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Transcript of Governor's media session
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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after visiting the Yau Tsim Mong District this (Thursday) afternoon:

Governor: I am sorry to keep you waiting. I am delighted to have been able to make my third official visit to Yau Tsim Mong District today. I have been very happy to see some of the work that is being done in the district and to have an opportunity of an exchange of views with the Chairman of the District Board and with Members of the District Board.

I will be continuing my round of district visits from now through until 30 June next year and hope to get through all the districts for a third time and perhaps embark on a fourth round with some districts.

Question: CT9 - the JLG has reached agreement on CT9, what do you think about that?

Governor: I think, like everybody else in Hong Kong, I breathe a huge sigh of relief. I think the agreement which has been reached is in everyone's interests. It is particularly in the interests of Hong Kong, of the development of our port, the creation of jobs and the strengthening of our economy.

Four years ago we set out with the objective of developing our port, increasing its capacity while introducing a new competitor into the delivery of services. Well, we've finished up four years later, after I don't know how many meetings, by achieving that objective. So our objective of developing the port and introducing, as it were a new player into the enterprise, has been achieved.

I am sorry that it has taken four years. I think many people have a view about why it has taken so long. But at last we have got the objective that we should all want and I think that each of the firms involved, each of the consortiums, the port itself and the whole community are the winners.

Question: Do you think it is a political decision because Jardines has been ruled out being one of the developers of CT9?

Governor: No, what has happened is that the allocation of terminals has been rearranged and Jardines is part of a consortium which will be managing another of the terminals, rather ahead of the position which would have been the case if they had been involved with CT9. So I think if anybody thought there was any political gain to be made in this they must be wondering about the result.

Question: Mr Patten, the Senior British Trade Commissioner, Francis Cornish, has called for restraint relating to the Diaoyu Islands protests and the anti-Japanese sentiments that we saw yesterday. Where do you stand on that and are you concerned about the level of protests?

Governor: This is a free society and in a free society people are of course able to express their views, within the law. We know that people in Hong Kong feel very strongly about this issue. We know that from the numbers, for example, who have been involved in demonstrations. But we also know that people in Hong Kong want to see these views, however strongly they are felt, expressed in a calm and rational way. And I think that we can say that despite one or two unfortunate minor incidents, that has happened so far.

We are a tolerant community and a moderate community and I think that an indication of that tolerance and moderation is that even when you feel passionately strongly about something, you respect other people's rights, you respect other people's opinions and you don't go outside the law. So I very much hope that people will continue, when they feel strongly about issues, to express their views as moderately as possible.

Question: Governor, don't you think it is about time the JLG discusses matters regarding the transferral of government properties?

Governor: Well, the JLG have discussed the transfer of government properties on a number of occasions. I am not quite sure what the difficulty is. I am not going to set off on 30 June at midnight next year carrying the Central Government Offices under my arm, I am not going to be setting off with 12 gross of the Government's elastic bands in my pocket. The assets that are left for the SAR Government will be the assets which have been owned by the present Hong Kong Government and of course those assets will include the huge fiscal reserves which should, I would guess, by the middle of next year, total altogether about 150 billion.

Question: Mr Governor, Exco Member, Vincent Cheng has already confirmed that himself and Mr Raymond Ch'ien have been already nominated to the Selection Committee. So do you know that before and please comment?

Governor: Yes, I did of course know it before because they discussed it with me, and I have talked to a number of other Exco Members about it. And just as I took a relaxed view about membership of the Preparatory Committee, so I do the same about membership of the Selection Committee. I don't think that there is any inherent conflict of interest but obviously it is up to individual members to work out from time to time whether they think there is a conflict of interest.

Mr C H Tung, for some time, was on both the Executive Council and on the Preparatory Committee and then after a time decided that he could not manage to work on both bodies and I respected that opinion.

Everybody knows that there is not any change in the Government's position on the fundamental issues. The fundamental issues for the next few months are that we are delighted to work with a Chief Executive(Designate); and the other position is that we certainly won't change our view that the present Legislative Council should be able to complete its four year term and that we won't help or co-operate in any way with a Provisional Legislature which we think would be extremely bad for Hong Kong. Now that is our position and it is not going to change.

