



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of the Governor's media session

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The following is the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, this (Thursday) morning at Central Government Offices:

Governor: ... Having a discussion with Mr Tsang before I go off on my holiday. He is, you know, acting as Governor until Mrs Chan returns to the office on 1 August. So we have been talking about one or two on-going issues. Any questions?

Question: Governor, on Monday when the Canadian ... Axworthy made public the Hong Kong Government's involvement the dissidents. Does it represent any setback in the movement, do you feel that by making it public it has hurt China?

Governor: I think all of you know and I think the whole community knows that we never comment on these particular subject and I think the community understands the reasons for that approach on our part. That has been our position and will remain our position. I don't think that position or the interests of anyone in Hong Kong had been hurt by anything that's been said this week. We have a very good and understanding relationship with Canada as a whole and the Canadian Government in particular and I am sure that will continue.

Question: How ... in Basic Law if those dissidents stay in Hong Kong for more than seven years, will they be qualified to become the residents of Hong Kong?

Governor: I honestly don't want to add anything to what I've said and certainly I don't want to speculate about particular meanings of the Basic Law. I think you all understand the reasons for our reticence in commenting on this particular issue. It's perfectly understandable that you ask the question but I think it's also perfectly understandable that I give the answer I do.

Question: Would you elaborate on your reason, say you are not going to comment ...?

Governor: My reasons are that it's in nobody's interest for me to comment further. It's certainly not in the interests of anybody about who I might be commenting.

Question: What is your reaction to NCNA official who would like to know the content of the list?

Governor: I don't have any comment on the NCNA's interest in the issue.

Question: (Follow-up question on dissidents)

Governor: I am not meaning to be too unhelpful. But I really don't think good it is helpful for me to speculate about what actually happens to any dissidents who may be in Hong Kong. You know perfectly well, the interest around the world in this particular subject and I am sure that interest will be reflected by appropriate generosity on the part of other communities, other governments in free societies, but I don't want to go beyond that.

Question: Governor, why you sent out such a message to an overseas government representative, to the Canadian Government, that the Chinese dissidents in Hong Kong will be endangered after 1997? And you say that that approach remains the position of the Hong Kong Government, why is it so?

Governor: I don't want to add anything to what I have said.

Question: Zhang Junsheng had shown great interest to the list, so, are you going to satisfy his curiosity?

Governor: I answer that question fully and comprehensively a moment or two ago. It was put very eloquently earlier. And, I am not going to add anything to what I have said.

Question: Did you say by making it public ... said that secret undertaking ...?

Governor: No. But I think that having said that I don't think it would be very helpful if I said a great deal more publicly on the subject.

Question: Now your policy address, after you are back from your summer vacation, how can you incorporate the changes that will be taking place in the coming few or two months till the day that you announce the policy address. Will you defer it later like last year or how to take into account of the Preparatory Committee decision in the coming months?

Governor: Well, I'll be thinking about my policy address over the next few weeks as I have in previous years. We'll be writing the first draft in early September and aiming to complete it by the end of the month, may be a little earlier than that because I am giving it a little bit earlier this year. And of course, as we have in previous year we'll take account of events as late as we can. Last year if you remember there was a meeting between Mr Qian and Mr Rifkind just before the policy address and I had to reflect that in what I said in the speech itself. But we were able to do it thanks the competence of the Government Printer, and thanks to the competence of our translators who do a very good job.

Question: Mr Patten, has you got a reply to your letter to President Clinton ... the new regulations on Hong Kong textile manufacturers?

Governor: No, I haven't yet had a reply. Obviously we'll be very interest in what the President has to say. I think the American administration now understands if it didn't understand earlier what an important issue this is for Hong Kong, and how concern all part of the community are, by what we believe to have been unfair unilateral action by the US administration.

Question: Governor, what is your remarks on Mr Winston Lord's comment that the US government is ... pointing out the Provisional LegCo ... is a breach of the Joint Declaration?

