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# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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## CS completes US visit with meetings in Washington DC

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, has completed a three-week tour to the United States, covering seven cities: San Francisco, Seattle, Boston, New York, Dallas, Los Angeles and Washington DC.

During her visit to New York, Dallas, and Los Angeles, Mrs Chan headed the delegation of business and government officials for the Hong Kong-USA '96 promotion.

On her final day in Washington DC, Mrs Chan met with the Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Also present was Mr Christopher's Deputy, Strobe Talbott, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord and other State Department Asian Affairs and Pacific Rim specialists.

Earlier in the day at the White House, Mrs Chan had discussions with the National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and several of President Clinton's advisers on East Asian and Pacific Affairs and members of the National Security Council.

On Capitol Hill, she met Senator Trent Lott, the Mississippi Senator who this week replaced Bob Dole as the new Senate Majority Leader.

Mrs Chan gave a luncheon speech at a meeting of trustees and members of the Asia Society and also briefed the media.

Questioned about her views on China fulfilling its obligations laid out in the Joint Declaration, Mrs Chan said she believed the Chinese leaders realised that the way in which Hong Kong could prosper and assist China in its modernisation programme was for the territory to remain substantially as it was today.

"I'm not saying that there will not be changes," she said.

"But I think changes bring opportunities. And Hong Kong people have perhaps demonstrated that we're better able than most to adapt to changes and to make the most of changes and the opportunities that they bring."

Turning to the legislature, Mrs Chan said this was a key area of concern. She said the legislature that was elected last year was fully consistent with the Basic Law and the Joint Declaration.

"In terms of continuity and confidence, particularly in the remaining days of transition, clearly the best outcome would be to allow the current legislature to straddle 1997 to serve the normal four-year term, which would take it to 1999," Mrs Chan said, adding that a provisional legislature was neither justified nor necessary.

"It will create a good deal of confusion and uncertainty, and we therefore remain opposed to the setting up of any provisional legislature," Mrs Chan told US media.

Mrs Chan leaves the US on Saturday (June 15, US time) for Hong Kong.

End

#### Efforts to speed up restaurant licensing

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The Buildings Department has proposed a simplified procedure for vetting premises intended for use as restaurants, the acting Assistant Director of Buildings (Specialist), Mr Philip Lau, said today (Saturday).

Mr Lau said the department had recently conducted a review on restaurant licensing and identified the difficulties encountered in processing the large number of applications referred from the two licensing authorities, that is, Urban Services Department (USD) and Regional Services Department (RSD).

"For all first-time applications, the Buildings Department is able to achieve a targeted standard of informing the applicants of the results and licensing requirements within 30 days of the applications.

"As to re-submitted applications, longer processing time is needed, mainly because of the extra time required for vetting remedial proposals and verifying compliance with the requirements under the Buildings Ordinance.

"The longer processing time for these re-applications has caused some concern," Mr Lau said.

To tackle the problem in the long run, the department proposes to simplify the procedures by way of a three-tier system for verification of compliance of licensing requirements:

- (a) applicant to verify compliance direct to USD/RSD in respect of requirements relating to matters of fact, for example, whether a fish tank on a canopy has been removed; whether a doorway has been widened from 800 millimetres to 850 millimetres;
- (b) the applicant's authorised person or registered structural engineer to verify compliance direct to USD/RSD in respect of requirements which involve a professional appraisal relative to well established standards; for example, whether the provision of means of escape meets with stipulated standards; whether any part of the premises is overloaded; and
- (c) the applicant's authorised person or registered structural engineer to verify compliance to Buildings Department in cases of more serious concerns about building safety.

"These simplified procedures will bring about a significant reduction, about two-third, of the normal time required in processing restaurant licence applications. Random checking will also be carried out to monitor the certification arrangements.

"If public safety is subsequently found to be compromised as a result of the premises being licensed on the basis of inaccurate information, the Buildings Department will take action under the Buildings Ordinance to remove any danger and/or carry out other appropriate enforcement actions," Mr Lau said.

The Buildings Department is consulting the two licensing authorities and plans to implement the new procedures as soon as the results of all consultations are taken into account, including the views of the restaurant trade.

"If the new system is found to be effective, it may be extended to other kinds of licensing, such as cinemas, or child care centres," Mr Lau said.

