



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Hong Kong supports China's entry into WTO

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, this (Wednesday) afternoon said Hong Kong was unreservedly of the view that China should be a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and it was in Hong Kong's interest that China was able to join the WTO as rapidly as possible.

Responding to media questions after visiting the Marine Department about China's failure to return to the GATT by end of this year, the Governor said: "We are pleased that substantive progress has been made."

Mr Patten said China was one of the most important economies in the world and had one of the largest trade balances with the rest of the world.

"It's important that China should be incorporated in international arrangements which will give the world more free trade and more prosperity," he said.

"What I am pleased about is that even though these negotiations haven't, alas, produced a satisfactory outcome as rapidly as we would have liked, the Chairman of the Working Party has made it clear that negotiations will resume early in the new year.

"And I very much hope that those negotiations bring the success that wasn't possible this month."

Commenting on remarks about an executive-led government, the Governor said: "The question is whether we try to keep in place our existing industrial relations machinery, which has been extremely successful over the years, whether we try to combine that machinery with an effective legislative control.

"The truth of the matter is that we can't get this legislation through without the approval of the legislature.

"We now have to go back to the LAB. We have to try to persuade the LAB of our view about an enhanced package which will reflect what the legislature thinks, and then we have to go back to the legislature."

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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 visiting the Marine Department this (Wednesday) afternoon:

Governor: I've really enjoyed meeting some of the staff of the Marine Department. It's at the cutting edge of what Hong Kong is all about, terrifically professional operation which helps to keep our port running as well as it does and I am delighted to see what they are doing to improve their management and improve the service they give to all our customers. Hong Kong's, as you know, the busiest container port in the world and that's partly thanks to the work of the Marine Department. So, I was pleased to see them today. Since there aren't any questions....

Question: The European Parliament approved a lump sum of \$1.8 million for the setting up of a human rights centre in Hong Kong. What is your reaction to it?

Governor: I haven't seen any more than the announcement about the budget item approved by the European Parliament. I don't have anything to say about it.

Question: Now that the Democratic Party has lost a member in the Legislative Council, how would you gauge its support for you personally in the Legislative Council since they did support your constitutional package?

Governor: As you know, the Government doesn't have a party and the Government has to work for its majority in the Legislative Council and that's in the nature of our system. The Legislative Council isn't, self-evidently isn't, a rubber stamp so the Executive has to work very hard, one vote after another, persuading a majority of legislators to support us. I think that helps to make Hong Kong's Government both more accountable and more confident and better. If you know that you're going to have to persuade legislators, then you'll have to think through very carefully what you are doing. Over the question of severance pay and long-term payments, we are plainly in the position now in which we've got to go back to the LAB which is also not a rubber stamp and put to them some new ideas which, we hope, will in due course satisfy the Legislative Council. Good government is a process of give-and-take between the Executive and the Legislature and that's what we are seeing in Hong Kong.

Question: Has the Government gauged the support for this bill before it went to the Council? Would you know if Lau Chin-shek incident in the past couple of days could have been avoided?

Governor: If you look back on the history of this interesting controversy. First of all, the Legco Manpower Panel said that it didn't want to discuss the bill which, I think, suggested to the Government that it wasn't hugely controversial. Secondly, Legco decided not to set up a Bills Committee which again, I think, encouraged the Executive to think understandably that we have enough support in the legislature. As things turned out, that wasn't the case. But I think frankly that the vote surprised everyone. I suspect it might even have surprised those who won it.

Question: There are some queries if you have some secret deals or a compromise between you and Mr Martin Lee, or Mr Lau Chin-shek personally?

Governor: I think I would like to make a substantial contribution to charity for everytime I've heard the word "secret deal" used in Hong Kong. As you well know, Hong Kong is about the most difficult place in the world to keep any secret whatsoever and I have no secret deals with anybody. I don't have any secret deals with Mr Martin Lee. I don't have any secret deals with Director Zhou Nan. I don't have any secret deals with anyone.

Question: Concerning the Court of Final Appeal, does the Government still plan to table the bill to Legco early next year no matter whether the two sides can reach an agreement in the JLG?