If I can just add one other thing about Dr Ch'ien and Mr Cheng. They are both outstanding servants of the community. As well as having distinguished commercial records themselves, they work in a number of ways to help this community. You only have to look at the number of bodies and boards that they have served on or chaired over the years. They are both men of very considerable integrity. I think that I will be fortunate to go on having them as colleagues on the Executive Council and if they are not only nominated for but chosen for the Selection Committee, I am sure that they will give equally distinguished service on the Selection Committee. So I repeat, Hong Kong is very fortunate that it has people like Dr Ch'ien and Mr Cheng who give so much service to the community.

Question: What will be in your last policy speech in October?

Governor: Ha, ha, ha. Oh, I'll tell you now! I'll tell you straight away. All you've got to do --

Question: Can you foreshadow anything?

Governor: Well, let me say a word or two about that. It won't be the same as all my previous policy addresses, so I think that you should be looking for something different. And why won't it be the same? Not because government is closing down for the winter and the spring of 1997. We have still got a lot of work to do, completing, for example, the five-year programme that I put in hand in the autumn of 1992. But it will be different because this is my last year as Governor, my last year responsible for the administration of Hong Kong, and I obviously will look forward to hearing my successor, the Chief Executive (Designate)'s views on the development of policy in Hong Kong after 1997.

It wouldn't be right for me to say exactly what the Government is going to do in the next few years but I will want to sketch out in broad terms what I think our objectives should be. I will want to set out how we have performed over the last few years and what still remains to be done in order to complete our agenda. And, of course, I will want to speak about the values which have made Hong Kong so successful and which will, I hope, keep Hong Kong just as successful, more successful, in the future. It will be a shorter speech than last year's but I hope that you won't find it uninteresting. Thank you very much.

End

Rationalisation of container terminal berths endorsed

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The Joint Liaison Group today's endorsement of the agreement reached by the commercial parties to Container Terminal 9 (CT9) on the way forward on rationalisation of berths at the Kwai Chung port was welcomed by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang.

He said the Government's objectives to enlarge the capacity if the container port and to introduce more competition had been achieved.

"This agreement will enhance the capacity of the terminal, while reducing the negative environmental impact.

"It will also introduce a new major operator into our container port in the interest of competition," he said, referring to Asia Container Terminals (ACT) Limited, previously known as Tsing Yi Consortium Ltd.

Mr Tsang hoped that construction work could start on the CT9 project by the end of the year.

"Resolution of the matter has been complex. The successful conclusion is the culmination of a great deal of hard work by all parties concerned, by both sides of the Joint Liaison Group and by the direct parties to the grant," Mr Tsang said.

The agreement provides for ACT to exchange its share in the CT9 development for the two existing berths in CT8 owned by Modern Terminals Ltd (MTL) and for CT9 itself to be shared between MTL and Hong Kong International Terminals Ltd (HIT).

Additional adjacent feeder berthing would be provided for both MTL and HIT. This would facilitate shipping access and direct delivery of cargo to the terminals by feeder vessels instead of by lorries through the increasingly congested roads.

The southern feeder berth will be within the existing CT9 area; the northern feeder berth will occupy part of the cargo handling area planned at the seafront north of CT9. This is in accordance with provisions in the gazetted town plan.

The arrangement also provides for the implementation of suitable measures to address environmental matters. These include the early construction of an off-site screen building which is to be in place before the northern berths become operational.

Mr Tsang said detailed arrangements would now be worked out and the Government would seek early agreement of the Land Commission on the provision of land required for CT9 development.

End

37th JLG meeting: Joint Communique

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The Joint Liaison Group held its thirty-seventh meeting in Peking from September 17 to 19.

The Group had a discussion about the transfer of Government, including the transitional budget and related matters, transfer of archives, government assets, the handover ceremony etc; matters relating to Hong Kong's international rights and obligations; Hong Kong's air services agreements; civil service matters; the defence of Hong Kong and public order; franchises and contracts extending beyond 1997 and related matters, (including the railway development strategy and container terminals); investment promotion and protection agreements between Hong Kong and relevant countries; surrender of fugitive offenders agreements between Hong Kong and certain countries; the reciprocal recognition and enforcement of judgements in civil and commercial matters between Hong Kong and foreign countries; localisation of laws, adaptation of laws; the Court of Final Appeal; the implementation of the provisions of the Joint Declaration relating to the right of abode in Hong Kong after 1997; visa abolition agreements; and Vietnamese migrants in Hong Kong (boat people and refugees).

The next meeting of the Joint Liaison Group will take place in Hong Kong at a time to be decided.

