



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CFA before 1997

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The Government will do its best to try to ensure that the Court of Final Appeal would be set up before 1997, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said today (Saturday).

Speaking to reporters after officiating at the congregation of the Hong Kong College of Cardiology, the Governor said the Government's position was that it wanted to get on with setting up the Court as rapidly as possible.

"The only guarantee I am giving the people of Hong Kong is that we will do our best to implement the 1991 agreement," he said.

"We want to have the co-operation that was promised in 1991.

"We think it's an issue on which people want us to roll our sleeves up and get on with the job of building the foundations for the rule of law here in Hong Kong."

End/Saturday, March 25, 1995

Transcript of the Governor's media session

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The following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after officiating at the first congregation of the Hong Kong College of Cardiology this (Saturday) morning:

Question: Director Lu this morning said the British side has to take up the responsibility for the delay of setting up CFA in Hong Kong. What is your reaction?

Governor: I haven't seen a detailed report of Director Lu's remarks. So I don't think it's reasonable to comment on it. Let me say a word in general about the CFA. Chinese officials and PWC members have spent the last week in the United States reassuring American audiences and through American audiences reassuring Hong Kong about their commitment to the rule of law, and as part of that commitment, their determination to live by the 1991 agreement. So we're puzzled about the delays and the problems on the Chinese side. The agreement was reached in 1991. Why suddenly problems being raised now? A draft bill was given to the Chinese side last May, not last week or last month, but last May. And there were a few technical amendments given to them in January, but nothing immensely substantial. So we remain absolutely committed to the 1991 agreement. Chinese side always tell us that they remain committed to agreements as well, and they tell us that they're committed to the rule of law in Hong Kong. So I very much hope we can make rapid progress. We should be able to, what's the problem?

Question: But they said that they want to have some guarantee that the British side will not go to table the bill to the Legislative Council before...

Governor: I tell you what we will guarantee - that we will do our best to implement the 1991 agreement, that we will do our best, we can't do more, but shouldn't do less, we will do our best to try to ensure that there is a court set up before 1997. Now Chinese officials say that they're committed to doing that. So I think there are a lot of people in Hong Kong who scratch their heads and say: 'So what's the problem?' Let me ask one simple question: the Chinese side have had the draft bill since last May, is there any way, is there any detail in which that bill doesn't comply exactly, precisely to the letter and to the spirit with the 1991 agreement? If there is any difference between that bill and the 1991 agreement, let them say precisely and in terms what it is. We don't want in the Hong Kong Government an argument about this. We don't think that this is the sort of issue about which Hong Kong people want us to argue. We think it's an issue on which people want us to roll our sleeves up and get on with the job of building the foundations for the rule of law here in Hong Kong. So we don't want an argument. We want to have the co-operation that was promised in 1991. Any other questions?

Question: Is that, I mean, the Hong Kong Government still sticks the original programme that we want the legislation pass through the Legislative Council in this session?

Governor: The Hong Kong Government's position is that we want to get on with setting up the Court as rapidly as possible and you know the implications for our timetable. And that's been our position I have to say all along. It hasn't been the Hong Kong Government which has been sitting down and relaxing since the bill was handed to the Chinese side last May. Any question on anything else?

Question: Can you tell us exactly are you going to table the bill in April?

Governor: We're going to make sure that we do everything possible to set up the Court before 1997 and if you think that I am going to tell you exactly what all our timetable particulars are, then you haven't been following me round at the press conferences very often. Any other questions on anything else?

Question: Do you guarantee that you will not table the bill in LegCo ...

Governor: I said do you want any questions on anything else, and the only guarantee I am giving the people of Hong Kong is that we will do our best to implement the 1991 agreement, and the real question which you should be asking is whether the Chinese side will do their best to set up the Court before 1997 and to implement that agreement. What we can't have is a huge gulf opening up between the assurances people give about the rule of law and what they're actually prepared to do about the rule of law. So I think what we all want, should want on both sides, I don't seek to make it a matter of argument, what we should all want is action, not words. Any questions on anything else? No? Thank you very much indeed.