End

Transcript of CS's media session

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Following is the transcript of the remarks made to reporters by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, on her return from the United States this (Sunday) evening:

CS: Hello everyone. Very happy to see you all. I've been away for three weeks, really far too long. But this trip has taken me to seven cities in the United States and it's generally given me a very good opportunity to bring people up-to-date on where we currently stand, how we're preparing for the transition and what the future holds for us. Particularly in Washington I've been able to follow up on the Governor's visit some six weeks ago and specifically to address our concerns on MFN extension for China, to emphasise how important this is for us. In Washington I met with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, his deputy Strobe Talbott, and his assistant Mr Winston Lord. I also met with the National Security Advisor Mr Anthony Lake and with the Secretary for the Treasury Mr Rubin. In addition I also met with key members of the House and Senate including Senator William Roth who is Chairman of the Finance Committee, the new Senate Majority Leader Mr Trent Lott and various other key officials, not only to lobby for MFN extension for China but also to discuss the prospects for permanent MFN for China, to bring senior officials and members of the House and Senate up-to-date on transition and to address specific concerns that people have had. In other cities I've also met with local government leaders, with business leaders and in Los Angeles I was particularly glad to have the opportunity to meet with many people from Hong Kong.

This has on the whole been a very worthwhile visit. As I've said, it's not only enabled us to talk about how we're preparing for the transition, it's clearly helped to strengthen our business links, to promote more cultural links and also to speak specifically to academics and members of think tank who of course have a great deal of interest in what's happening in Hong Kong. Secretary Christopher particularly reaffirmed the United States' enduring interest in Hong Kong, their interest in seeing a smooth transition and seeing a smooth implementation of the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

I've on this occasion been able to on the one hand address the positive aspects of our transition and about the future, in particular to draw attention to how much has been achieved in the last 12 years on implementing the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. But of course at the same time as the Governor found on his previous visit, I've also had to address specific concerns put to me about the transition in particular centring around China's threat to put in place a provisional legislature, the scepticism over whether China will protect human right including press freedom. I think on the one hand whilst it is possible to be positive about the future we also have to acknowledge that there are problems. I've tried to point out where these problems are and I've said that of course in many instances in the final analysis the reassurances that the people of Hong Kong are looking for and our trading partners particularly in the United States are looking for must come from China.

Now in this respect I'd like to say one word about the provisional legislature because quite frankly I've been very surprised at local reporting that there is a difference of opinion between the Governor and myself. Let me make it quite clear, there is no difference of opinion. The Administration's view remains that we have a legislature that was elected in fair and open elections last September. It is a credible, legitimate legislature that enjoys the support of the people of Hong Kong. Clearly the community wishes to see this legislature straddle 1997 and for members of the legislature to serve their full four year term. When I met Mr Lu Ping in Beijing earlier, I've already made it quite clear to him that we are opposed to the setting up of a provisional legislature. We will not provide any assistance in the setting up of this provisional legislature. We remain of the view that the current legislature should continue. Moreover, I have also made it clear we will not do anything that will in anyway undermine the working of the current legislature. In this respect of course we welcome Mr Qian Qichen's statement that on this side of 1997 there will only be one legislature. To that extent it take cares of one aspect of the problem. But whilst I was in the States I made it quite clear to everyone I met that I see great difficulty ahead in this area of the continuity of the legislature.

Question: Mrs Chan. Were you saying this in LA that it was inevitable ...?

CS: No. I think if your were there. I've double-checked everything I have said. I've stated the position which the Government has which I've just reiterated. I was then asked, but the Chinese have made it very clear they intend to proceed. So what I said was, yes it is true that many people have told us that the Chinese will proceed with this, I then followed on what I've already told you. So let me make that quite clear. I hope you will clarify that.

Question: Did you also go on to say that that if it was to be set up, then you would want it to be as representative as possible?

CS: It's not my view. I think it is the view of the Hong Kong people and it is the view of people outside. What they are concerned about is, if the Chinese insist that the current legislature cannot continue, then how is the provisional legislature going to be formed. Is it going to be representative? Because at the end of the day the concern must be how representative this provisional legislature and the new legislature to replace it will be. These are concerns that Hong Kong people have, these are concerns that the Americans have put to me at every level.

Question: Are there splits within the civil service about the legitimacy of the provisional legislature?

CS: No. I've already stated the Administration has one view and that view I've already restated very very clearly.

