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## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

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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' "Letter to Hong Kong" today (Sunday):

There's a school of thought which believes that the best way of securing a smooth and successful passage for Hong Kong through the change of sovereignty next year is by avoiding saying anything which appears either to contradict Chinese officials or to raise doubts about whether courses of action which they propose are always by definition good for Hong Kong. Related to this is the argument that you should never admit that Hong Kong faces this or that problem or difficulty, and that the only tolerable view of the future is one that denies that anything could possibly go amiss.

I think that all these arguments are wrong. Wrong and damaging for Hong Kong. Let me tell you why, beginning with how we should put our case to the outside world.

Most of the countries we do business with, most of those who are big investors here, most of those who share values as well as trade with us, have (as we still do) a free press and free electronic media. What happens in Hong Kong makes news in those countries. They are interested in what happens here. They may sometimes get things wrong. They might sometimes take an extravagantly extreme view of our prospects. But they can't be simply Sno-paked out of existence. We have to respond to how the world sees us with arguments which are true and which take account of common sense and decency.

So where does that leave us this summer with just 13 months to go to the big day? If you threaten to wind up Hong Kong's fairly elected legislature, don't be surprised if most of the media in the free world regard this as likely to be disruptive and to raise doubts about your intentions elsewhere.

If you say that civil servants or judges may be required to demonstrate their political loyalty, don't be surprised if the press around the world and those policy makers and investors who read about what we do, raise a collective eyebrow.

If you suggest that Hong Kong's own press can remain free provided it recognises that its freedom can only operate within political bounds set by Peking, don't be surprised if all around the world people nudge one another and say, "I told you so".

Hong Kong has a wonderful reputation internationally. Every comparative measure of economic performance has us among the front runners. People admire our commercial vigour, our vitality, our self-confident resilience, our responsible exercise of freedom. And because they admire us so much, they inevitably ask - "It's terrific today; but what will it be like after 1997?". And when they try to answer that question, which determines their confidence or otherwise, all the headlines made by some of the recent incidents I described crowd into their cuttings files or on to their computer screens.

Do you answer those worries by pretending they don't exist, by claiming - it does happen you know - that issues like civil liberties don't matter to people in Hong Kong; don't matter to people many of whom are here precisely because of the civil liberties that we enjoy and others don't?

Give people answers that bear no resemblance to reality and they don't believe you. Politely, of course. But they don't believe you. They think you're in the propaganda business, not the truth game.

There are powerful arguments to put about Hong Kong's future. The momentum of our economic success. The sound foundation on which our commercial life is based. The strength, too, of our institutions - courts, civil service, professions, charities, and so on. Our position at the heart of Asia and at the gateway of China. Above all, the sheer quality of our people. Those are, I repeat, powerful arguments. Don't discredit them by pretending that we don't have some difficult problems - not of our own making - to overcome as well.

One issue that has bubbled to the surface again recently is the question of freedom of the press. You can bet your bottom dollar that we'll be asked for more reassurance about what things will be like after 1997 as a direct result. And note well - as it used to say in books on grammar - the fuss wasn't stirred up by anything said or done by the Hong Kong Government.

A free press is guaranteed, of course, by the Joint Declaration, and again by Article 27 of the Basic Law. The guarantee in Article 27 isn't qualified in any way by the application of national Chinese law. The only Chinese laws that will be applied in Hong Kong are mentioned in Article 18 - and none of those listed touches on freedom of speech.

So the guarantee, you'd think, is clear. No confusion there. No room for redefining what the pledge means. No scope for wringing some new and different sense out of it.

Why does this matter?

A free press is not an end in itself. It's part of the way you secure a free and open society. The role of the press is to hold the powerful to account, to break down, break through, scramble over, tunnel under, the barriers behind which bad decisions and corrupt decisions can too easily be made in secret.

Does a vigorous press make government weaker? I don't believe it does. Government is stronger as a result because it has to think much harder about the decisions it takes. A free press also helps to underpin the rule of law which protects the weak against the strong, the individual against the state.

