



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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## HK needs Court of Final Appeal before 1997

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It would be in the best interests of Hong Kong to stand by the commitment to establish the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) before 1997 on the basis of the 1991 agreement, the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, said tonight (Thursday).

In order to ensure the smooth operation of the new CFA and to allow it to develop its own body of jurisprudence, it must be set up by mid-1996, she added.

That means the CFA Bill have to be enacted by the end of July when this Legco session ends.

Spelling out the reasons for the need to set up the CFA before 1997 at a dinner of the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, Mrs Chan said Hong Kong would have a judicial vacuum for the last few months before June 30, 1997 if the CFA was not set up before 1997.

In that case, new cases will not have time to be considered by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and then for the year or two after that date that it will take the Special Administrative Region Government to enact a bill and then set up the court. Perhaps as long as two to three years in all.

"All this would mean a lack of continuity at the top of the judicial system, that would inevitably undermine confidence among both the Hong Kong public and international investors.

"We are already aware that some potential investors are now taking the unusual step of ensuring that their contracts are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Hong Kong courts.

"This is not a situation that we welcome," she said.

Another reason for setting up the CFA before 1997 is that the Government does not want to deprive litigants of their right to appeal against decisions of the Appeal Court, Mrs Chan explained. Privy Council decisions, almost by definition, produce important points of law that affect the whole of the legal and judicial system in Hong Kong.

She told the gathering of industrialists that a commercial dispute that was not settled could mean additional costs to them.

"No responsible Government should subject litigants to such a predicament," she said.

The CFA Bill was handed to the Chinese Government in May last year. Since then, they have asked 17 questions which have all been answered promptly by the Government.

The Government also sought the views of the legal profession on the draft bill last November, and in the light of their comments made a number of technical amendments, which were handed to the Chinese Government in late January this year.

"I very much hope that the Chinese side will be able to give us a positive response very soon," Mrs Chan said.

"This will be the best demonstration of our resolve to co-operate in ensuring a smooth transition for Hong Kong and will send a reassuring signal to the community," she added.

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Transcript of Chief Secretary's media session

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The following is the transcript of the media session by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, after the presentation ceremony of the Green Project Awards '95 this (Thursday) afternoon:

Question: Given your recent comments about government officials admitting to their mistakes, how satisfied are you with Mr So's reaction to the ombudsman's criticism with regard to the Hong Kong Stadium...

Chief Secretary: Ask me this slightly later because I have not yet seen the report myself. I know that we received a comprehensive report from the Commissioner and I shall of course study this report very carefully. We'll see what lessons can be learned. There may well be a lack of co-ordination, if there is, then I'm sure this report will point to where there is room for improvement. And you can be sure that we will follow up. But in the meantime, of course, the community would very much like the Urban Council and the Government to make sure that we can make optimum use of this splendid sport facility. The Urban Council, I understand, is having a test concert in April. They've installed some new sound equipment which hopefully will meet both the audience's expectation but also satisfy the residents living nearby as regards noise pollution. If this test concert goes as well as expected then I'm sure it will enable the sport facility to be much better used in the future. So we must wait to see how the test concert go. But let me assure you again I'll look at the report personally and I'll, as I said, see what lessons can be learned. I'm sure co-ordination can always be improved.

Question: How do you find yesterday's civil aviation expert group can expedite the plenary for the ...JLG?

Chief Secretary: I think they are still in the discussion stage. Of course, air services agreements, the whole network of the air services agreements is extremely important in terms of maintaining Hong Kong's position as the regional aviation centre. I think this view is fully shared by the Chinese and we very much hope that through expert group meetings and eventually at JLG discussions we can secure Chinese agreement to more ASAs being concluded with our aviation partners.

Question: Is there's no agreement on the Court of Final Appeal ....in the Joint Liaison Group meeting, will the Government..... introduce the bill?