Governor: What Ambassador Lord said was exactly what the State Department and the American administrations has been saying for some years. It didn't represent any departure whatsoever. Their position which I think they've expressed very carefully, is an understandable one, that is they're not parties to the Treaty which the Joint Declaration is. And it's primarily a matter for others to say whether or not an individual cause of action would be in breach of that Treaty. That's been their consistent position.

Question: Governor, Canada as a matter of course takes in refugees ... around the world. Do you think that in making those comments that the external affairs minister under estimated the secrecy that you were trying to ...

Governor: I am sure he wouldn't under-estimate anything. You are quite right in saying that Canada has a distinguished record in providing a safe haven for refugees. As you will remember Canada had one of the best records of helping with the Vietnamese, particularly in the earlier days when they were deemed to be refugees and Canada has helped in many other respects as well. Canada has a very good record on these matters and I am sure Mr Axworthy intends that record would be maintained. He has a distinguished past himself as a champion of human rights and civil liberties.

Question: Governor, would you like to comment on ... about the use of hydrogen peroxide, as a sacred water for healing illness ...

Governor: I am going to answer that question, Carrie. I think that advice on that subject would come better from the Director of Health rather than from me.

Question: So after your vacation ...

Governor: Well, there're three priorities I think from the autumn onwards. The first is that I want to see the final implementation of the programme that I put in hand in 1992 on livelihood issues, on opening up government and making it more transparent. All those programmes to help the disabled, to help the elderly, to help children and young people. I want to make sure that those are implemented as fully as possible. As you know, we've reported on our implementation of those programmes regularly every autumn and we'll be doing exactly the same again this year. We have to point out from time to time those pledges that we are not doing so well on, I don't regard that as a sign of terrible weakness. I regard that as an important example of the Government being open with the public. Secondly, there are of course a number of specific transition issues that we need to make sure are resolved. There are questions like right of abode and adaptation of laws where we're having continuing discussion with Chinese officials. I very much hope that we can clarify for instance all those right of abode questions which have caused some concern. I think we're moving, I have to say in the right direction but I think there're still some clarifications that are required. So I'll want to see a successful conclusion to that transition business. Thirdly, I want to try to ensure that Hong Kong at the transition is in as good shape as possible. And that means doing all that we can to ensure that the economy remains sound and doing all that we can to make sure that there is as much confidence in the future of Hong Kong as possible. That confidence would of course be much greater if Chinese officials in the coming months would be rather careful in what they say and do about some of the matters which greatly concern people in Hong Kong, like the credibility of our representative institutions and the defence of our civil liberties. So I'll be speaking out, continuing to speak out on those matters as well. Last question.

Question: There is a saying that after the Chief Executive of the SAR is elected, the Chief Secretary of Hong Kong Government has to stop her work and help the Chief Executive, would you comment on that?

Governor: Well, I think I answered this question last week on a couple of occasions and I don't think I've got anything to add. I don't think it's terribly helpful to speculate about precisely what help a Chief Executive Designate would want before there is Chief Executive Designate. Once there is a Chief Executive Designate, we'll want to talk to him or her about what his or her requirements are and we'll then try to provide the assistance which the Chief Executive Designate will want, will require. Obviously, a Chief Executive Designate will want assistance in starting to think through his or her strategy, in shaping his or her first policy address. Those are all the sort of issues on which a Chief Executive Designate would want assistance and we think it is very important that the Chief Executive Designate has an office, has transport, has the staff which are appropriate to do the job properly. The whole community would expect that to happen. But at the same time the whole community would expect the existing Hong Kong Government to be as capable of doing its job as possible.

Question: Would you say what level of staff ...?

Governor: Of course, I can't.

Question: Governor, this is your last summer holiday as the Governor. How are you going to spend it?

