



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Informal Get Together between Senior Hong Kong Civil Servants
and Officials of the Chinese Side

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Following consultation with the Xinhua News Agency (Hong Kong Branch), we are pleased to announce that the fifth informal get together between senior Hong Kong civil servants and officials of the Chinese side will take place on January 18, 1996 at the Voting Members' Box, Happy Valley Racecourse starting at 10.30 am. It will end after lunch.

Participating officers will be:

Mr Haider Barma
Secretary for Transport

Mr Nicholas Ng
Secretary for Constitutional Affairs

Mrs Lily Yam
Commissioner for Transport

Mr Richard Hoare
Director of Administration

Mr Leung Kwok-sun
Director of Highways

They will be accompanied by Mr Cletus Lau, Director of General Grades (Civil Service Branch) and Mr Warner Cheuk, Principal Assistant Secretary for the Civil Service.

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Visual arts representative selection details worked out

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The Recreation and Culture Branch held a meeting yesterday (Friday) with some 20 visual arts organisations to discuss how to select a representative for the visual arts sector for nomination for consideration by the Governor, at his discretion, for appointment as a member of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

It was decided at the meeting to form a new, neutral, umbrella organisation named the "Hong Kong Visual Arts Nomination Conference", to appoint PA Professional Consultants Ltd as the organiser and election agent and to hold the election on February 11, 1996.

Details of election procedures such as the registration of voters and the nomination of candidates were also discussed at the meeting.

Membership/voters registration forms, candidate nomination registration forms and the election timetable were distributed to the participants. The branch will shortly send the same materials to those visual arts organisations who have previously expressed interest in the Hong Kong Arts Development Council nomination process but who did not attend the meeting.

All organisations wishing to register as voters and/or candidates should approach Miss Kathy Chan or Miss Anne Moy of PA Professional Consultants Ltd on 2527 7800.

Any organisations wishing to obtain copies of the briefing materials distributed at the meeting are requested to call Mr Ben Wong of the Recreation and Culture Branch on 2594 5622.

End

Salt water cut in Tai Po

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Flushing water supply to some premises in Tai Po Industrial Estate will be temporarily suspended from 10 pm on Tuesday (January 16) to 10 am on Thursday (January 18) for the checking of the flushing water supply system.

The suspension will affect all premises in Dai Fat Street, Dai Fu Street, Dai Shui Street, Dai Kwai Street, Dai King Street, Dai Wang street, Dai Cheong Street, Dai Shing Street, Dai Li Street and Dai Hei Street.

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	2,047	09:30	Nil
Closing Balance in the account	1,787	10:00	Nil
Change Attributable to:		11:00	Nil
Money Market Activity	Nil	11:30	Nil
Laf Today	-260		

Laf Rate 4.25% Bid/6.25% Offer TWI 123.3 *+0.0* 13.1.96

End

The Governor's "Letter to Hong Kong"

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Following is the full text of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's broadcast on RTHK's "Letter to Hong Kong" today (Sunday):

People keep on saying that 1996 is a year of decision for Hong Kong. Well, in some ways that's not a particularly illuminating description. After all, most years are ones full of decision for a community which, like Hong Kong, lives on one of the high-wires of history. Name almost any year - 1984, 1989, 1994, to list three at random - and they seem pretty important ones for Hong Kong. And Hong Kongers - as we think of ourselves - make the tough decisions and get on with life, subject always to the microscopic scrutiny of the media, home and away.

If there is something special about the decisions in 1996, it is quite simply that they are going to be about 1997 - whether you think that's going to be good for you or bad - and they're more urgent for the obvious reason that, as that clock in Tiananmen Square reminds us, 1996 happens to be rather close to 1997.

Let me say one or two other things about these decisions. The most important is whether to stay in Hong Kong or to go. But that is not a decision available to everyone. There are about half-a-million people here - it's what's called a "guesstimate" but it seems pretty near the mark - who have a foreign passport and can choose to leave at the drop of a clanger by a clumsy official. Yet for most people that option simply doesn't exist. For them, there's no choice. So it's not surprising that they have a particular passion for wanting the transition to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 to be successful. Hong Kong is home for them today. And it will be home in the future.

It's not unfair to point out that quite a lot of those who are most critical of the government's efforts to safeguard the way of life of Hong Kong by speaking up for it, even at the risk of annoying Chinese officials, have themselves the option of departing with another passport to a company or to assets domiciled abroad if things don't work out here. I find it hard to understand their argument that it's fine to want the option of living in a free society for oneself, but somehow wrong to stand up for everyone's right to go on living in a free society in Hong Kong.

My aim has been, is and will remain absolutely clear. It seems difficult to get some people to understand that this is the Hong Kong Government's and the British Government's consistent - repeat, consistent - position. We will continue arguing, working, standing up for the promises that were made to the people of Hong Kong in 1984 when the Joint Declaration was signed. The assurance that people can go on running their own domestic affairs in a free and open society is the best way of keeping at home those with a passport option to depart - and they would be an awful and desperately sad loss - as well as the best way of giving peace of mind and confidence to all those who are going to stay here come what may.