The free, uninhibited flow of information is essential to a sophisticated market, especially a financial market like ours in Hong Kong. A booming media industry is part of a booming modern economy. Every year new periodicals and newspapers hit our news-stands. We have more newspapers per head of population than anywhere else in the world. And we're the South East Asia home for many newspapers, magazines, news agencies from Reuters and AP to Time, Newsweek, the Asian Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times and the International Herald Tribune.

These are the signs of a free society, and the reasons for a free society. And Hong Kong will stay that way if we want it to do so, and if we make it plain that we care. As Thomas Paine wrote, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must .. undergo the fatigue of supporting it".

The same point was put very eloquently at the beginning of the week by a magazine, read all around the world, which recently found itself in the middle of a trumped-up controversy. What it said bore on the points I've made today - on credibility and on advocacy. Some of it is worth repeating.

"Hong Kong and its people - those same people who have done so much, and who have come to cherish their freedom - now face an uncertain future. The world cannot know how the territory will be governed when the time and place that Britain borrowed from China reverts to Beijing's control next year. It is true beyond the need for argument that a happy Hong Kong must be a prosperous one, and that prosperity will be damaged if Hong Kong is seen to challenge, at every turn, the new realities of Chinese rule. To the extent that the business community make that point, its members are right to do so. But it is also true that the prosperity of Hong Kong depends on those hallmarks of capitalism that, so far in the world's history, seem to be most easily guaranteed by open accountable governments - free trade; the sanctity of contracts and property rights; an intolerance of corruption; the right to criticise those placed in positions of power; the free flow, unimpeded by government fiat, of information. If Chinese rule guarantees all that, it will win and deserve the world's plaudits. But China - and for that matter, those in Hong Kong's business community - must also realise one other thing. After 1997, the whole world will be watching. That is Hong Kong's destiny, a fate bequeathed it by the place it has won in the heart of any who have visited there. Hong Kong, said John Major this year (a little late, but better late than never), "will never walk alone". Count us among those who will be walking alongside."

The magazine was "Newsweek". Like the rest of the world's press, it will be watching what happens to what it calls "one of the world's special places". Special, very special, indeed.

End

#### Parade to bid farewell to CAS Deputy Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner (Operations) and Chief Staff Officer, Civil Aid Services (CAS), Mr F S Kavanagh, will retire from the service on June 29, 1997. He will proceed on his pre-retirement leave on June 29 this year.

A parade with 300 CAS officers, members and cadets was organised to bid him farewell today (Sunday) at the Gun Club Hill Barracks, Kowloon, and the event was well attended by guests and members of the Services.

Mr Kavanagh arrived at 11 am to take the salute and to inspect the parade. After the ceremony, he joined the guests and CAS officers and members for a farewell reception held at the Officers' Mess.

Mr Kavanagh joined CAS on January 3, 1989, as Chief Staff Officer and was appointed Deputy Commissioner (Operations). Before that, he had served in the Royal Hong Kong Police Force for over 28 years.

He joined the Hong Kong Government on October 30, 1960, and has served the Hong Kong community for over 35 years with distinction.

End

#### Volunteers wanted for rehabilitation of offenders

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The Social Welfare Department is looking for volunteers to help with the rehabilitation of offenders.

People aged 21 or above, with secondary school education, mature personality and an interest in the rehabilitation of offenders, are invited to join the Volunteer Scheme for Probationers.

A spokesman for the department said today (Sunday) that the scheme aimed to promote interest and concern of the public towards the rehabilitation of offenders.

A total of 539 enthusiastic volunteers have joined the scheme since it was introduced in 1976.

Under the scheme, volunteers will assist offenders in the following ways:

- \* acting as tutor for the offender who has problems with school work;
- \* guiding the offender in proper use of leisure time and directing his interest into wholesome social, cultural and recreational activities; and
- \* providing friendship to offenders, especially those without family support, and sharing with them life experience so that they can feel acceptance by the community.