End

### Deadline for electrical workers to register by experience

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The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (Sunday) reminded electrical workers that the existing channel which allows them to register as Grade A electrical workers by experience will expire on November 1 this year.

At present, an applicant is qualified to register as a Grade A electrical worker if he satisfies the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (DEMS) that he has been employed as an electrical worker for at least six years, of which at least one year includes practical experience in electrical work.

"From November 2 onwards, whoever wishes to apply for registration as a Grade A electrical worker will have to, apart from having sufficient working experience in electrical work, possess the required academic qualifications or pass the Grade A Trade Test approved by the DEMS," said a spokesman for the department.

Meanwhile, the spokesman said, under the registration scheme, there are also Grade B and Grade C electrical workers who can perform more complex low voltage electrical work.

Any worker without formal academic qualifications who wishes to be qualified for registration as a Grade B or C electrical worker is required to pass an examination approved or set by DEMS.

The examination for registration as a Grade B worker is held regularly twice a year by the Hong Kong Examination Authority while the examination for registration as a Grade C worker will be available the first time this year.

"The examination for registration as a Grade C worker is now jointly organised by EMSD, the University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers. It will be conducted in the first week of November each year starting from 1996," he said.

The spokesman explained that there would be no minimum entry requirement for the examination, although preference would be given to current registered electrical workers, in particular Grade B electrical workers.

"A candidate who has passed the examination will still have to fulfil the electrical work experience requirement as laid down in the Electricity (Registration) Regulations if he wishes to apply for registration as a Grade C electrical worker," he said.

Details of the examination syllabus and sample questions are contained in a booklet "Notes on Examination for Registration as a Grade C Electrical Worker" which is available free from:

- \* Electrical and Mechanical Services Department  
Customer Service Office  
ground floor, 98 Caroline Hill Road  
Hong Kong;
- \* University of Hong Kong  
Department of Electrical and Electrical Engineering  
Room 601, Chow Yei Ching Building  
Pokfulam Road  
Hong Kong; and
- \* Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
Department of Electrical Engineering  
Hung Hom  
Kowloon

The spokesman added that in accordance with the Electricity Ordinance, all electrical workers engaged in electrical work on fixed electrical installations after June 1, 1992 had to register with EMSD.

"This is to ensure that electrical work is done only by qualified electrical workers to improve electrical safety.

"So far, 57,108 qualified electrical workers have been registered," he said.

End

Guidelines for residential densities revised

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Chapter two of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) on residential densities have been revised.

The revised chapter mainly represents a review and formulation of density controls for private residential development that have been approved under recent strategic studies, a spokesman for the Planning Department said today (Monday).

The spokesman pointed out that the revision was necessary in order to meet changes in demographics, improvement in living standards, increased aspirations and the geographical distribution of development pressures. The last review was done in 1991.

"Existing guidelines of the chapter have been revised to prevent residential development from reaching a level at which residents would be adversely affected by social and environmental problems.

"It will also help to ensure an appropriate balance between residential population and the capacity of existing or planned facilities and infrastructure," he said.

The revised Chapter two has introduced a new set of population density guidelines to facilitate the initial estimation of population capacity and land requirements at different planning stages.

"The population density tables in the old chapter have been replaced by a set of charts which convert building density or plot ratio into population capacity on sites of different areas.

"These charts can be used to obtain initial estimates of population capacity and land requirements for strategic, district and site planning purposes," the spokesman explained.

"The revised chapter also sets out the maximum domestic plot ratio for private residential development/redevelopment in specified residential zones and geographical areas such as Metroplan Area, New Towns and Rural Areas.

"It introduces a range of building height and site coverage restrictions to enable a variety of building heights to be adopted to fit in with urban design objectives and to ensure development is of an appropriate scale in relation to its landscape setting."

HKPSG comprises a series of 11 chapters with each devoted to a particular aspect of land use or facility.

The revised Chapter two of HKPSG is now on sale at \$38 per copy at the Government Publications Centre on ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

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Air-conditioning for centres for elderly

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Elderly people taking part in social and recreational activities or being looked after in various elderly centres will enjoy the comfort of air-conditioning during the forthcoming hot summer season, thanks to a generous donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

In 1994-95, the Trust had allocated \$7.28 million to non-governmental organisations for the installation of air-conditioners in the activity areas of various elderly centres.

Installation work for most centres was completed in 1995-96, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department said.

End