Chief Secretary: Let me state our position. We have an agreement with the Chinese which was reached in 1991 about the establishment of the Court of Final Appeal. Both sides have stated on many occasions their commitment to see this Court of Final Appeal established before 1997. We have already said that in order to go through the necessary procedures in terms of setting up this court, and there are many procedures such as for example, securing a building, fitting out, getting the necessary rules and regulations drawn up including staff etc., etc. This will take about a year. So, the latest we need to set up the court would be mid-1996 at the latest. The first thing obviously is to get the necessary legislation enacted by the Legislative Council. We have a bill which is ready to go before the Legislative Council but we do want to secure Chinese agreement to this bill. The Chinese have had this bill since May last year, so about 10 months. They have raised a number of questions. We've answered all these questions. So we very much hope that the Chinese will feel able to give us a positive response to the draft bill which would then enable us to table the bill in the Legislative Council and hopefully to enact this bill before the end of this current session. But I'll be saying more about the Court of Final Appeal at the speech to the Federation of Hong Kong Industries this evening. Thank you.

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#### Greener and cleaner environment benefits Hong Kong

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, today (Thursday) called on the public to change their environmentally unfriendly habits and practices so as to protect the environment.

"To engender the change of attitudes and habits, we must increase the community's environmental awareness and sense of responsibility," she added.

Speaking at the Green Project Awards 1995 Prize-Presentation Ceremony, Mrs Chan said the Government had published information on environmental matters to help educate the public and to encourage them to take a wider, and more sympathetic interest in the environment.

She noted that Hong Kong, owing to rapid economic growth, faced substantial environmental problems.

To remedy the situation, comprehensive action plans have been taken to provide practical and cost effective long term solutions to the problems.

"We are making substantial investments in environmental infrastructure - a \$21 billion sewage strategy, a \$10 billion solid waste strategy, a \$2 billion special wastes strategy," the Chief Secretary said.

"These plans, and the investments which secure them, are well underway."

Within the environmental programme area, studies are also undertaken to articulate a framework of sustainable development for Hong Kong.

The Waste Reduction Study reviews the existing waste generation and collection patterns, and will identify measures to reduce waste production and increase reuse and recycling.

"The study will help us cut down on wastes and make the best long term use of valuable waste disposal facilities."

Another pre-emptive measure, Mrs Chan pointed out, was the legal requirement for environmental impact assessments of major development projects.

"Such assessments will ensure that the potential environmental consequences of major projects are considered throughout the process of project planning, so that the negative impact caused by the projects on the environment can be minimised," she added.

Meanwhile, many government and non-government organisations are doing excellent work in raising public's environmental concern, for example, setting up green funds to support environmental activities.

Turning to the award scheme, the Chief Secretary said the number of quality green projects entries this year was encouraging, showing that public interest in the environment was growing.

"More green projects will mobilise more people to show concern for the environment and help with the important task of environmental education. In this way green concern will be translated into green practice.

"We will all benefit from a greener and cleaner Hong Kong," she added.

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#### Appointment of Executive Director of the Securities and Futures Commission

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The Financial Secretary has approved the appointment of Mr David White as an Executive Director in charge of the Supervision of Markets Division of the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC), the Secretary for Financial Services, Mr Michael Cartland, said today (Thursday).

Mr White, 48, is an accountant by profession and has had 18 years' of experience in the banking and securities industries.

Prior to his current appointment as Director, Derivatives and Market Development, with the Australian Stock Exchange, he was Director of County Natwest Investment Management in Sydney and London (1986-92), Director of Dominguez Barry Samuel Montagu (now SBC Australia Ltd) (1983-86), and General Manager of Citicorp Australia (1977-83).

Earlier, the Financial Secretary appointed a Selection Panel chaired by the SFC Chairman, Mr Anthony Neoh, to identify a suitable successor to Mr Robert Gilmore, whose contract expires on April 30, 1995.

Other members of the Panel included Mr Roderick Chalmers, a Non-Executive Director of the SFC, Mr Antony Leung of the Citibank group and the Deputy Secretary for Financial Services.

"To secure the best possible candidate for such an important appointment, the Panel appointed an executive recruitment consultant to conduct a global search of potential candidates. In addition, advertisements were placed locally," Mr Cartland said.