Question: What is the minimal time to

Governor: Honestly, I'm as good as my word. Do you want a question on anything else or not?

Question: You mean other than CFA?

Governor: I have said everything I want to say on the CFA. Do you want a question on anything else? Thank you very much. Question: How about the airport? Is there any agreement to be made during these few days?

Governor: Director Lu said in the United States that we could expect agreement on the FSAs within days. So I think everyone in Hong Kong is looking to the Chinese side here in Hong Kong to make sure that happens. It's not for me to say what the Chinese side's position is on it. But Director Lu has made that pledge and I hope that Chinese officials here will live up to it. Okay?

Question: So everything will be ready after the JLG meeting in April?

Governor: Well, I only hear what you hear, and I have heard the pledge, the promise given in America, and I assume that wasn't just for American audiences. We have things like agency tapes and television and telephones, so that message came back to Hong Kong, and a lot of people in Hong Kong threw their hats in the air, and said: 'Terrible, we can put that argument behind the stand.' All I am saying is we haven't given that commitment, but it's been given, and I very much hope that Chinese officials here will be able to live up to it now. Okay? Thanks very much indeed. Thanks for being so patient.

End/ Saturday, March 25, 1995

Consultants appointed to study mandatory provident fund system

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The Secretary for Financial Services, Mr Michael Cartland, announced today (Saturday) the appointment of Hewitt Associates, in conjunction with GML Consulting Limited, to conduct a consultancy on the establishment of a mandatory provident fund system in Hong Kong.

The objective of the study is to advise and make recommendations to the Government on the details of the system.

It will cover the administrative and regulatory aspects as well as provisions for preservation and portability and convergence with voluntary retirement schemes registered under the Occupational Retirement Schemes Ordinance and other statutory schemes.

Hewitt Associates is one of the largest international firms specialising in the design, financing, communication and administration of retirement programmes, and providing services to national governments and private sector clients. It is formally represented by GML Consulting Limited in Hong Kong.

GML Consulting Limited is a Hong Kong-based management consultancy firm. Its team of consultants has been involved in the design, administration and supervision of retirement schemes since 1982.

The consulting team, comprising eight consultants in Hong Kong and others in Hewitt's international offices, will start work immediately and their interim report is expected by early next month.

A final report will be submitted to the Financial Services Branch on April 18.

"Upon receipt of the consultant's final report, we will consider the recommendations and finalise our proposals on the contents of a mandatory provident fund system," Mr Cartland said.

"Meanwhile, drafting of the relevant legislation is being put in hand, with a view to submitting primary legislation for the setting of a mandatory provident fund system before the end of the current legislative session," he added.

End/Saturday, March 25, 1995

CS extends condolence to fire victims

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, today (Saturday) extended her deepest condolence to the victims of the bedspace apartment fire in Tsuen Wan early this (Saturday) morning and hoped that those injured would make a speedy recovery.

Speaking to reporters after officiating at the 75th anniversary celebration of the Hong Kong Y.W.C.A., Mrs Chan said the Government would certainly spare no efforts to make the lives of those who were temporarily accommodated in the Princess Alexandra Community Centre as comfortable as possible.

"We will as soon as possible examine the affected structure to see whether it is safe for the residents to go back," she noted.

"If in the longer run, they can not go back to their own apartment, then we will certainly offer alternative accommodation elsewhere."

End/ Saturday, March 25, 1995

Transcript of the CS

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The following is the transcript of the media session by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, after officiating at the 75th anniversary thanksgiving ceremony of the Hong Kong Y.W.C.A. this (Saturday) afternoon.

CS: Good afternoon everyone. I want to say a few words about the arson incident at the bedspace apartments. Can I first of all say that I was very, very sorry to hear about this incident and, in particular, to hear that three people had died and three were injured. To those who died, I extend my deepest condolence and to those who were injured, I hope they will make a speedy recovery. As we know, we've moved very fast to provide temporary accommodation for those affected in the Princess Alexandra Community Centre. The Secretary for Home Affairs has been out to visit the victims and he's briefed me fully on the situation and on the help that we're extending. We will certainly spare no efforts to make the lives of those who are temporarily accommodated in the community centre as comfortable as possible. We will as soon as possible examine the affected structure to see whether it is safe for the residents to go back. But clearly, there will have to be some repairs. In the meantime, we will accommodate them at the community centre. If in the longer run, they can not go back to their own apartment, then we will certainly offer alternative accommodation elsewhere. On the general front of bedspace apartments, as you know, we have a registration programme in force now. We will move as quickly as possible. We'd already registered 150 of these apartments and the whole purpose behind the registration system is to ensure that we can lift the standard, both the safety standard and the sanitary standard to an acceptable level, so that we can provide a better standard of accommodation for those affected.