Governor: I am going to spend it in reading, walking, gardening, playing tennis, seeing my children, talking to my wife, picking fruit, ... I am going to do, spend the holiday I guess the way most of you do by trying to relax and at the same time do a bit of work so I can keep reasonably fit. I'll be doing that in French mostly. Thank you very much indeed, have a good summer.

End

S for T on MTRC train disruption

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The Secretary for Transport, Mr Gordon Siu, today (Thursday) asked the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) to make every effort to ensure that they provide a safe, reliable and efficient train service.

He conveyed the Administration's concern to the chairman of MTRC, Mr Jack So, after the suspension of train services between Mei Foo and Prince Edward stations.

Mr Siu said he had also decided to invite the Deputy Chief Inspecting Officer of Railways of the United Kingdom Railway Inspectorate, Mr Alan Cooksey, to come to Hong Kong to look into the recent spate of incidents relating to the disruption of MTRC train services.

"I have asked Mr Cooksey to investigate the causes of recent incidents and to advise on the necessary remedial measures. Mr Cooksey's report will be published," Mr Siu said.

Commenting on today's suspension of train service, Mr Siu said he was satisfied with the emergency repair work taken by MTRC.

He pointed out that upon notification of the incident, the Transport Department immediately activated its Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre to arrange alternative transport for the travelling public.

"Hong Kong's Chief Inspecting Officer (Railways) immediately went to the scene of incident to look into the matter", he said.

Mr Siu expressed his appreciation to Kowloon Motor Bus Company, China Motor Bus Company and Hong Kong and Yaumatei Ferry Company for their assistance in providing additional bus and ferry services.

"The quick response and adequate support from the bus and ferry companies have helped alleviate the problem," he noted.

End

Building condition satisfactory: survey

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Over three-quarters of the buildings constructed between 1946 and 1958 were found to be in a satisfactory condition, according to a survey commissioned by the Buildings Department.

The survey, which covered 4,308 buildings constructed between 1946 and 1958 with cantilevered elements, was aimed at investigating the durability and deterioration trend of the buildings and to devise a strategy for future inspection and investigation.

Announcing the survey findings at a press conference today (Thursday), Assistant Director of Buildings (Specialist), Mr Lau Yiu-wah, said the external condition of the buildings, with specific focus on their cantilevered elements, were inspected.

"It was revealed that 77 per cent of the building flats had cantilevers in a satisfactory condition and about 23 per cent required some kinds of follow-up actions.

"Only 0.13 per cent of the flats, involving 32 buildings, were suspected to be in a potentially dangerous conditions where appropriate actions have already been taken," he said.

The survey also covered inspection of the internal condition of about 29,500 flats. Ninety-four per cent of the flats are either in sound or fair condition while the remaining six per cent were considered to have some structural problems.

Mr Lau stressed that proper and regular maintenance to buildings were the keys to slow down their deterioration rate and to extend their service life.

"The consultants have concluded that since some of the buildings would continue to progressively deteriorate with time, inspection programmes should be developed to rectify the situation," he said.

As a short-term measure, the Buildings Department has commenced a programme of detailed inspections to ensure safety of all the buildings covered by the survey. Potential dangers which may risk degenerating into imminent dangers will be identified and removed.

"The order and frequency of inspections will be prioritised according to the severity of the deterioration as revealed in the study. It is targeted that the operation can be completed within 12 months.

"In the long term, it is the responsibility of property owners to keep their buildings well-maintained and repaired.

"The Government is actively considering the proposal of mandatory inspection of buildings by owners. This idea is highly endorsed by the consultants," said Mr Lau.

He pointed out that some observable building defects, such as spalled concrete, structural cracks with stains, and loose or bulging rendering, could develop into a serious hazard if they were ignored.

"If members of the public identify any of these problems, they should engage building professionals to carry out proper repair works or report to the Buildings Department through the department's 24-hour telephone hotline 2626 1234.

"I wish to reiterate that the safety of buildings relies heavily on the owners' co-operation to fulfil their responsibility of maintaining their properties," Mr Lau said.

