts indices. Annual indices are also included.

Statistics on banking are obtained from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority; and those on retail and restaurants businesses are obtained from two existing surveys regularly conducted by the Census and Statistics Department.

The Quarterly Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries, Third Quarter 1995 report is now on sale at \$7 per copy at the Government Publications Centre of the Information Services Department, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

It can also be purchased from the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Enquiries about the survey results may be directed to the Business Services Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2802 1244.

Table 1 : Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries for 2nd Quarter and 3rd Quarter 1995

表一：一九九五年第二季及第三季服務業業務收益指數

(Quarterly average of 1992 = 100)

(一九九二年按季平均指數 = 100)

Type of Service Industry 服務行業	2nd Quarter 1995 一九九五年第二季	3rd Quarter 1995 一九九五年第三季	3rd Quarter 1995 compared with 2nd Quarter 1995 一九九五年第三季與一九九五年第二季比較		3rd Quarter 1995 compared with 3rd Quarter 1994 一九九五年第三季與上年同期比較	
	(Revised figures) (修訂數字)	(Provisional figures) (臨時數字)	Points (點)	% (百分率)	Points (點)	% (百分率)
Wholesale 批發	117.5	122.2	+ 4.7	+ 4.0	- 7.0	- 5.4
Import / Export 進出口貿易	138.8	143.1	+ 4.3	+ 3.1	+ 12.8	+ 9.8
Retail 零售 ⁽¹⁾	124.0	133.4 #	+ 9.4	+ 7.6	+ 4.7	+ 3.6
Hotels 酒店	145.3	144.8	- 0.5	- 0.3	+ 24.6	+ 20.5
Restaurants 飲食店 ⁽²⁾	110.8	116.6	+ 5.8	+ 5.2	+ 7.0	+ 6.4
Transport 運輸	141.5	156.1	+ 14.7	+ 10.4	+ 21.9	+ 16.3
Storage 倉庫	127.0	137.1	+ 10.1	+ 7.9	+ 22.3	+ 19.5
Communications 通訊	149.6	156.1	+ 6.5	+ 4.3	+ 20.4	+ 15.0
Banking 銀行 ⁽³⁾	138.8	144.1	+ 5.3	+ 3.8	+ 23.6	+ 19.5
Financing (except banking) 金融(銀行除外) ⁽⁴⁾	139.2	122.0	- 17.2	- 12.4	- 35.9	- 22.7
Insurance 保險	160.3	169.2	+ 8.9	+ 5.5	+ 22.8	+ 15.6
Business services 商用服務	123.8	137.3	+ 13.5	+ 10.9	+ 6.5	+ 5.0

Notes 註釋：

(1) Based on the survey results of the Monthly Survey of Retail Sales
根據零售業銷售額按月統計調查的結果

(2) Based on the survey results of the Quarterly Survey of Restaurant Receipts and Purchases
根據飲食店收益及購貨按季統計調查的結果

(3) Business receipts data are obtained from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority
業務收益數據由香港金融管理局提供

(4) Excluding investment and holding companies
不包括投資及控股公司

Revised figure
修訂數字

Table 2: Time Series of Quarterly Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries

表二：服務業按季業務收益指數的時間數列
(Quarterly Average of 1992 = 100)
(一九九二年按季平均指數 = 100)