Governor: You've heard me talk about legislative timetable before and the fun of the hunt is that you try to get me back into a corner and give you very precise date in the calendar and I try to say that it isn't in fact sensible to do that. What I'll tell you is that in order to get the Court set up by the middle of 1996, we will have to get through the legislation by the end of this legislative session, so that we've then got the best part of the year to actually set up the Court and in order to get the bill through by the end of this legislative session, it follows, as night follows day, that we'll have to table the bill fairly early in the new year.

Question: Do you personally endorse the setting up of a human rights centre here and do you think China should be consulted before setting up such a centre?

Governor: It has nothing to do with me.

Question: What is your personal opinion?

Governor: What is my personal opinion? Hong Kong is a free society. We've lots of organisations which look at human rights here in Hong Kong. We've got Amnesty. We've got Asia Watch. We've got Justice. They all look at human rights here in Hong Kong. Some of them criticise the Government. Some of them are less critical of the Government but that is in the nature of an open, tolerant, free, plural society. I am not bothered about organisations doing that. That's part of Hong Kong today and I don't think that anybody should be bothered about those activities continuing. If you look at the Joint Declaration and what it says about a free society, then people are perfectly at liberty to do that sort of things.

Question: ...you're saying that without consulting China. This Human Rights Centre could still be set up in Hong Kong and straddled 1997?

Governor: What Human Rights Centre? I mean what you're doing is you're taking an agreement in the European Parliament and you're turning it into something which you yourself are describing. I've told you what my reaction is, both to the vote in the European Parliament, and my reaction to monitoring of human rights in Hong Kong. Of course, the best way to monitor human rights in Hong Kong is through the international covenants, and that's why we will continue to argue, as we do, because it's fact that under the Joint Declaration, there is an obligation to report on how we manage in relation to the international covenants.

Question: Do you consider it's a failure of you and Martin Lee to not persuade Lau Chin-shek to change his mind again?

Governor: No.

Question: Are you planning to see him again?

Governor: No, unless he wants to see me about something else. I've said before and the Chief Secretary has said, and all other people have said, that Lau Chin-shek is a distinguished legislator. He's done a lot for Hong Kong. Some of the causes in which he's particularly interested, like industrial safety, are issues that I'm interested in myself. And I am sure he'll continue to work on those issues. I am sorry that he's decided to resign from the Legislative Council. But it's his decision. Life will go on. There will be a by-election. There will be another legislator and Hong Kong will go on booming away and being as successful as it has been for the last few years.

Question: China cannot return to the GATT by the end of this year. Do you think Hong Kong's economy will be greatly affected?

Governor: No, I don't think that Hong Kong's economy will be affected, at least in the short term. But it's obviously in our interest that China is able to join the World Trade Organisation as rapidly as possible. We are disappointed that it wasn't possible to conclude a deal by the end of this year. We are pleased that substantive progress has been made. We are unreservedly, and I repeat that, unreservedly, of the view that China should be a member of the World Trade Organisation. China is one of the most important economies in the world. It has one of the largest trade balances with the rest of the world, and it's important that China should be incorporated in international arrangements which will give the world more free trade, and therefore, more prosperity. What I am pleased about is that even though these negotiations haven't, alas, produced a satisfactory outcome as rapidly as we would have liked, the chairman of the working party has made it clear that negotiations will resume early in the new year. And I very much hope that those negotiations bring the success that, alas, wasn't possible this month. I think it's fair to say that there are some big and difficult issues that have to be tackled, that have to be cracked between the world and China. So nobody should be, I think, too critical that it has proved such a difficult job. But the sooner it's concluded, the better for everyone, including Hong Kong. Hong Kong is one of the most successful trading territories in the world. We trade with all the other major trading nations. And clearly, in Hong Kong, the more trade there is between China and the rest of the world, the better. Any others ?

Question: ...his accusations that you're just interested in an executive-led government, instead of a legislature...What is your comments on Mr Lau's dealing with his resignation and twist and turn

Governor: Well, how Mr Lau behaves is very much a matter for him. And I don't criticise individual legislators. Mr Lau will, I'm sure, explained what he has done to both his constituency and to his party colleagues and fellow legislators. As for the issue, I am not sure I have got anything to add to what I have said before. The question is not whether Legco is a rubber stamp, plainly it's not a rubber stamp. If Legco was a rubber stamp, we wouldn't have had this problem. The question is whether we try to keep in place our existing industrial relations machinery, which has been extremely successful over the years, whether we try to combine that machinery with an effective legislative control. The truth of the matter is that we can't get this legislation through without the approval of the legislature. We now have to go back to the LAB, we have to try to persuade the LAB of our view about an enhanced package which will reflect what the legislature thinks, and then we have to go back to the legislature. But at the end of the day, unless the legislature approve, unless the legislature agree, then we won't be able to get our package through. And that is as clear as anything.