End

Climbing lanes to improve Tuen Mun traffic flow

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Additional climbing lanes on four sections of the Kowloon-bound carriageway of Tuen Mun Road will be open to traffic in stages from Saturday (July 27) to improve traffic flow.

Announcing the details today (Thursday), Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West of the Transport Department, Mr Chow Ying-shun, said the new lane on the So Kwun Wat section would be the first to open at 6 am on Saturday.

It will be followed by sections of Tai Lam, Sam Shing Hui and Ting Kau respectively. However, part of the Tai Lam and Ting Kau sections will not be completed for the time being.

With the provision of a new lane and a full width hard shoulder along the widened sections, the right most lane (fourth lane) along these sections will become a new climbing lane for Kowloon-bound traffic.

"Motorists should exercise extreme care and patience when they merge with the third lane at the end of the climbing lane," said Mr Chow.

Appropriate traffic signs and lane markings indicating the start and end points of the climbing lane (fourth lane) will be provided.

In view of technical difficulties in construction, the climbing lane at Tai Lam between Brother's Point and Ka Loon Tsuen could not be completed on time.

To facilitate interfacing construction works, part of the Ting Kau section has been included in the Ting Kau Bridge and approach viaduct project for completion early next year.

A hard shoulder will be provided only along this part of Ting Kau section as traffic volume on this part of Tuen Mun Road will be reduced following the operation of Ting Kau Bridge next year.

On traffic arrangements in connection with the opening of these climbing lanes, the existing bus only lane (BOL) on the left most lane (first lane) between 7 am and 9 am daily will continue except Sundays and public holidays.

During the operating hours of BOL, the existing prohibitions will remain in force:

- * banning vehicles on Castle Peak Road from entering Tuen Mun Road Kowloon-bound at Siu Lam Interchange;
- * banning vehicles over three tonnes on Castle Peak Road from entering Tuen Mun Road Kowloon-bound at Sham Tseng Interchange;
- * banning vehicles on Tuen Mun Road Kowloon-bound from entering Castle Peak Road at Siu Lam Interchange and Sham Tseng Interchange.

All motorists using Tuen Mun Road are required to observe expressway driving rules by keeping to their left except overtaking.

Medium and heavy goods vehicles, containers and buses should travel on the first and second lanes only. However, when the first lane is operating as BOL, they are allowed to travel on the second and third lanes, but not the fourth lane.

When the widening sections at Siu Lam and Ting Kau are completed, an extra lane will be provided on Tuen Mun Road Kowloon-bound at Siu Lam Interchange and Sham Tseng Interchange for vehicles coming up from Castle Peak Road.

"This will provide them with sufficient time and better sight line for safe merging with Tuen Mun Road Kowloon-bound traffic," Mr Chow said.

Upon the opening of the Sham Tseng climbing lane, the existing speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour will be adjusted to 70.

The existing one-kilometre double white line between the slow and middle lanes will remain in order to maintain lane discipline.

End

Provisional statistics of retail sales for May released

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The value of total retail sales in May 1996, estimated at \$17.8 billion, increased by 5% when compared with May 1995, according to the provisional figures released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

After discounting the effect of price changes over the period, total retail sales showed virtually no change in volume.

Compared with a year ago, sales of motor vehicles increased by 10% in value and 9% in volume. This is consecutively the third month where year-on-year growth in volume terms has been registered since July 1994.

Concurrently, sales of some other commodities also recorded increases in both value and volume terms. These included miscellaneous consumer goods (8% in value and 3% in volume); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (8% in value and 3% in volume); consumer durable goods other than motor vehicles (3% in value and 2% in volume); and clothing and footwear (9% in value and 1% in volume). Sales in supermarkets also went up by 9% in value and 3% in volume.

On the other hand, sales of fuels registered virtually no change in value but declined by 8% in volume. Sales in department stores and sales of jewellery, watches and clocks and valuable gifts both went down by 3% in value. In volume terms, their respective decreases were 8% and 5%.