Year 年	Quarter 季	Wholesale 批發		Import/Export 進出口貿易		Retail 零售		Hotels 酒店		Restaurants 飲食店		Transport 運輸	
		Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago
			%		%		%		%		%		%
1993		106.3	+ 6.3	108.8	+ 8.8	112.7	+ 12.7	112.5	+ 12.5	106.1	+ 6.1	111.8	+ 11.8
1994		121.0	+ 13.8	123.7	+ 13.6	126.1	+ 11.9	131.1	+ 16.5	110.1	+ 3.7	123.1	+ 10.1
1993	3	109.5	N.A.	118.3	N.A.	118.1	N.A.	106.8	N.A.	111.5	N.A.	121.2	N.A.
	4	114.5	N.A.	115.1	N.A.	120.5	N.A.	137.0	N.A.	115.5	N.A.	114.7	N.A.
1994	1	108.4	+ 10.2	108.0	+ 12.0	123.4	+ 17.9	121.3	+ 19.9	114.3	+ 15.2	112.2	+ 10.4
	2	111.6	+ 8.5	113.5	+ 7.8	119.1	+ 10.7	124.1	+ 18.0	105.1	+ 7.0	111.0	+ 1.3
	3	129.2	+ 17.9	130.4	+ 10.2	128.8	+ 9.0	120.2	+ 12.5	109.6	- 1.7	134.2	+ 10.7
	4	134.8	+ 17.7	142.7	+ 24.0	133.2	+ 10.6	152.8	+ 15.9	111.2	- 3.7	134.9	+ 17.6
1995	1	123.9	+ 14.2	128.7	+ 19.1	131.8	+ 6.8	142.8	+ 17.7	116.1	+ 1.6	128.6	+ 14.6
	2	117.5	+ 5.3	138.8	+ 22.2	124.0	+ 4.2	145.3	+ 17.1	110.8	+ 5.4	141.5	+ 27.4
	3*	122.2	- 5.4	143.1	+ 9.8	133.4 #	+ 3.6	144.8	+ 20.5	116.6	+ 6.4	156.1	+ 16.3

Year 年	Quarter 季	Storage 倉庫		Communications 通訊		Banking 銀行		Financing (except banking) 金融(銀行除外)		Insurance 保險		Business services 商用服務	
		Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago	Indices 指數	Compared with preceding year/same quarter a year ago
			%		%		%		%		%		%
1993		98.5	- 1.5	118.8	+ 18.8	116.6	+ 16.6	148.7	+ 48.7	119.3	+ 19.3	117.3	+ 17.3
1994		106.6	+ 8.2	136.1	+ 14.5	122.5	+ 5.1	169.4	+ 13.9	146.9	+ 23.1	127.4	+ 8.7
1993	3	101.0	N.A.	121.4	N.A.	121.9	N.A.	146.8	N.A.	121.7	N.A.	121.2	N.A.
	4	95.6	N.A.	130.9	N.A.	123.5	N.A.	221.5	N.A.	122.5	N.A.	142.1	N.A.
1994	1	95.1	- 9.5	129.5	+ 20.6	116.9	+ 6.9	219.6	+ 101.0	150.2	+ 30.7	125.6	+ 33.8
	2	106.1	+ 14.8	129.4	+ 11.9	115.4	+ 3.5	145.7	+ 24.5	141.9	+ 20.3	123.0	+ 9.9
	3	114.8	+ 13.6	135.7	+ 11.8	120.6	- 1.1	157.9	+ 7.6	146.4	+ 20.3	130.8	+ 7.9
	4	110.3	+ 15.3	149.7	+ 14.4	137.0	+ 10.9	154.3	- 30.3	149.1	+ 21.7	130.3	- 8.3
1995	1	105.8	+ 11.2	141.9	+ 9.6	129.3	+ 10.6	154.7	- 29.6	169.4	+ 12.8	146.5	+ 16.6
	2	127.0	+ 19.7	149.6	+ 15.7	138.8	+ 20.4	139.2	- 4.5	160.3	+ 12.9	123.8	+ 0.7
	3*	137.1	+ 19.5	156.1	+ 15.0	144.1	+ 19.5	122.0	- 22.7	169.2	+ 15.6	137.3	+ 5.0

N.A. : Not available 沒有數字

* : Provisional figure 臨時數字

: Revised figure 修訂數字

Information handbook on Basic Law published

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To promote public understanding of the Basic Law, the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE) has sponsored the publication of an information handbook entitled "Introduction to the Basic Law".

A spokesman for CPCE said today (Thursday) that the handbook, written in Chinese, provided a clear and comprehensive picture of the Basic Law.

Originally compiled and produced by the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers in 1990, the handbook, which also contains the full text of the Basic Law, had won the Outstanding Civic Education Projects Award under the Community Participation Scheme organised by CPCE.