Question: Do you mean that you wish it was a rubber stamp ?

Governor: No I don't wish it was a rubber stamp because I believe in greater participation by people in governing their own affairs. That's one of my fundamentals. Hello, Jenny, what can I do for you ? What'll I say ?

Question: You said you're sorry to see him.....

Governor: I don't seek to criticise. I don't know where your constituency is. But if that's your view and you live in that constituency, doubtless you'll vote accordingly. But I am not going to criticise legislators as I never have, and never will I leave it to legislators to criticise me. That's I am here for.

Question: Is it the way that politicians used to be?

Governor: I think individual politicians have to explain their own behaviour and the way they behave. I have quite enough to do explaining my policies in the way I behave without trying to explain the way others behave. Yes, last one.

Question: Do you feel anybody in the Government should be responsible to this incident, to take up responsibility, like Michael Leung, Anson Chan ?

Governor: I am responsible. I am responsible for the Government. And as President Truman, the late President Truman once said, the bug stops on my desk. So that is the position. And I want to make it absolutely clear, in case I haven't done so before, that the Chief Secretary and Michael Leung have my full, 110 per cent support, without any qualification, without any reservation. I think they both do a superb job, and will continue to do so. Thank you very much. And you're not too busy, listen to the radio 3, RTHK, nine o'clock on Christmas Day, and you'll hear an hour of very good record.

End/Wednesday, December 21, 1994

Governor briefed on measures to enhance navigation safety

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The Governor, The Rt Hon Christopher Patten, was today (Wednesday) briefed on the measures the Marine Department had taken to reduce navigational risks in the central part of the Victoria Harbour during his visit to the department.

Met on arrival by the Director of Marine, Mr Allan Pyrke, and the Deputy Director of Marine, Mr Ian Dale, Mr Patten first took a tour at the Vessel Traffic Centre located at the Macau Ferry Terminal.

He was shown how the centre uses an advanced system of radar and radio links to regulate ocean going traffic.

Thereafter he reviewed a "sail past" of a selection of the department's fleet ranging from patrol to oil pollution responses vessels.

Mr Patten concluded his visit by touring a mini-exhibition featuring the activities and achievements of the six operational divisions of the Marine Department and met a broad selection of operational staff involved in these activities.

Mr Patten was told that the Marine Department had introduced a number of measures to minimise navigational risks in what the public perceived as a "shrinking harbour" and was given an overview of other proposals that were planned.

In particular, he was advised that the Marine Department was seeking funds of about \$10 million to carry out a navigational risk assessment consultancy which could lead to the setting up of new fairways and marine traffic arrangements to reduce risk and enhance traffic flow patterns.

Mr Pyrke told the Governor that his department is in the process of completely reorganising the patrol services of the port by redeployment of its existing craft and the acquisition of new ones so that more emphasis can be given to the safe navigation control of ferries and other small craft using the waters of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is the world's busiest port for both large and small vessels and the busiest in term of container throughput. One vessel enters or leaves Hong Kong every 1.5 minutes; one container box is loaded or unloaded every 30 seconds and one passenger leaves or enters Hong Kong by sea every 1.6 seconds.

At any time during the day about 40 high speed craft and 5,000 small craft are under way in Hong Kong waters.

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Measures to enhance navigation safety proposed

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The Government is introducing Shipping and Port Control (Amendment) Bill 1994 and Shipping and Port Control (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulation 1994 to enhance navigation safety, a Government spokesman said today (Wednesday).

The Shipping and Port Control (Amendment) Bill 1994 empowers the Director of Marine to give directions to a class, type or description of vessel over navigational matters. Such directions would remain in force for a period not exceeding six months.

It also empowers the Director to close for safety reasons, any area of the waters of Hong Kong to all vessels, or any class, type or description of vessel, for a period not exceeding six months.

The Shipping and Port Control (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulation 1994 provides the Director the power to regulate or prohibit traffic near fireworks display area.