Compared with April 1996 (but bearing in mind that this comparison is affected by seasonal factors), total retail sales in May 1996 increased by 6% in value and 5% in volume.

Comparing the period from January to May 1996 with the same period in 1995, total retail sales rose by 5% in value and 0.3% in volume.

The volume of retail sales is derived from the value of retail sales after adjusting for price changes. The relevant components of the consumer price index are used as deflators.

Table 1 presents the revised total retail sales figure for April 1996 and the provisional figure for May 1996.

Table 2 shows the value and volume indices of retail sales in May 1995, April 1996 and May 1996 for all retail outlets and by type of retail outlets, with average retail sales from October 1994 to September 1995 taken as 100.

Comparisons of the May 1996 results with those for April 1996 and those for May 1995, as well as comparison of retail sales in the period from January to May of 1996 with the same period in 1995 are also given.

The report containing the analysis of the May 1996 results is now on sale at \$4 per copy at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, ground floor, Low Block, 66 Queensway; and the Publications Unit of the Census and Statistics Department, 19th floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be directed to the Wholesale and Retail Trade Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2802 1258.

TABLE 1 : TOTAL RETAIL SALES

Total Retail Sales for May 1996 (Provisional Figure) = HK\$17,837.1 million
for April 1996 (Revised Figure) = HK\$16,827.5 million

TABLE 2 : VALUE AND VOLUME INDICES OF RETAIL SALES FOR MAY 1995, APRIL AND MAY 1996

(Monthly average of Oct 94 - Sept 95 = 100)

Type of Outlet	Type of Index	Index Number			% Change		
		May 1995 (Revised figures)	April 1996 (Revised figures)	May 1996 (Provisional figures)	May 1996 compared with Apr 1996	May 1996 compared with May 1995	Jan - May 1996 compared with Jan - May 1995
(A) FOR ALL RETAIL OUTLETS		(Point)	(Point)	(Point)	(%)	(%)	(%)
	Value	98.2	96.9	102.7	+6.0	+4.7	+5.3
	Volume	96.4	91.4	96.3	+5.3	-0.1	+0.3
(B) BY TYPE OF RETAIL OUTLETS							
Food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (other than supermarkets)	Value	101.7	110.6	110.2	-0.4	+8.3	+8.4
	Volume	103.7	102.6	106.6	+3.8	+2.8	+3.4
Supermarkets ϕ	Value	97.3	98.8	106.0	+7.3	+8.9	+8.6
	Volume	96.1	92.1	98.7	+7.1	+2.6	+1.6
Fuels	Value	104.7	99.2	104.6	+5.4	-0.1	+4.4
	Volume	103.0	91.3	95.2	+4.3	-7.6	-2.8
Clothing, footwear and allied products	Value	107.3	102.6	117.2	+14.2	+9.2	+13.4
	Volume	101.9	92.9	102.9	+10.8	+1.0	+5.2
Consumer durable goods	Value	92.0	97.9	96.7	-1.2	+5.0	-3.7
	Volume	91.4	97.0	95.5	-1.5	+4.5	-4.4
- Motor vehicles and parts	Value	78.5	79.7	86.0	+7.9	+9.5	-19.6
	Volume	78.2	79.0	85.4	+8.1	+9.2	-19.5
- Consumer durable goods other than motor vehicles and parts	Value	100.2	108.9	103.1	-5.2	+2.9	+5.7
	Volume	99.4	107.9	101.6	-5.8	+2.2	+4.4
Department stores	Value	97.0	86.1	94.5	+9.8	-2.5	+2.4
	Volume	93.4	80.3	86.3	+7.5	-7.6	-2.9
Jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts	Value	98.2	84.8	95.2	+12.2	-3.1	+0.5
	Volume	96.7	81.1	91.6	+13.0	-5.2	-4.6
Other consumer goods not elsewhere classified	Value	92.8	99.6	100.5	+0.9	+8.3	+10.2
	Volume	92.4	95.1	95.4	+0.3	+3.3	+5.5

NOTE : ϕ Not including supermarkets operating in department stores.
The underlined figures were rounded up to 5.