Question: Mrs Chan, how do you react to Chinese vessel illegally entered the Hong Kong waters?

CS: We have expressed our concern to the Chinese authorities via the NCNA. I am glad to know that in fact the number of such incursions have in fact decreased quite appreciably. I believe that in 1993, we had 15 such incidents. Last year, we only had seven and so far this year, we only had one. But clearly, we are concerned and we've drawn the Chinese authorities' attention to this concern.

Question: Mrs Chan, how do you look at the visit of Mr Robert Peirce to the States, is it a deliberate

CS: Mr Peirce's visit was in fact arranged some time ago. It's a pure coincidence that he happened to be in the States at the same time as Mr Lu Ping. I wouldn't read anything into it.

End/Saturday, March 25, 1995

Medical care for the elderly poses challenges to health administration

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Managing medical care for the elderly will become an ever greater challenge for public health administration, and cardiological care will be a huge component within that, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said today (Saturday).

Officiating at the first congregation of the Hong Kong College of Cardiology, the Governor said heart disease was already one of the three major killer diseases, second only to malignant neoplasms.

Over 15 per cent of all deaths are from cardiovascular ailments. The disease strikes most commonly against the elderly. Eighty per cent of those who die are over 65.

Mr Patten said: "There is not just the threat to the individual, but the growing burden of cost to the whole community if our response to this swelling problem concentrates upon treatment, and neglects prevention.

"But since so much cardiovascular disease is the consequence of poor diet, inadequate exercise and unmanaged stress, there is a huge potential gain to the community if we can educate them in the dangers of heart disease, and if we can educate and encourage them to adopt the simple changes of habit that will help to guard against it," he added.

The Governor said he was encouraged by the amount of work the College had done in setting up registries, research projects, training programmes and its progress on public education programmes.

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SHA visits victims of Tsuen Wan fire

The Government will do its best to make temporary accommodation arrangements for the bedspace apartment lodgers affected by the Yeung Uk Road fire, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen said today (Saturday).

Speaking to the media after visiting the lodgers at the Princess Alexandra Community Centre, Mr Suen said the Government would assist with lodgers' rehousing and the arrangements would depend on the results of the survey by the Buildings Department regarding the conditions of the premises.

He pointed out that Police had classified the case as homicide, arson and wounding, and the circumstances surrounding this unfortunate incident might be different from other incidents of fire.

Nevertheless, he said, the Government has been very concerned about the fire and building safety as well as sanitation standards of bedspace apartments and legislation was enacted last year to provide for a licensing scheme to regulate such premises.

Mr Suen noted that 150 known bedspace apartments had been registered for temporary licences and staff of the licensing authority had conducted initial inspections to work out the improvement measures required to meet the standard in the law. Fire prevention leaflets have also been distributed to residents during these visits.

He stressed that there was a tight programme of implementation for the licensing scheme and follow-up work would proceed vigorously.

Mr Suen and the Director of Home Affairs, Mr Joseph W. P. Wong later went to the scene of the blaze to see for themselves the conditions of the building.

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Employment agencies warned against unlicensed operation

Employment agencies should not operate without a licence, neither should they overcharge job applicants upon successful placement.

"Employment agencies must obtain a licence from the Labour Department at least one month before starting business," Labour Officer (Employment Agencies Administration) Miss Corrina Cheng said today (Saturday).

The licence fee is \$1,400 for an employment agency and \$280 for a branch office.

The licence and fee schedule issued by the department should be displayed in a conspicuous position at the place of business.