The panel unanimously decided that Mr White should be appointed to fill the vacancy. The recommendation was accepted and the appointment approved by the Financial Secretary.

Mr White will report to the SFC on April 18 and will formally assume the post on May 1. His contract will run until June 30, 1997, and may be extended by mutual agreement.

"The appointment, from among the Executive Directors, of a new Deputy Chairman of the SFC is still under consideration and an announcement will be made in the near future," Mr Cartland said.

"I would like to pay tribute to Mr Robert Gilmore, the outgoing Deputy Chairman and Executive Director, for his contributions to the SFC since its inception in 1989. Mr Gilmore's in-depth knowledge of the international securities industry has helped the SFC to develop into a world class regulatory organisation," Mr Cartland added.

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#### Unemployment and underemployment statistics for Nov 1994 - Jan 1995

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The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 1994 - January 1995 was 2.2%, and the underemployment rate was 1.6%, according to the latest labour force statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

The provisional seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period of December 1994 - February 1995 was 2.5%, while the provisional underemployment rate was 1.5%.

The latest figures indicate that the unemployment rate rose, while the underemployment rate remained generally stable.

The rise in the unemployment rate in the three months ending February is likely to be due to more workers changing jobs and looking for alternative employment after the Lunar New Year.

During the period of November 1994 - January 1995, the number of unemployed persons, adjusted for seasonal variations in the proportion of first-time job-seekers in the labour force, was estimated at 66,000, while the number of underemployed persons was estimated at 47,300.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous General Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department.

The survey for November 1994 - January 1995 covered a quarterly sample of some 12,600 households or 42,800 persons, selected scientifically to represent the land-based civilian non-institutional population in Hong Kong.

Relevant data were obtained from the survey by interviewing each individual member aged 15 or over in the households sampled.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the report on the General Household Survey which is published four times a year.

The next report covering the quarter ending December 1994 will be available at the Government Publications Centre by the end of the month at \$24 a copy.

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#### Bus-only lane on trial at Tuen Mun Road

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A bus-only lane is to be introduced at Tuen Mun Road starting on March 25 on a trial basis for three weeks.

Announcing details of the trial scheme today (Thursday), Assistant Commissioner for Transport, Mr Alan Lui, said the scheme was aimed at improving the efficiency and reliability of public transport services.

This will also encourage private car users to switch to public transport to help alleviate congestion on Tuen Mun Road.

Mr Lui said the bus-only lane would be designated in the nearside lane of the Kowloon-bound carriageway of Tuen Mun Road from So Kwun Wat to a point west of Tsuen Wan Road with a total length of 13 kilometres.

"It shall be operational between 6.30 am and 9 am daily except Sundays and public holidays. The bus-only lane will be used by franchised and non-franchised buses, including school buses and other coaches," he said.

He added that the remaining two lanes would be open to all traffic including medium and heavy goods vehicles with the offside lane for overtaking activities.

Outside the operation hours of the bus-only lane, the nearside bus-only lane will be a normal traffic lane along an expressway and all traffic should keep to the left unless overtaking. Medium and heavy goods vehicles and buses shall not drive on the offside lane.

During the operation of the bus-only lane, Kowloon-bound motorists on Tuen Mun Road are not allowed to exit Tuen Mun Road at Siu Lam and Sham Tseng Interchanges. To reach their destinations at Siu Lam and Sham Tseng from Tuen Mun, they should use Castle Peak Road instead.

At the same time, motorists on Castle Peak Road are not allowed to join Tuen Mun Road Kowloon-bound at Siu Lam Interchange and Tuen Mun Road both bounds at Sham Tseng Interchange. They should remain on Castle Peak Road for the rest of their journeys.

With the introduction of the bus-only lane, it is expected that a saving of bus journey time of about 15 minutes will be achieved, benefiting about 60,000 bus passengers in the peak hour. Besides, the reliability and efficiency of bus operation will be improved, resulting in fewer lost bus trips and more passenger capacities.

