



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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## Hong Kong wants civil servants to straddle 1997

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, this (Sunday) morning said Hong Kong wanted its civil servants to go on after 1997 working in as good an environment as they had now and wanted as many civil servants to transfer through sovereignty in 1997.

Responding to media questions after officiating at the opening of the Community Chest Island Walk, about Director Lu Ping's remarks about the transfer of files of senior civil servants, Mr Patten: "We want a smooth transition. That means that we all have to be very careful in what we say. Reinforce the civil service morale rather than the reverse."

The Governor said Hong Kong recognised that there was a relationship between the transfer of sovereignty and the transfer of assets.

"But the specific question here is what personal information about civil servants should be sent to Peking and we've already provided a huge amount of information on civil servants," Mr Patten said.

"We've provided general information about the civil service regulations and the civil service structure and we've provided specific information about the biographical details of civil servants, about salary levels and so on.

"Now, what more does anyone want and why should people be talking about sending to Peking information which we wouldn't dream of sending to London and which London wouldn't dream of asking for.

"I think that people should be specific about what additional information they have."

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Transcript of Governor's media session

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The following is a transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after officiating at the opening of the Community Chest Island Walk this (Sunday) morning:-

Question: British newspapers said that the Chinese and the British side had a secret deal to improve the Sino-British relationship. Is it true?

Governor: I don't know anything more than the newspapers have reported about that and, obviously, it's a matter for the British Trade Commissioner here and for the British Embassy in Peking but it is not a very surprising story. There are a huge number of exports from Britain to China just as there're a lot of exports from China to Britain and Britain is the largest European investor in China. A good deal of British investment in China is guaranteed by a form of insurance called export credits and it's not very surprising that this particular understanding is backed by export credits. It's not actually cash. It's, as I say, a sort of insurance policy so I don't think it's a particularly exceptional thing, just an indication of the trade relationship between Britain and China which continues.

Question: Lu Ping said any transfer of senior civil servants should be made directly to the Chinese Government, not the SAR...

Governor: Well, I think we want to distinguish between the real issue here and what seems to become a rather notional, theoretical issue. But nobody is arguing that there isn't a relationship between the transfer of sovereignty and the transfer of assets. Of course, there is. We all recognise that but the specific question here is what personal information about civil servants should be sent to Peking and we've already provided a huge amount of information on civil servants. We've provided general information about the civil service regulations and the civil service structure and we've provided specific information about the biographical details of civil servants, about salary levels and so on. Now, what more does anyone want and why should people be talking about sending to Peking information which we wouldn't dream of sending to London and which London wouldn't dream of asking for. I think that people should be specific about what additional information they have. There is one other thing I would say. I do think and I say this in the most moderate way, I do think people should be rather careful about the consequences of what they say. Last week, the PWC was making remarks about the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. Well, you couldn't have chosen a much worse week for doing that and I think you'd only have to look at the newspapers to see some of the assumptions that people were drawing about those remarks. It's not helpful nor is it helpful to make remarks which make some civil servants worry about the future. We want civil servants to go on after 1997 working in as good an environment as they have now. We want as many civil servants to transfer through sovereignty in 1997. We want a smooth transition. That means that we all have to be very careful of what we say, reinforce the civil service morale rather than the reverse.

Question: It seems that the local senior officers association supports sending files to Beijing.... ?

Governor: I think that you would find it very difficult to find civil servants who are in favour of giving more than we've provided already. But, let's be absolutely clear what is required and I'd like to be clear as to how more than we've provided would be good for the civil service in Hong Kong. Our only concern, our only interest, is the long-term interest of Hong Kong and the long-term interest for the civil service and I hope more people will show any good concern about those matters. Thanks.

End/Sunday, January 15, 1995

Government response to Law Society's decision

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The Government is glad that members of the Law Society have confirmed their support for the draft Court of Final Appeal (CFA) Bill at their Extraordinary General Meeting, the Director of Administration, Mr Richard Hoare, said today (Sunday).

"We now look forward to receiving the Law Society's formal response and comments on the Bill as soon as possible. We will give these comments careful consideration."

Mr Hoare reaffirmed that the Government still aimed to introduce the Bill into LegCo as early as it could in 1995, but noted that precisely when this would be done would depend on the progress of discussions with the Chinese side.

"The draft CFA Bill was handed to the Chinese side last May," Mr Hoare said.

"So far the Chinese side have asked 13 quite straightforward questions, which we answered quickly. We have repeatedly explained the tight timetable to them, and hope to receive their response soon."

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Electronic postage label to bear pig design

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The label paper and machine die plate impression of the electronic postage label (Frama label) vending machine at the General Post Office and Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office will be changed from the dog design to the pig design on February 15, the Postmaster General, Mr Mike Pagliari, announced.

No official first day covers will be issued in connection with this change.

However, for the convenience of customers, an advance order service for pre-packaged sets of Frama labels bearing machine codes '01' (General Post Office) and '02' (Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office) will be available as follows:

- \* from 10 cents to \$2.30;
- \* from \$2.40 to \$5; and
- \* the most common postage rates of 10 cents, \$1, \$1.20, \$1.90, \$2, \$2.40 and \$5.

Advance orders will be accepted at any post office, except the Airport Post Office, from January 18 to 28.

Customers may collect the labels on February 15 from the post office where they placed their orders.

A limited quantity of pre-packaged Frama labels, bearing the most common postage (10 cents, \$1, \$1.20, \$1.90, \$2, \$2.40 and \$5), will be made available for sale on February 15 at the following seven philatelic offices:

- \* Beaconsfield House Post Office
- \* General Post Office
- \* Granville Road Post Office
- \* Peak Post Office
- \* Sha Tin Central Post Office
- \* Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office
- \* Tsuen Wan Post Office

A hand-back service will be provided at all post offices, except the Airport Post Office, on February 15 for privately-made covers bearing the "First Day" indication.