How can we best meet those aims? First of all, not by keeping quiet. There was an extraordinary suggestion the other day that the leadership role in Hong Kong for the next 500 plus days should consist of taking a Trappist vow of silence. No one, no one, should keep silent. This is a time, if ever there was one, for speaking up and saying what one wants to happen, and what one expects to happen, to preserve Hong Kong. There has been and continues to be an overwhelming case for all of us to make our voices heard, courteously but firmly. We don't need to respond to propaganda barbs or bluster. But if we don't speak up for what we believe in, no one else will do it for us. That goes for LegCo members, for leaders of business and the professions, for Preparatory Committee members, for - frankly - all of us.

One of the things which occasionally encourages a sense of drift or personal helplessness is the tendency to talk about Hong Kong, to comment on it, in the form of interchangeable and thuddingly dim-witted cliches. For example, for at least 10 years, critics have oscillated between claiming on the one hand that the government is washed up, side-lined, lame in one webbed foot, irrelevant. On the other hand - sometimes indeed at the same time - the identical critics ask - what are you going to do to solve this particular problem? What promises can you make that you'll deal with that hypothetical horror? What guarantee can you give that some nameless disaster won't be visited upon the territory at some indefinite moment down the road?

So what is the government's position? It's neither retired hurt, nor capable of miracles and of rewriting history. This government will go on governing effectively and decisively until the time comes to hand over to its successor. That is the best way it can help its successor. Any attempt to make that task of good administration more difficult will hurt Hong Kong, and will hurt the SAR Government to come, far more than it would hurt me and my colleagues.

We can't change what is pre-ordained for the future, but we can and will do everything we can to ensure that Hong Kong's future arrives as advertised. No one is worried about whether to use their foreign passport, no one is worried about life without a foreign passport, because of any decision likely to be taken by this government. The worries are about the future, and that is what we need to focus attention on in a constructive and helpful way, encouraging Chinese officials and China's rather narrow circle of advisers in Hong Kong not to drop rocks on all our toes, and to build with us a better and more prosperous future.

That's what the British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, was working for in Hong Kong and Peking over the last week.

I very much welcome, as I'm sure you do, the important progress made during Mr Rifkind's visit. Britain and China have now reached a written understanding on the arrangements for issuing SAR passports. This was immediately welcomed by a number of other countries and paves the way for foreign immigration authorities to consider their attitude towards the new passport. We hope that the associated question of right of abode can now be quickly settled, and in this connection the experts have had an excellent boost to their work from Vice Premier Qian Qichen's clear assurance to Mr Rifkind that all those who are now permanent residents in Hong Kong would remain so after 1997. The two Foreign Ministers also confirmed agreement to two more Air Service Agreements, bringing the total to 14. And they cleared the political air for a resolution to the problem of Container Terminal Nine, on which we hope that the companies involved can now quickly reach agreement. All of this is good news for Hong Kong.

That makes two successful meetings now between Mr Rifkind and senior Chinese leaders. But there's still a lot of work to do, still much reassurance required, and not much time left. Just over 500 days for Britain, but the same is true for China. And for Hong Kong? Well, we don't count the days, we just think of our future.

I'm sure it would be a great help to him, to us and to China, if Mr Qian Qichen as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee were able to come here and see things for himself. He would get a warm and civilised welcome. A visit from him would, I am sure, be a big boost to confidence.

1995 was a mixed year. Like the curate's egg, good in parts. We had some agreements - for example on the airport and its financing and the Court of Final Appeal - which boosted confidence. But we had some shocks which undermined it, too - on human rights, and on whether Hong Kong should be left alone to run its own affairs and its own welfare services, for instance.

I hope we can put all that behind us, and enjoy a shock-free year, in which our colleagues in China show that they understand Hong Kong, trust Hong Kong, and recognise that there should be a place for everyone in Hong Kong to play a part in its continuing success story, this year, next year, for ever. Recognising that simple fact would probably be the best confidence boost of all.

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Entries to awards for industry competition invited

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The Director-General of Industry, Mrs Regina Ip, today (Sunday) urged manufacturers to enter into the 1996 competition of the Hong Kong Awards for Industry - Hong Kong's highest and most prestigious award to industry.

Established in 1989 and expanded over the years, the awards scheme aims at encouraging and recognising excellence in different aspects of industrial performance.

"A flourishing industrial sector is crucial to the continued success of Hong Kong. The fact that companies are more willing to come forward and participate in the competition indicates increasing confidence of our manufacturers in their own performance.

"It also indicates that our manufacturers are becoming more quality and productivity oriented. Such developments are helping Hong Kong move into higher value-added and more technology-intensive production," Mrs Ip said.

"In line with the established practice, the Governor will present the awards at the presentation ceremony scheduled for September," she added.

The awards scheme covers six categories, each runs by a different organisation.