It requires also any person who intends to hold a gathering of vessels in or upon any part of the waters of Hong Kong to give advance notification to the Director of Marine and to submit information to enable the Director to plan traffic regulation measures.

The regulation also enables the Director to impose conditions in respect of the manner of holding such a gathering.

The Bill and the Regulations will be gazetted this Friday (December 23).

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Great land demand projected for port back-up and open storage activities

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A consultancy study commissioned by the Planning Department has identified a significant future demand for land for port back-up and open storage activities.

Speaking on the findings of the study at a press conference today (Wednesday), the Director of Planning, Dr Peter Pun, pointed out that the estimated demand for port back-up land was 380 hectares by 2001 and 507 hectares by 2011 respectively.

Demands for land for open storage are 555 hectares and 753 hectares by 2001 and 2011 respectively.

"A planning strategy is, therefore, required to accommodate future needs," Dr Pun noted.

Dr Pun said potential sources of supply would include 254 hectares of land already planned as part of the new container terminal development at Kwai Tsing and Lantau; 196 hectares of land earmarked for port back-up or open storage on town plans; and other long-term sites at Tuen Mun West and North East Lantau.

The study has recommended two major policies - a broad area policy and a site planning policy.

The broad area policy was to be implemented through planning applications and zoning on statutory plans, he explained.

Existing port back-up and open storage sites are grouped into 25 broad areas, and each of them is assigned to one of five categories, ranging from intensification of uses, limited intensification to discontinuance of sites in the long term.

As regards the site planning policy, he said 154 existing problem sites covering 64 hectares of land had been identified as creating severe environmental problems and should be discontinued once alternative sites became available.

A further 79 sites covering 26 hectares of land, also with significant environmental problems, had potential to be improved through mitigation measures.

"A code of practice, to be prepared by the Government for application by major operator bodies and associations, is also advocated in the study to educate operators about the existing regulations and to propose practical measures by which sites may be improved," Dr Pun added.

The study has also recommended the Government to resume land and develop the basic infrastructure required at Ping Che and Ta Kwu Ling for open storage use and at San Tin for container lorry parking and empty container storage or repair.

Dr Pun said the Government would further examine these proposals in greater detail, including their impacts on traffic, drainage and environment of the areas.

Other recommended measures include rezoning some of the industrial sites on the West Kowloon Reclamation to port back-up use; encouraging open storage activities in shed-like accommodation on land reserved for rural industries; temporary use of land on reclamations; reserving possible long-term cavern development on Tsing Yi for port back-up use; and designation of a multi-storey container lorry park building near Container Terminal No. 8.

The building would provide more than 1,000 lorry parking spaces and would incorporate a container freight station and other ancillary uses.

"The long-term aim would be to encourage relocation of port back-up activities and some open storage operation to China, where land is abundant and relatively cheap.

"Relocation could provide a major solution to relieve land pressures in Hong Kong. To achieve this, more dialogue with the Chinese authorities will be required," Dr Pun noted.

Earlier, he said the main objectives of the consultancy study were to project future demand for port back-up and open storage uses up to the year 2011; to identify sites to meet future land requirements; and to make recommendations to resolve problems currently caused by such operations.

In August 1993, there were a total of 237 port back-up and 1,453 open storage sites in the territory covering 198 hectares and 362 hectares of land respectively.

These figures doubled the amount of land used for such purposes 10 years ago.

Compared with the situation in 1990 when the Interim Development Permission Area Plans were introduced, haphazard proliferation of such uses on agricultural land has been put under control.

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Statement on car growth

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In response to press enquiries about the Motor Traders Association (MTA) statement yesterday that the average compound growth rate in private car numbers up to 2001 would be less than five per cent a year, the Deputy Secretary for Transport, Mr John Telford, said there had been a one-third increase in numbers of private cars over the last three years and growth was still continuing at the rate of about 10 per cent a year.

Increases on this scale could not possibly be accommodated by Hong Kong's road system without there being serious consequences for everyone in Hong Kong.

With continued increases in disposable income, the Government had every reason to believe that the current upward trend in car ownership would continue.

Certainly the MTA's forecast, based on historical data, that growth would be less than five per cent a year was unrealistic.

Regarding the MTA's claim that the Government should respect the individual's right to own a car, Mr Telford said 90 per cent of Hong Kong people relied on public transport for their daily journeys.