"The period of service is normally six months, but the volunteer may serve for further terms for the same or other offenders.

"Selected volunteers will be given a thorough briefing before they start to assist the offender through the probation officer," the spokesman said.

Application forms are now available at all Probation Offices of the Social Welfare Department. Completed forms should be returned on or before June 30.

Further enquiries about the scheme may contact the Sha Tin Probation Office on 2603 4171.

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#### New Harcourt Road post office to open soon

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A new post office at Harcourt Road, Central, will open to the public at 9.30 am on June 18 (Tuesday), the Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Sunday).

The new office, located at G10 to G15, Hutchison House, 10 Harcourt Road, is to replace the existing post office on the ground floor of Beaconsfield House at 4 Queen's Road Central. The Beaconsfield House Post Office will close for business at 6 pm on Friday (June 14).

The business hours and telephone numbers of the new post office will be the same as those of the Beaconsfield House office.

The Harcourt Road Post Office will continue to operate as a philatelic office and a newly designed pictorial postmark featuring the Tea Museum will be introduced for its use from June 18.

A special hand-back service will be available on Friday at the Beaconsfield House Post Office for unregistered covers with full postage prepaid, bearing the superscription "Last Day Cover" and a local address; and on June 18, at the new office for covers bearing the superscription "First Day Cover".

These privately prepared covers will be accepted over the counter, impressed with the normal post office datestamp or the philatelic pictorial datestamp, depending on the collector's choice, and handed back to the person presenting them.

Mr Footman said on June 18, the design of the pictorial postmarks currently in use by the Philatelic Bureau and seven philatelic offices would also be changed to incorporate the Chinese characters of "Hong Kong" and the office code in alphabets, in line with the pictorial postmark for the Harcourt Road Post Office.

The seven philatelic offices are:

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

On the same day, a hand-back service will be provided at these offices and the Philatelic Bureau at 38 Pier Road, first floor, Central, for all covers bearing the "First Day Cover" indication.

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#### Stamps on archaeological finds of Hong Kong to be issued

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A set of special stamps on the theme of archaeological finds of Hong Kong will be issued on June 26, the Postmaster General, Mr Robert Footman, announced today (Sunday).

The set comprises four denominations depicting four archaeological finds excavated from various sites in the territory.

The \$1.20 stamp shows a painted pottery basin with perforated ring-foot from Chung Hom Wan, Hong Kong Island, and the \$2.10 stamp depicts a stone 'yue', or ceremonial stone axe, from Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, the New Territories.

The \$2.60 stamp shows a stone 'ge' or stone halberd, from Tai Wan, Lamma Island, while the \$5 stamp depicts a pottery tripod with cover from the Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon.

The stamps will be displayed for the advance information of the public at the General Post Office, Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office, Tsuen Wan Post Office and Sha Tin Central Post Office from Wednesday (June 12).

Official first day covers will be on sale at \$1 each at all post offices on the same day. Advance orders for serviced first day covers will be accepted from that day to June 19 at all post offices. The minimum number of serviced first day covers per order is five.

A restriction of 100 stamps of each denomination (viz 100 sets of stamps) per customer queuing will be imposed on the first day of issue on June 26.

A presentation pack containing the four stamps will also be on sale at \$19 each at all post offices on the same day.

Serviced first day covers affixed with the set of stamps and cancelled with the first day of issue postmark will be on sale at \$14.40 each on June 26 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

Hand-back service will be provided at all post offices on June 26 to official and privately made covers bearing the first day of issue indication.

The stamps were designed by Mr Ian Leung and printed by Joh Enschede of the Netherlands.

End

Fresh water cut in Fanling

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Fanling will be suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (June 12) to 6 am the following day to facilitate waste detection work on watermains.

The suspension will affect premises at Jockey Club Road between North District Office and the junction of access to Fanling Hospital, Ling Shan Tsuen and Pik Fung Road, Fanling.

End