To tie in with the introduction of the bus-only lane, Kowloon Motor Bus will strengthen external bus services operating along Tuen Mun Road by deploying more buses on these routes. Additional trips, planned at some 50 extra bus departures between 6 am and 9 am, will be operated.

Two new bus routes will also be introduced near Sham Tseng and Sam Shing to operate to Tsuen Wan MTR Station, starting from Saturday (March 18).

Mr Lui urged commuters in Yuen Long, Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan districts to make the best use of public transport which would be enhanced in capacity and efficiency.

It is expected that the queue of general traffic on Tuen Mun Road and Castle Peak Road will be longer after the introduction of the bus-only lane, and some delays in car travel is likely.

To make the best use of available road space, private motorists are advised to consider carrying their friends and relatives in their cars and giving them a lift. This will help reduce traffic volume. Besides, they should also plan their journeys well and travel early.

Mr Lui pointed out that traffic volume on Tuen Mun Road had been increasing and the road was saturated in the morning peak hours. Traffic queues were often observed in the uphill sections. Consequently, bus operation was seriously affected, resulting in substantial lost trips and delay to thousands of bus passengers.

A Government/District Board Working Group was convened in 1992/93 to examine short-term traffic management measures to relieve congestion on this corridor. Its recommendations have been actively pursued by the Government departments concerned. The major proposals implemented include:

- \* enhancement of publicity and education on road discipline;
- \* increases in police patrols and monitoring;
- \* construction of additional lay-bys for breakdown/accident management;
- \* positioning of stand-by breakdown-recovery vehicles on-site;
- \* commencement of the provision of a vehicle-weighing station at Tai Lam to deter overloading; and
- \* improvement of bus and ferry services.

However, despite the efforts made in the above areas, no lasting relief had been achieved and the situation might deteriorate prior to the completion of the Tuen Mun Road widening scheme in late 1996 and the Route 3 Country Park Section in 1998, Mr Lui said.

"In view of the prevailing traffic conditions, there have been repeated suggestions and representations made by resident organisations in the past year pressing for the early introduction of a bus-only lane on Tuen Mun Road to speed up bus journeys in the morning peak period," he said.

The feasibility of bus-only lane on Tuen Mun Road has been studied in depth with the support of consultants. The proposal is considered worth pursuing, under certain conditions, initially on an experimental basis.

The bus-only lane scheme will be closely monitored by the Transport Department and the Police. A joint Scheme Co-ordination Centre made up of concerned departments will be established at Siu Lam to oversee the implementation of the scheme.

In addition, the Tuen Mun District Office has also set up a liaison group comprising Legislative Council Members, District Board Members and other concerned parties to observe the implementation of the trial scheme.

"Two telephone hotlines, Nos 2399 2437 and 2399 2424, will be in operation between March 17 and March 31 to answer public enquiries on the operational details of the bus-only lane," Mr Lui said

The scheme, together with the associated traffic measures, will be reviewed in three weeks' time.

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#### REO receives information on over 1m employees for voter registration

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As at yesterday (March 15), returns from employers covering over 1.03 million employees (representing 35 per cent of the estimated 2.9 million working population) were received by the Registration and Electoral Office (REO).

These returns were made by some 115,000 employers in response to the request by the REO for information on their principal line of business, and the names and identity card numbers of their employees.

Such information is required for the registration of working persons for the nine new functional constituencies in the September Legislative Council elections.

The first phase of the voter registration exercise for the nine new functional constituencies, which started in mid-January, is focused on obtaining employees' information from employers.

In mid-January, the REO sent out requests for information to all employers on the business registration record.

Reminders were sent in late February to those employers who had not responded.

Staff of the Home Affairs Department are also making follow-up visits to business establishments to collect outstanding returns on behalf of the REO.

An REO spokesman said the next phase of the voter registration exercise would be targeted at the working persons themselves.

The REO staff would be matching information provided by the employers with records on the General Electoral Roll (GER).

Notifications would be sent to employees whose particulars have been supplied by the employers and who are registered electors on the GER to invite them to be registered under one of the nine new functional constituencies in accordance with the principal line of business of their employers.