The Consumer Product Design Award category, organised by the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, encourages innovative design in consumer products.

The Machinery and Equipment Design Award category, administered by the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, encourages upgrading in the design and production of machinery and equipment.

The Productivity Award category, run by the Hong Kong Productivity Council, promotes endeavours to achieve improved productivity.

The Quality Award category, organised by the Industry Department, recognises quality achievements in manufacturing operations.

The Environmental Performance Award category, run by the Private Sector Committee on the Environment, promotes a wider appreciation of the importance of environmental protection among Hong Kong companies.

The Export Marketing Award category, organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, recognises the importance of export marketing strategies, methods and techniques in expanding and opening markets abroad.

Entries are invited every year and the best entry in each award category will be presented with the Hong Kong Award for Industry.

Organisers of the various categories may also give their own awards in each award category or confer certificates of merit on deserving entries.

The closing date for entries this year is April 15. The presentation ceremony will be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on September 23.

"In recognition of the on-going restructuring of Hong Kong's manufacturing sector, we have slightly modified the criteria in the entry requirements this year in the Quality and Machinery and Equipment Design categories to better reflect the current industrial environment.

"The modification caters for entries from manufacturers based and operating in Hong Kong but with part of their production operation relocated offshore," Mrs Ip said.

Entries for the Quality Award will be evaluated on two main criteria.

The first is the quality of the company's products, in terms of fitness for purpose, consistency in performance, packaging/appearance, environmental protection aspects, value for money and safety.

The second is the company's quality culture and the extent to which a company's quality management system is applied to design, materials sourcing, production and testing; and how far it eliminates delays and rejections during the manufacturing process and consumer complaints afterwards.

Entry forms and brochures on the Quality Award are obtainable from the Quality Services Division of the Industry Department or by calling 2829 4875.

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Carnival enhances teenagers' awareness of drug pitfalls

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Although the problem of teenage drug abuse in Wong Tai Sin District was not very serious when compared with other areas, the issue should not be taken lightly due to its long-term effect on the younger generation.

The Wong Tai Sin District Officer, Mr Richard Luk, said today (Sunday).

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Wong Tai Sin District Anti-Narcotics Carnival, Mr Luk noted that the problem was worsening in recent years while drug abusers started taking drugs at a younger age.

The range of drugs being abused also expanded from hard drugs such as heroin to cough medicine, tranquillisers, and even chemicals like gaseous fuels and thinners, he added.

"The problem of drug abuse among young people is one of the Government's main concerns.

"The first Drug Summit was held last year to set out a comprehensive work plan and to co-ordinate departmental and local efforts to combat the drug problem. Beat drugs activities are launched at community levels all over the territory while periodic reports are published," he said.

According to some research reports, Mr Luk added, youngsters made an attempt to take psychotropic and other drugs out of curiosity, peer group pressure and ignorance of the effect of drugs as well as a lack of parental guidance.

"Today's carnival, organised by the Wong Tai Sin District Fight Crime Committee, is aimed at heightening the public's awareness of the lethal effects of drugs, signs of children taking drugs and ways to tackle the problem correctly," he said.

Mr Luk also called on everyone to cherish one's life and say "no" to drugs.

The carnival was jointly organised by the Action Committee Against Narcotics, the Urban Council and the Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited with assistance from the Wong Tai Sin District Office and sponsorship from the Wong Tai Sin District Board. The programme included exhibitions, quizzes, games and various performances.

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Students show winning potted vegetables

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More than 200 pots of vegetables - comprising Chinese radish, Chinese white cabbage, broccoli, snap pea and squash - carefully planted by primary school students since last September will be on display at the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre for three days from Tuesday (January 16).

The pots have been selected from the entries of 84 primary schools which took part in the 1995-96 Primary School Children Vegetables Growing (in pots) Competition.

A prize-giving and exhibition opening ceremony for the competition will be held at the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre, 4 Pak Fuk Road, North Point at 2.30 pm on Tuesday.

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 promoting awareness in school children of the need to care for plants to ameliorate the environment.

The competition is organised by the Education Department in co-operation with the Agriculture and Fisheries Department and sponsored by Choi Hing Lee Seed Company.

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Deadline for nomination for drugs education courses

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Primary school heads are reminded that nomination for teachers to attend courses on drug education will close on Saturday (January 20).

Completed nomination forms should reach the Education Department on or before the closing date.

The courses, run by the Biological Sciences Section of the Education Department, aim at enhancing teachers' knowledge on the problem of substance abuse and its effects on health as well as equipping teachers with skills for helping students with such a habit.

The two one-day courses for primary school teachers to be held on February 8 and 9, consist of three talks given by experts in the field and a workshop on teaching drug education in primary schools.

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Fresh water cut in Mong Kok

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Mong Kok will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (January 17) to 6 am the following day to facilitate the testing of watermains.

All premises along Argyle Street, Yim Po Fong Street, Waterloo Road and Soares Avenue including Victory Avenue, Peace Avenue and Liberty Avenue will be affected.

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