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Australia and US Year of Pig stamp products on sale in HK

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Stamp products issued by Australia Post and the United States Postal Service to celebrate the Lunar New Year of the Pig will be put on sale at seven philatelic offices from January 19.

The offices are at Beaconsfield House Post Office, General Post Office, Granville Road Post Office, Peak Post Office, Sha Tin Central Post Office, Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office and Tsuen Wan Post Office.

The stamp products include Year of the Pig stamps issued by the United States Postal Service and the Year of the Pig miniature sheet and serviced first day cover issued by Australia Post for Christmas Island.

This is the second release of Lunar New Year stamps by Australia Post and the third release by the United States Postal Service, the Postmaster General, Mr Mike Pagliari, said.

The Australia Post (Christmas Island) miniature sheet comprises two stamps with face values of Aus 45 cents and 85 cents.

The serviced first day cover is affixed with a miniature sheet bearing a postmark of the first day of issue.

The United States Year of the Pig stamp has a face value of US 29 cents and will only be available in sheets of 20 stamps.

The selling prices in Hong Kong currency are:

- \* Christmas Island miniature sheet - HK\$8
- \* Christmas Island serviced first day cover - HK\$9.50
- \* United States Year of the Pig stamps - HK\$45.50  
(sheet of 20)

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### Employer fined for sacking pregnant employee

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The Labour Department today (Sunday) reminded employers not to terminate the employment of a female employee after she had given notice of her intention to take maternity leave.

Siu Chung Garments Limited in Tsuen Wan was recently fined \$5,000 in the Tsuen Wan Magistracy for sacking a pregnant employee who had already notified her employer of her intention to take maternity leave.

"Under the Employment Ordinance, a female worker is protected from termination of her employment from the date on which she gives notice of her intention to take maternity leave until the date on which she is due to return to work, if she has been employed for not less than 12 weeks," a Labour Department spokesman said.

"A female employee who has worked for the same employer under a continuous contract for not less than 26 weeks is entitled to maternity leave.

"She is also entitled to maternity leave pay if she has worked continuously for the same employer for not less than 40 weeks before the expected date of her commencement of maternity leave and if she has not more than two surviving children," he added.

Failure to comply with these provisions is liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000.

To help pregnant workers understand their rights, copies of a leaflet on maternity protection provisions can be obtained at all the offices of Labour Relations Service, all public hospitals as well as maternal and child care health centres.

The leaflet contains a standard form of notice specifying the expected date of confinement and the commencement date of maternity leave. There is also a declaration form for declaring the number of surviving children.

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"Clean and Green" jingle and slogan design competitions

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Country park lovers and members of the community with innovative ideas are invited to join two prize-carrying competitions now being held to mark this year's "Clean and Green" Scheme.

They are welcome to join either or both of the competitions, the jingle design contest and the slogan creation contest, which form part of the many activities for this year's scheme.

An Agriculture and Fisheries Department's (AFD) spokesman said the main objective of these contests was to arouse participants' awareness on the importance of keeping the country parks clean and green.

On the jingle design contest, the spokesman pointed out that it could be entered in individuals or groups.

"Each entrant should submit a one-minute recording tape for a jingle promoting the clean and green message in country parks. The jingle can be either in Cantonese or English, and must be interesting," he said.

The overall winner of this contest will be awarded with a \$5,000 cash prize and a trophy.

Turning to the slogan creation competition, he said it would be open to individual entrants only. Each entry should comprise a 20-word or less slogan on keeping country parks clean.

The overall champion of this competition will get a \$2,000 cash prize plus a trophy.

The champions and other winners of these two competitions will also be invited to join a fun day at a country park later in the year.

The deadline for the competitions is March 31, 1995.

All entries should be submitted to AFD's Conservation Education Unit at Room 321, Canton Road Government Offices, 393 Canton Road, Kowloon.

Enquiries on the competitions can also be directed to the Unit on tel 2733 2121.

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### Pupils show their green thumbs

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About 400 pots of vegetables - including carrots, lettuces, cauliflowers, tomatoes and squashes - carefully nurtured by primary school pupils will be on display for three days from Tuesday (January 17).

A prize-giving ceremony and exhibition for the 1994-95 Primary School Children Vegetable Growing (in pots) Competition will be held at the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre, 4 Pak Fuk Road, North Point, at 2.30 pm on Tuesday.

This year, 110 primary schools took part in the competition.

The competition is jointly organised by the Education Department and the Agriculture and Fisheries Department and is sponsored by Choi Hing Lee Seed Company Limited.

The growing of vegetables is an educational activity, not only providing opportunities for children to study the growing of plants through observation and practice, but also awakening their concern for the beautifying of their environment.

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Attention News Editors:

You are invited to send representatives to cover the prize-giving ceremony, to be officiated by agricultural officer Mr Edward Lok at the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre, 4 Pak Fuk Road, North Point, Hong Kong, at 2.30 pm on Tuesday (January 17).

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### Spring scrolls to spread child care message

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The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has produced five sets of spring scrolls, or 'Fai Chuns', appealing to members of the public to make full use of occasional child care service.

Free copies of the spring scrolls, totalling 250,000, will be available for collection from all district offices of the SWD from Thursday (January 19).

"Children should under no circumstances be left alone at home, even for a short while," a spokesman for the department said today (Sunday).

"At present, there are 135 child care centres offering occasional child care service to families who might otherwise leave their children unattended at home," he said.

Child care centres offer temporary care for children aged under six at two-hour, half-day 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 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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