End

Governor visits Yau Tsim Mong District

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, was updated on the general situation in Yau Tsim Mong district during his visit today (Thursday).

Mr Patten first toured the Flower Market, or 'Fa Hui', where he was briefed on the history and operation of the market, which has more than 60 florists who account for more than 80 per cent of the flowers sold wholesale in the urban area.

Later at the activity centre of Yau Ma Tei and Tsim Sha Tsui Culture and Arts Association (YTCAA), he viewed an exhibition of Chinese painting and calligraphy by local artists.

The YTCAA activity centre in Salisbury Road, which has been the venue for holding cultural and arts activities since 1986, has to move out by the end of February 1998 owing to the construction of a nearby subway.

The Governor then visited the Henry G Leong Yau Ma Tei Community Centre where he was briefed on the operation of a day nursery and a centre for the elderly run by two voluntary agencies. A painting by the children at the nursery and a lantern made by the elderly at the centre were presented to Mr Patten.

Mr Patten also visited the Chinese Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Hong Kong's new premises in Waterloo Road, where a renovation project was mostly completed to provide more recreational and sports facilities to its members and the public.

Before concluding his visit, Mr Patten attended a reception to meet local district board members and community leaders.

Accompanying the Governor were acting Director of Home Affairs, Mr Lee Lap-sun, and Yau Tsim Mong District Officer, Mr Bart Ireland.

End

Mail services to UK subject to delay

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The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Thursday) that as advised by the British Post Office, the Communication Workers' Union will hold two 24-hour postal strikes from 7 pm on September 20 (Friday) and 10 pm on September 22 (Sunday).

All air and surface letter mail services to the UK may be subject to delay.

During the past three months, the postal workers in the UK have carried out short duration strikes intermittently and air and surface letter mails have been slightly affected.

However, the British Post Office has confirmed that Speedpost and parcel services have not been affected and have been operating normally.

End

New health centre in Ma On Shan

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A new health centre set up by the Department of Health in Ma On Shan will commence operation on September 23 (Monday).

The new centre, Ma On Shan Health Centre, is comprised of a general out-patient clinic and a maternal and child health centre.

"Local residents will enjoy better primary health care services with the opening of the new centre," a spokesman for the department said.

"It will provide a wide range of health services including general out-patient consultation, as well as a comprehensive services to women of child-bearing ages and children from birth to five years old."

The centre is located at 609 Sai Sha Road, Ma On Shan. It will be open from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm on weekdays, and 9 am to 1 pm on Saturdays.

Following the opening of the new centre, the Ma On Shan (Temporary) Clinic will be closed on the same date.

End

ABC Guide to 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 compiled a new bilingual publication - An ABC Guide to the Basic Law - which is now available at all district offices.

The contents of the booklet are grouped by chapters under different subject matters such as general principles; relationship between the Central authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; fundamental rights and duties of the residents; political structure; Economy; Education, Science, Culture, Sports and others; external affairs; and interpretation and amendment; for readers' quick reference.

"The Committee has devoted much time and effort in preparing an easy-to-read and attractively-illustrated booklet," a spokesman for CPCE said today (Thursday).

"Whilst each article of the Basic Law is equally important, for the purpose of this booklet, we have focussed on those articles more relevant to the everyday life of the public and have presented them in a format appropriate to a simple guide.

"Readers are also strongly encouraged to refer to the original text of the Basic Law, which has been reproduced in full in the booklet."

Copies of the booklet are now available for collection at the public enquiry centres of all district offices; the Civic Education Resource Centre on the second floor, Tung Sun Commercial Centre, 194-200 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong; and the Information Services Department's Marketing Office, 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 176-192 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai.

Free copies, together with teaching posters in Chinese highlighting the contents, will also be distributed to public libraries, schools, voluntary agencies, educational bodies and community organisations in Hong Kong.

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Applications invited for challenging civil service career

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Applications will be invited to join five civil service grades from Saturday (September 21) until October 11.

These grades are: Administrative Officer, Executive Officer II, Assistant Labour Officer II, Assistant Trade Officer II and Management Services Officer II.

Applications are open to candidates who possess a degree from a university in Hong Kong (or equivalent qualifications) and undergraduates who are taking their final degree examinations in summer 1997.

Suitable diploma holders and matriculants with relevant experience may be considered exceptionally for the post of Management Services Officer II.