"The fourth edition of the handbook has been revised and enlarged to cover more topical issues in its 50 pages.

"It addresses subjects such as the promulgation of the Basic Law; the design of the Special Administration Region's flag and emblem; the relationship between China and Hong Kong; the basic rights and obligations of local residents; and the political system, economy, social life, external affairs, passports and immigration controls of the Region," the spokesman said.

Attached to the handbook are 50 relevant questions set to test the readers' knowledge on the Basic Law. The answers are also provided.

Free copies have been distributed to primary and secondary schools and tertiary education institutions, voluntary agencies and educational bodies in Hong Kong.

They are also available for members of the public at the Civic Education Resource Centre on the second floor, Tung Sun Commercial Centre, 194-200 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. Enquiries can be made on 2802 0131."

End

Weather of December 1995

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With generally persistent winter monsoon, December 1995 was generally fine and dry. The monthly mean pressure of 1,022.1 hectopascals was the sixth highest on record for December. The monthly total rainfall amounted to only 7.9 millimetres, 71 per cent below the normal of 27.3 millimetres. The monthly mean relative humidity was only 63 per cent, five per cent below normal and Fire Danger Warnings were issued for 18 days in the month.

It was generally fine and dry for the first three days in December. Temperatures rose to 22.8 degrees on December 3, the highest for the month. Northerly winds prevailed from December 4 to 8 resulting in rather dry and cool weather conditions. An extensive hill fire broke out on Kowloon Peak around noon on December 7, scorching an area of about 6,600 square metres and requiring Government Flying Service helicopters to help put out the fire. Winds turned more easterly on December 9 and it remained fine until December 12.

Easterly winds increased on December 13 and the weather became cloudier. On December 15, an extensive cloud band developed over the south China coast and brought rain to the territory for the first time in the month. Light rain patches continued for the next three days.

A cold front crossed the south China coast late on December 17 and the winter monsoon brought cool, dry and sunny weather. Another surge of the winter monsoon arrived on December 24 and strong northerly winds brought cold and dry air to the territory. Fine and clear weather prevailed for the rest of the month with the persistent winter monsoon. Temperatures at the Royal Observatory dropped to 11.6 degrees, the lowest for the month, on the morning of December 30. Temperatures at Ta Kwu Ling in the next morning were even lower with a minimum of only 1.3 degrees and frost was reported at the Sha Tin Race Course.

There were two tropical cyclones over the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in the month of December. Details of the issuance/hoisting and cancellation/lowering of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1.1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal of December are tabulated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Warnings and signals in December 1995

Warnings / Signals	Effective date and time
Strong Monsoon Signal	24 Dec 2305 - 25 Dec 0730

Fire Danger Warnings	
Yellow	2 Dec 0600 - 4 Dec 0600
Red	4 Dec 0600 - 10 Dec 0600
Yellow	10 Dec 0600 - 10 Dec 2400
Yellow	23 Dec 0600 - 24 Dec 0605
Red	24 Dec 0605 - 2 Jan 0600

Gas Heater Alerts	26 Dec 0630 - 28 Dec 0800 29 Dec 1630 - 1 Jan 0830

Table 1.2 Figures and Departures from Normal - December 1995

Total bright sunshine	220.6 hours; 39.1 hours above normal
Mean daily Global Solar Radiation	12.18 MJ/SQM; 0.15 MJ/SQM above normal
Total rainfall	7.9 mm; 19.4 mm below normal
Mean cloud amount	34%; 15% below normal
Mean relative humidity	63%; 5% below normal
Mean daily maximum temperature	19.7 degrees Celsius; 0.8 degree Celsius below normal
Mean air temperature	17.4 degrees Celsius; 0.2 degree Celsius below normal
Mean daily minimum temperature	15.1 degrees Celsius; 0.3 degree Celsius below normal

Court order sought to close tourist guesthouse

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The operator of a Tsim Sha Tsui tourist guesthouse was today (Thursday) issued a Notice of Intention to apply for a closure order on the premises for violating conditions of his licence.