These employees should receive a notification before April 15 informing them of the particular functional constituency to which they belong.

To supplement these efforts, there will be intensive general publicity through the mass media and promotional activities to remind working persons to register as electors in the new functional constituencies.

Registration forms would be available from over 1,500 convenient outlets such as banks and post offices.

The spokesman said if employees did not receive a notification by April 15, they should complete a registration form and send it to the REO before June 1 to ensure that they would be registered in time for the September LegCo elections.

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#### More occasional child care places under planning

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The Social Welfare Department (SWD) is planning to provide 225 additional occasional child care places in 1995/96 to cope with increasing demand for the service.

Members of the public who need to leave their children alone at home for whatever reason at any time of the day are advised to make full use of the occasional child care service, a spokesman for the department said today (Thursday).

"Children should under no circumstances be left unattended at home, even for a short while," the spokesman said.

At present, there are 135 child care centres providing a total of 405 occasional child care places to assist needy parents to temporarily look after their children.

Child care centres offer temporary care for children aged under six at two-hour, half-day (four hours) or whole-day basis. The fee for a two-hour session is \$13.

Members of the public who are interested in the service may call the SWD's hotline 2343 2255 or the Child Care Centre Advisory Inspectorate at 2836 3114.

"Parents having any child care problems can seek help from the department's various family services centres throughout the territory," the spokesman added.

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#### Primary schools invited to join Extensive Reading Scheme

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Primary schools wishing to join the phase 1 of the Extensive Reading Scheme in English for Primary 5 and 6 pupils this September are reminded to submit their applications before next Wednesday (March 22).

An Education Department spokesman said today (Thursday): "The aims of the Scheme are to help upper primary pupils develop a good habit of reading in English and to improve their English proficiency through reading quality English books and incorporating extensive reading into the curriculum.

"In the first year of implementation in a school, only primary 5 students will take part in the scheme. They will start reading at a level appropriate to their reading ability and they are expected to work their way through the reading levels as they move up to primary 6.

"In the second year of implementation, the class will share the resource with a new primary 5 class," the spokesman said.

Schools participating in the Scheme will receive a complete resource package including one set of 300 books graded into six reading levels as well as reading and teaching aids.

Specialist support will be offered to schools to help teachers implement the Scheme. Seminars and induction courses will also be held before the implementation of the Scheme.

The spokesman said about 35 schools would be selected to join the Scheme.

Schools interested in participating in the scheme are requested to send the reply slip to the Extensive Reading Scheme Team, English Section, Advisory Inspectorate, c/o Bonham Campus, Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2 Hospital Road, Hong Kong before March 22.

For further enquiries, please contact the Extensive Reading Scheme Team, English Section, Advisory Inspectorate at 2803 2406.

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**New requirement for PLB driving test**

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A person applying for a Private/Public light bus (PLB)(Vehicle class 04/05) driving test needs to have a PLB learner driving licence as from April 1 this year.

The applicant must also take his driving training from a licensed PLB driving instructor.

A spokesman for the Transport Department said today (Thursday) that the new requirement was in fact the second step of regularising light bus driving instruction, following the issue of PLB driving instructors' licences last year.

He said during the training session, a "L" plate must be displayed at the front and rear of the training vehicle as stipulated in regulation 30(3b) of the Road Traffic (Driving Licence) Regulation, Cap. 374.

"This new requirement is in line with the application for driving test for other types of vehicles," he added.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,354	0930	+1,268
Closing balance in the account	1,567	1000	+1,258
Change attributable to :		1100	+1,248
Money market activity	+1,251	1200	+1,251
LAF today	-1,038	1500	+1,251
		1600	+1,251

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.2 \*-0.3\* 16.3.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills

EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds

Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.94	14 months	2605	6.35	100.07	6.38
1 month	5.17	23 months	2702	7.50	101.50	6.77
3 months	5.61	28 months	3707	6.95	100.29	6.93
6 months	5.92	34 months	3801	8.00	102.40	7.18
12 months	6.24	57 months	5912	8.15	102.52	7.65

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$15,959 million

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