Announcing this today (Thursday), a government spokesman said: "We are looking for talents who are committed to serve the people of Hong Kong. Candidates selected to fill the posts must be sensitive to the needs of the community and be able to make sensible judgements.

"They should be dynamic in their character and be innovative in solving problems. They should also have good communications skills and be proficient in both spoken and written Chinese and English."

Vacancies for these five grades will be advertised in two English and two Chinese dailies and a Chinese evening daily on September 21 and 28. The advertisement will also be posted on the Internet at Civil Service Branch Homepage (http://www.hku.hk/hkgcsb). The closing date for application is on October 11.

A common recruitment examination will be held for the five grades on November 30.

"In line with government's aim for a biliterate (Chinese and English) civil service, the examination will emphasise the use of both Chinese and English," the spokesman said.

The examination comprises three papers: Chinese Paper (two hours) and English Paper (1 hour 45 minutes) are to test candidates on the use of Chinese and English languages and to assess their analytical power and problem-solving ability; Aptitude Test Paper (one hour) is to assess candidates' logical thinking and their ability in the interpretation of statistics.

Application forms (GF 606 and 606A) (Rev 9/96) are available at district offices of Home Affairs Department, local employment services of Labour Department and student affairs offices of the various universities.

Applicants applying for more than one grade need to fill only one application form. For the first time, applicants can make on-line applications through the Internet at the Civil Service Branch Homepage. Alternatively, they can also download the necessary application forms from the same site.

Following is an outline of the responsibilities of the five grades:

Administrative officers are responsible for the formulation and implementation of government policies, planning the use of resources and managing the delivery of Government services. They form a cadre of generalists filling key positions of different natures in secretariat branches and government departments throughout their career.

Executive officers II are deployed to various secretariat branches and government departments for assisting in planning and acquiring the necessary and appropriate human, financial and other resources for the organisation they serve, putting in place efficient and effective systems and ensuring that good management practices are implemented, and promoting a service-oriented culture in the organisation.

Assistant labour officers II in Labour Department provide employment services to job seekers and employers; provide careers advisory service to students; process claims for employees' compensation; assist in promotion of good labour-management relations; and enforce labour legislation.

Assistant trade officers II work either in Trade Department or Industry Department and assist in research and analysis of trade and industry matters, management of licensing and control matters, design and development of computer systems relating to licensing, trade control procedure and industrial data, and industrial promotion. The job may require them to attend overseas conferences, to assist in overseas negotiations, or to be posted to Hong Kong Government's overseas offices.

Management services officers II work either in Management Services Agency or various government departments to provide management services such as management consultancies, organisation reviews, value for money studies, office automation studies, office accommodation planning and modernisation of office equipment. They help government branches and departments deliver the best service possible within the resources available.

End

Mobile phone charges reimbursement available for teachers

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Teachers who use their personal mobile phones in excursions, picnic, hiking and other outdoor students activities may claim reimbursement of expenses from September 2, a spokesman for the Education Department said today (Thursday).

However, repayment would only be considered when the activities took place where other kinds of communication are not readily available and there were genuine needs for making the calls, he said, adding that it would be limited to one mobile phone per location.

"The Education Department has considered thoroughly the feasibility of providing mobile phone to teachers for use in outdoor activities.

"It is considered not cost-effective to make mobile phone as a standard equipment in schools," the spokesman said.

Enquiries on the procedure of reimbursement should be directed to respective District Education Officer/Senior Inspector (Special Schools Administration).

End

Soldiers have sights set on Swiss shooting competition

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Gurkha and British soldiers from the Queen's Gurkha Signals will challenge members of the Swiss Rifle Association of Hong Kong to a shooting competition this weekend.

Operation Mercury 1996 marks the 25th anniversary of the competition and will see Swiss military and consulate staff, along with their rifle association colleagues, pit their shooting skills against the Regiment's crack shots in a good-natured and friendly event at Lo Wu Ranges on September 21 and 22.

By coincidence the Regiment also celebrates its 47th birthday on Monday (September 23).

Also present at the range will be Commander British Forces, Major General Bryan Dutton, and Colonel of the Regiment, Brigadier Mervyn Lee, who will swop their rifles for a traditional Swiss crossbow in a VIP competition against a team from the Swiss Consulate, headed by the Consul Jean-Jacques Mayor.

Once the shooting events have been completed, on Sunday, there will be a short commissioning parade during which Lieutenant Rajendraman Gurung will be commissioned as a Queen's Gurkha Officer.