A spokesman for Home Affairs Department said the Licensing Authority had ascertained that the premises at Block F, 16th floor, Mirador Mansion, 54 Nathan Road, should be closed so that unauthorised building works erected there could be demolished without endangering the occupiers and the public.

A Notice of Intention notifying the operator of the application for a court closure order was posted on a conspicuous part of the premises.

The spokesman said it was the first time the department gave such a notice to a tourist guesthouse to make the premises meet the building and fire safety standards.

He also stressed that action would continue to be stepped up to ensure all guesthouses meet licensing requirements under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance and the building safety standards outlined in the Buildings Ordinance.

It is anticipated that demolition works will commence when the closure order is granted on February 12.

End

Visit permits for ex-China residents in Macau relaxed

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The Immigration Department announced today (Thursday) to further relax the residential requirement for ex-China residents in Macau for the issue of multiple visit permits.

"With effect from January 15, 1996, ex-China residents of Macau who are holders of Macau identity card for two years or longer will be eligible to apply for the two year multiple permits.

"The permits will allow the holders to visit Hong Kong for up to seven days in any calendar month. The fee for the permit is HK\$90," a Immigration Department spokesman said.

"The arrangement is the final phase of our plan to lower the residential requirement for ex-China residents of Macau for the issue of such permits to two years."

However, the spokesman emphasised: "There is no easing of existing system of immigration control and that visitors must leave Hong Kong at the end of their permitted stay."

For enquiries, members of the public may telephone 2824 6111 or use faxline 2877 7711.

End

Philatelic collection set for the Year of the Rat

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The Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) and the World Wide Fund For Nature Hong Kong (WWFHK) today (Thursday) announced the launching of a philatelic collection set to celebrate the Year of the Rat.

The set comprises two editions of first day covers, four postcards and a souvenir pack depicting the Year of the Rat. Distribution will be limited.

The production of the collection set is timed to tie in with the new special stamps of rats to be issued by the Post Office on January 31.

The normal covers and postcards will be on sale from Saturday (January 13) and the special covers and souvenir packs will be available from February 3 at the WWFHK Office, No 1, Tramway Path, Central.

Assistant Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr Frank Lau, praised WWFHK for producing these items. The special first day covers and postcards feature four different rats with information about them.

"They are educational as well as a collector's item," he said.

"Rats are traditionally a symbol of industry and prosperity," said WWFHK Executive Director, Mr David Melville.

"Among those featured in the first day covers and postcards are the familiar pet Golden Hamster and the Key Largo Woodrat, which is endangered, as its habitat is being destroyed," he said.

Enquiries on the collection set can be directed to Mr Jansen Lu of WWFHK on 2526 1011 or by fax 2845 2734.

End

Fresh water cut in Yuen Long and Chai Wan

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Yuen Long and Chai Wan will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Monday (January 15) to 6 am the following day to facilitate watermains work.

In Yuen Long, all premises along Yuen long On Ning Road, Shan Pui River, Castle Peak Road, Tung Lok Street including Yuen Long Estate, Tai Kiu, Sau Fu Street and Fook Tak Street will be affected.

In Chai Wan, the suspension will affect all premises along Tai Man Street, Hong Man Street, Kut Shing Street, Cheung Lee Street, Lee Chung Street, Ning Foo Street, No 220 and all odd number premises at 111-333 Chai Wan Road.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,875	0930	+130
Closing balance in the account	1,965	1000	+130
Change attributable to :		1100	+130
Money market activity	+90	1200	+125
LAF today	NIL	1500	+125
		1600	+90

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 123.2 *+0.0* 11.1.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.52	2 years	2711	5.60	100.31	5.49
1 month	5.49	3 years	3810	6.15	101.39	5.68
3 months	5.45	5 years	5012	6.38	101.46	6.12
6 months	5.43	7 years	7211	6.82	102.98	6.38
12 months	5.40	5 years	M502	7.30	103.98	6.43

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$15,881 million

Closed January 11, 1996

End