They also had rights, and every additional car on the roads meant that less road space would be available for the buses they use.

More private cars meant slower bus journey times and ultimately higher fares. Unrestricted growth in car numbers would also seriously affect air pollution levels, which were already causing concern.

Mr Telford welcomed the MTA's support for electronic road pricing, but noted that pending the introduction of such a system it would be necessary to limit the growth in new car registrations, otherwise there was a real risk of traffic gridlock.

He said the Government looked forward to early meetings with the MTA representatives to discuss these matters further.

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Use of unlined galvanised steel water pipes banned

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With the introduction of corrosion resistant pipe materials in plumbing systems, home owners and residents should not have to worry any more about yellowish water, a spokesman for the Water Supplies Department said today (Wednesday).

A new requirement, approved by the Governor-in-Council last week, has been introduced by the Water Authority with amendments to the Waterworks Regulations which ban the use of unlined galvanised steel pipes for use as fresh water plumbing installation in new buildings or where buildings undergo refurbishment.

The spokesman said in recent years, people had become more conscious of the water quality and the number of complaints of discolouration of the drinking water had increased by more than four times over the past two years.

He pointed out that the cause of discoloured water was mainly attributed to the corrosion of the unlined galvanized steel pipes, commonly used in the plumbing systems.

Although the existing Waterworks Regulations also allow the use of alternative pipe materials such as PVC pipes and copper pipes, these are seldom used in the building industry because unlined galvanized steel pipes are relatively cheap and easier to install than the other pipes.

The Regulations will be applicable to the plumbing installations in all new buildings and upon renewal of the plumbing in existing buildings but are not applicable to fire service installations in new buildings nor to the repair of plumbing systems which are of a minor nature.

The new Regulations also allow a phasing out period of one year from the date on which the Waterworks Regulations Amendments 1994 is gazetted so that pipe suppliers are able to adjust their business induced by the change.

End/ Wednesday, December 21, 1994

By-election held for Education Conduct Council

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Mr Lai Siu-ki of the Hong Kong Association for Business Education has been elected to the Council on Professional Conduct in Education, filling a seat for subject-related organisations vacated through the resignation of Mrs Pang Chu Wai-see, the Education Department announced today (Wednesday).

Mr Lai received three votes in the by-election, which was conducted on an organisation basis. The vote counting was officiated by the Chairman of the Council, Dr Cheng Kai-ming.

The other contestants were: Miss Tsui Wai-chuen (two votes) and Mrs Mak Lau Siu-ming (one vote).

While Mr Lai joins the council immediately, his term will expire with other members on April 30, 1996.

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15 ECVIIs repatriated

A total of 15 Ex-China Vietnamese Illegal Immigrants (ECVIIs) comprising nine men, two women, two boys and two girls were returned to China via Sha Tau Kok this (Wednesday) morning.

A further 130 ECVIIs are expected to return to Guangxi, Hainan and Yunnan in January.

Discussions are continuing with the Chinese authorities on the repatriation of the remaining ECVIIs in Hong Kong.

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Flushing water cut in Kowloon Bay

Flushing water supply to some premises in Kowloon Bay will be suspended from 8 pm on Friday (December 23) to 9 am the next day to facilitate water mains connection.

The suspension will affect all the premises in Richland Gardens, as well as Kai Yiu, Kai Lok, Kai Wo, Kai Cheung, Kai Wang and Kowloon Bay temporary housing areas, Kai Yip Estate and Kai Tai Court.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
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Opening balance in the account	2,483	0930	-700
Closing balance in the account	1,645	1000	-700
Change attributable to :		1100	-695
Money market activity	-576	1200	-692
LAF today	-262	1500	-692
		1600	-576

LAF rate 3.75% bid/5.75% offer TWI 121.8 *+0.0* 21.12.94

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills

EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds

Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.98	17 months	2605	6.35	98.85	7.35
1 month	5.28	23 months	2611	6.90	98.89	7.67
3 months	5.63	28 months	3704	6.15	96.64	7.88
6 months	6.25	34 months	3710	7.25	98.53	7.98
12 months	6.84	57 months	5909	7.45	99.70	8.39

Total turnover of bills and bonds - 22,827 million

Closed December 21, 1994

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