This will be followed by the presentation to all members of the Regiment of specially engraved Swiss army knives, an appropriate symbol to commemorate 25 years of partnership between the Queen's Gurkha Signals and the Swiss community.

End

Governor meets student painters

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The three first prize winners of "My City of Vision" student painting competition presented their paintings to the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, at Government House today (Thursday).

They were among the 39 winners in the painting competition organised last September to promote students' awareness of the growth and future development of Hong Kong.

Mr Patten congratulated the three students, aged eight, 14 and 16 respectively, and was impressed by their creativity and artistic skills.

Jointly organised by the Planning, Architectural Services, Education, Information Services departments and the Urban Council, the competition had attracted over 1,700 entries from 221 primary and secondary schools.

In view of the high standard of the paintings, the organising committee decided to publish a book comprising all winning entries and information on some future major projects in the territory.

The Governor also encouraged the students by signing personal book copies for all prize winners.

The painting books were presented to the winners at a ceremony held last Saturday (September 14) at the Hong Kong Science Museum.

End

No mail for public holiday

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There would be no mail delivery during the forthcoming public holiday on September 28 - the day following the Mid-Autumn Festival, the Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Wednesday).

While all post offices would be closed, one mail collection would be made for all street posting boxes except those located on outlying islands and in remote areas. The time of collection is shown on the time-plate of each posting box.

"This arrangement will serve to advance the processing of letters posted on that day and hence improve our quality of letter service to the public," said Mr Footman.

End

Monitors' report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Tai A Chau Detention Centre decantation operation this (Thursday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The three monitors comprised a non-official Justice of the Peace, Mr Tsim Tak-lung; and representatives from two non-government organisations, Ms Harriet Sewell from Christian Action and Mr Lum Kwok-choi from Oxfam, Hong Kong.

End

HK to participate in international stamps exhibition

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The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Thursday) that the Hong Kong Post Office will participate in the '96 International Stamps Exhibition in Guangzhou, China, from September 30 to October 2.

The exhibition is organised by the General Office of Guangzhou Municipal People's Government, the Foreign Affairs Office of Guangzhou Municipal People's Government and the Guangzhou Postal Service Bureau to commemorate the 2210th anniversary of the founding of Guangzhou city.

To commemorate the Hong Kong Post Office's participation in the exhibition, a specially designed souvenir cover will be placed on sale at all post offices at $2 each from September 23.

A special postmark and cachet will be introduced for cancellation purpose at all post offices on September 30. Hand-back service will be provided at all post offices to official and privately-made covers bearing an indication of the event. The cachet will also be available for cancellation at the exhibition venue.

End

Stamp collector's kit on sale

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The Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Thursday) that a stamp collector's kit and a stamp catalogue will be placed on sale from September 25 (Wednesday) at the following eight philatelic offices:

Airport Post Office
General Post Office
Granville Road Post office
Harcourt Road Post Office
Peak Post Office
Sha Tin Central Post Office
Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office
Tsuen Wan Post Office

The collector's kit, a starter's kit for beginners and youths, comprises a stamp stock book, a magnifying glass, a pair of tweezers, and a souvenir cover. It will be sold at $50.

In addition, a stamp catalogue "1996 Yang's Postage Stamp and Postal History Catalogue of Hong Kong" will also be put on sale at $65. This is a guide for stamp collectors with full colour illustrations on postage stamps and philatelic products issued by the Hong Kong Post Office since 1862.

Mr Footman said: "By making available basic stamp-collecting accessories at the philatelic offices, the Post Office hopes to provide convenience for beginners to start the hobby."

The Post Office will also put on sale other items such as albums for stamps and First Day Covers for the experienced collectors in due course.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change ($million)
Opening balance in the account	2,162	0930	-5
Closing balance in the account	2,808	1000	-5
Change attributable to:		1100	-5
Money market activity	-2	1200	-2
LAF today	+648	1500	-2
		1600	-2

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.4 *-0.2* 19.9.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/MTRC				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.01	2 years	2808	6.00	99.62	6.31
1 month	5.01	3 years	3907	6.80	100.52	6.70
3 months	5.18	5 years	5109	7.32	100.49	7.33
6 months	5.32	7 years	7308	7.24	98.51	7.66
12 months	5.69	5 years	M503	7.35	99.43	7.63

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - $6,720 million

Closed September 19, 1996

End