End

Countdown to closure of Sek Kong's Friday market

* * * * *

Purses at ready, ladies, for there are only four more weeks until the closure of Sek Kong's Friday market.

Administered by the Royal Air Force (RAF) for the past 14 years, it is set to close on Friday August 30 and organisers are hoping to attract bumper crowds over the last four weeks.

"We're grateful to all the people - Garrison families, locals and even the tourists - for making the market such a success and as a way of saying 'thank you' and putting something back into the community we hope to raise as much money as possible for a local charity during the remaining weeks," said Flight Lieutenant, Paul Rice.

"RAF caterers will be manning refreshments stalls, selling everything from soft drinks to bacon sandwiches, and we'll have some guys touring the market dressed as Italian ice-cream sellers peddling their wares.

"All the money collected will be presented, at the last market, to the Home of Loving Faithfulness, at Dill's Corner, which cares for children and adults with physical and mental disabilities.

"so it would be great to see as many visitors as possible over the next four weeks."

The market, which covers the five-acre married quarters estate at the bottom of Route Twisk, began, in a rough and ready form, in 1979. RAF took formal control in 1982 since when there have been 200 licensed hawkers.

"The flow of visitors over the three hours the market is open - from 9 am to 12 noon each Friday - is constant and there's rarely a quiet period," said Flt Lt Rice.

"At any one time there are about 500 to 600 people and over the course of a morning that can amount to almost 2,000 visitors."

Organisers are expecting hundreds more bargain hunters as the countdown to the closure of the market begins and they hope visitors will make donations, no matter how big or small, to RAF's nominated charity.

End

118 VMs depart on orderly repatriation flight

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A group of 118 Vietnamese migrants (VMs) returned by air to Hanoi, Vietnam, today (Thursday) on the 48th flight under the Orderly Repatriation Programme (ORP).

All of the returnees, comprising 43 men, 29 women, 24 boys and 22 girls, are from North Vietnam.

The majority of them arrived in Hong Kong in 1989, with the remaining in 1988 and 1991.

The group brought the total number repatriated on ORP flights to 4,369 since November 1991.

End

Monitors' Report submitted to CS

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The monitors appointed to observe the Orderly Repatriation Programme operation this (Thursday) morning have submitted their report to the Chief Secretary.

The two monitors comprised a non-official Justice of the Peace, Mr Joseph Chow Ming-kuen, and a representative from a non-government organisation, Mr Chan Sui-jeung from Caritas-Hong Kong.

End

Last day cover to mark closure of village post office

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The acting Postmaster General, Mr P C Luk, announced today (Thursday) that owing to the clearance of the Tiu Keng Leng Cottage Area, the Rennie's Mill Village Post Office at District 1, Rennie's Mill Village, will be closed down after business next Saturday (August 3).

A special hand-back service will be available at the Rennie's Mill Village Post Office for philatelists on that day.

Privately prepared unregistered fully postage prepaid covers bearing the superscription "Last Day Cover " and a local address, will be accepted over the counter, impressed with the normal post office datestamp and handed back to the customers.

End

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	1,957	0930	NIL
Closing balance in the account	2,112	1000	NIL
Change attributable to :		1100	NIL
Money market activity	+5	1200	+5
LAF today	+150	1500	+5
		1600	+5

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.0 *+0.1* 25.7.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.16	2 years	2805	6.30	100.10	6.33
1 month	5.15	3 years	3907	6.80	100.28	6.81
3 months	5.25	5 years	5106	7.23	99.84	7.40
6 months	5.44	7 years	7305	7.60	100.06	7.73
12 months	5.85	5 years	M502	7.30	99.59	7.55

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$11,481 million

Closed July 25, 1996

End