She also reminded employment agency operators not to charge a job-seeker more than 10 per cent of his first month's salary as commission upon successful placement.

"Charging any other fees such as registration fee is also prohibited," she added.

Any person who operates an unlicensed employment agency or overcharges a job-seeker violates the Employment Agency Regulations. The maximum fine for each offence is \$25,000.

For enquiries on the operation of an employment agency, please contact the Employment Agencies Administration, Labour Department, on 2852 3535 or 2852 3540.

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Four lots of land up for auction

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The Lands Department will auction four lots of land in Kowloon and the New Territories next Monday (March 27).

The public auction will begin at 2.30 pm in the Concert Hall of Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Tsim Sha Tsui.

The first, located in Chung Hau Street, Ho Man Tin, has an area of 3,380 square metres for private residential use.

Covering an area of 2,155 square metres in Town Park Road, Yuen Long, the second lot is also for residential use.

The third lot, located in Area 100, Ma On Shan, has an area of 10,306 square metres for non-industrial use.

Having an area of 5,970 square metres, the remaining lot is situated in Area 37C, Tseung Kwan O, Sai Kung, for non-industrial purpose.

Attention News Editors:

Your representatives are invited to cover the auction.

A press area will be designated. Photographers are advised to bring along telephoto lenses.

End/Saturday, March 25, 1995

24-hour automated telephone enquiry service on rating matters

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As part of its efforts to better serve the community, the Rating and Valuation Department will introduce a 24-hour automated telephone enquiry service on Monday (March 27).

This service provides recorded information on rating and landlord and tenant matters. The service also provides callers with the option to obtain information and property market statistics by fax.

A spokesman for the department said callers would be able to obtain information they required quickly and easily, even outside office hours. If a caller has a specific query, he can still use the system, which provides access to a duty officer, during office hours.

Access to this service is by tone-dial telephone, and the number is 2881 1033.

A leaflet introducing this service incorporates a simple user guide, and copies are available, free of charge, from the department's office or at District Offices.

Any queries about this service may be directed to the department on tel 2805 7666 during office hours.

End/Saturday, March 25, 1995

Drug abuse solves no problem

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Drug abuse would hold no attraction if everyone adopted a positive outlook on life, the Commissioner for Narcotics, Mr Alasdair Sinclair, said today (Saturday).

Officiating at an anti-drug carnival organised by the Finnish Missionary Society at Tai Po, Mr Sinclair urged the participants to make good use of their life.

He accepted one could not control the family or society one was born into or whether one was gifted or not.

However, he said: " Whatever our circumstances, we can choose whether to make the most of our potential."

The Commissioner warned that problems could not be overcome by taking refuge in drugs.

"Whatever the temptations, however hopeless our life appears, drug abuse will only make things worse.

"When we have troubles, we should face up to them and set out to make things better," he said.

Mr Sinclair said this required a positive attitude towards life.

It required looking outward, he said, adding that smoking and drug-taking would only damage our bodies and diminish our potential.

"Instead of despairing at unhappy circumstances which we cannot control, let us try to change the things we can control," the Commissioner said.

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Fresh water cut in Wong Chuk Hang

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Wong Chuk Hang will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Monday (March 27) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains leakage detection.

The suspension will affect all the premises at 1-65 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Yip Kan Street and Tong Bin Lane.

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HK to take part in UN Women Conference

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Hong Kong will join many countries and regions to take part in the Women Conference held by the United Nations in Beijing this September, the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, said today (Saturday).

Speaking at the YWCA's 75th Anniversary Thanksgiving Ceremony, she noted that the association had stepped up educational work among women and organised a number of activities to support the world forum.

Through its activities and courses given, she said, women from all walks of life could achieve a thorough development, both physically and psychologically.

Learning helped them to build up their self-confidence, develop their potential and at the same time, gave them a chance to serve the community, she added.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ Million</u>	<u>Time (Hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative Change (\$ Million)</u>
Opening Balance in the account	2,111	09:30	+25
Closing Balance in the account	1,333	10:00	+25
Change Attributable to:		11:00	+25
Money Market Activity	+25	11:30	+25
Laf Today	-803	15:00	

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