



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of the Governor's media session at Press Centre

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after inspecting vote-counting facilities and the Press Centre at the International Trademart, Kowloon Bay, at 6 pm today (Sunday):

Governor: Hullo, I'm very pleased to see this extremely efficient and up-to-date organisation. I've taken part in a few general elections in Britain and I'm bound to say I have never seen anything quite as competently organised and modern and up-to-date as this. I was also very pleased this morning to see at polling stations the same high level of efficiency that we've come to expect in our elections, thanks to the Boundary and Election Commission and the work of the REO. There's still over four hours left to vote so I very much hope that those who are on the register and haven't yet turned out to vote will do so this evening. The weather is still good, so there's no excuse for staying at home. I hope that as many people as possible will turn out and take their civic responsibilities seriously and vote in these important elections. Already I think about 70,000 more people have voted in the geographical constituencies than at the same time in 1991 and of course the figures for the functional constituencies are hugely greater than in 1991. But I'd still like to see more people turning out and I hope that will happen during the course of the evening.

Question: Inaudible

Governor: Clearly these are open and fair elections and I think they're proving extremely acceptable to the people of Hong Kong so to that extent yes, I think it is a vindication of the decisions taken by the Legislative Council in 1993 and 1994 with, of course, a lead being given by the Government. What I think needs to be underlined once again is how Hong Kong takes these developments in its stride. As I have said before we've had a moderate sensible campaign. Today people are going about their civic responsibilities in a moderate and sensible way. Why should we expect anything else in Hong Kong because this a sophisticated, well-educated community.

Question: Inaudible

Governor: I think, first of that you'll recall that after the District Board and Municipal elections you pressed us, among others so did the Legislative Council, to modernise and clean up our electoral register as rapidly as possible. We've done that, we've done that according to the statutory procedures so that it's as up-to-date as possible. If people have complaints that they were left off the register despite several attempts to contact them, then they can take up those complaints in the usual way but I think in comparison with some of the things we've seen elsewhere on polling day, any problems today have been pretty minor by comparison. And I repeat, they're a consequence of us doing what the community expected, which is not only to get more people on to the electoral register but to make sure that the electoral register was as accurate and up-to-date as possible. I commented on Xinhua's characteristically unhelpful remarks at lunchtime today. I think it's quite extraordinary when the people of Hong Kong are going through an election procedure like today, when they are doing what was promised to them, when they're engaged in the most credible and broadly based election in Hong Kong's history, to denounce the whole process as Xinhua did this morning. I don't think it's a very sensitive way of trying to win hearts and minds in Hong Kong and all of us wish they were more intent on doing that but I'm not surprised by it.

Question: Inaudible

Governor: Well, I think that there are two lots of figures one should be looking at. Looking in both the geographical and the functional constituencies, one is the percentage turnout, the other is the total number of people voting. Because we have been successful in increasing the number of people on the electoral register by over 600,000, in order to have the same percentage turnout rate as last time, you have to have a huge increase in the total number of people voting. We have seen an increase of about 70,000 so far, which I'm delighted about. In other words, about 15 per cent more people have turned out at this stage than in 1991 but obviously I'd like to see the figures even higher and I'd like to see us getting as close to a million as we can by the end of the day.

Question: Inaudible

Governor: I'm old enough in the arts of politics to know that that is an interesting question but one which it would be extremely foolish for me to reply to. What I would like to see, and what anybody would like to see, is as many people as possible voting. I'm pleased that so many more have voted than happened last time. After all, there were a lot of very dire predictions that very few would vote a couple of years ago, but obviously in the next four hours I hope that the figures will increase even more rapidly and we'll get as high a turnout and as high an absolute number of people voting as possible. I think one of the things that's interesting, though you're not, I admit, strictly comparing like with like, is to see the huge number of people who have voted so far in the functional constituencies. If you compare the number voting in the functional constituencies with the number who voted last time, I think you get some idea of how much more broadly based this Legislative Council is going to be than its predecessor.

Question: Inaudible

Governor: I'd say to them that the best way of ensuring that Hong Kong gets the steady process of democratisation which it was promised is to take advantage today of the opportunity of voting. We're not talking about speeding up that process of democratisation. What we're talking about is ensuring that each step along the road is a genuine step, is a genuine and open election, rather than an election which - I think I recall the remark - gives you the result you wanted before the election took place. That's not an election and I hope that Xinhua will recognise that what people in Hong Kong want is free and fair elections and they want everyone, the present sovereign and the future sovereign power, to live up to the promises that were made to them. One more question.

Reporter: In the functional constituencies, those huge gaps in the turnout rates ... 60 per cent in the labour sector and maybe 10 per cent for doctors, why do you think that is?

Governor: I don't know, it may have something to do with the nature of the functional constituency and it may have something to do with how well-known the candidates are in the functional constituencies. But I think the latest figure I saw was that well over 200,000 people had so far voted in the functional constituencies. In the last 1991 Legislative Council elections, I think I'm right in saying the total vote in all the contested functional constituency elections was just over 20,000, so we're seeing a lot of people turning out and there are obviously some ding-dong battles going on in those functional constituencies. I think that all those of you who are on the late shift tonight and watching the count and watching the results come in will have some pretty exciting contests to watch. Thanks very much indeed.

Question: Inaudible

Governor: Have you ever looked at how the American Senate works?

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Transcript of the 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 a polling station in Sheung Shui today (Sunday):

Governor: I'd just like to say two things. First of all, I'd like to express my gratitude and the Administration's gratitude to everyone in the media, in radio, in television and in the newspapers, who's encouraged the community to come out and vote today. I am grateful for the efforts that you've made. I am also particularly grateful for the work being done by 14,000 civil servants today in polling stations like this who are making a complicated system as easy and efficient as possible. I think as I said after visiting the REO last week, they are doing a superb job. You've only got to see inside to see how they are helping people through the process and it's working extremely smoothly and I am sure will throughout the day.

Question: How do you feel about the rating?

Governor: About the turnout? It's about the same as it was so far in the District Board and Municipal Council elections. We've got a much bigger electoral register. It's up by about 600,000. So even though the turnout rate is about the same as last time, it means that so far, I think over 20,000 more people have voted. I guess that's the pattern you will see through the day. If this is like the District Boards and Municipal Councils, that you will see the percentage turnout rate fluctuating either side of the average for the last elections, but the actual number of people voting will probably be much higher. It certainly is so far. The last figures I saw suggested that 180,000 people have voted so far, against 160,000 at a similar time in the last Legislative Council elections.

Question: What's your reaction to Xinhua's statement this morning that they would abolish the Legislative Council. They put out a statement just after the poll is open.

Governor: I haven't got anything to add to what I've said before. It seems to me to be an astonishing way of trying to win the hearts and minds in Hong Kong to say at the moment when the people of Hong Kong are taking part in the most credible and democratic elections in our history that you are going to give the whole thing the thumbs-down. I think that they should think again. And I certainly think they should get a little more into tune with what people in Hong Kong can do.

Question: ... there is a little like the referendum on the .. of Hong Kong about now. You see that a referendum can..

Governor: I hope that the tenure of these candidates will be for four years. These are credible, fair elections, they're the most open elections in Hong Kong's history and I am sure everybody will hope that the legislature that will emerge as a result of today's historic events, carried out its responsibilities for its full term. That would be clearly the sensible thing to do. I am sure in that the way they vote today, people are thinking not just of the short term, not just of next week's problems and next month's problems. I am sure they're expressing a view about the sort of place they want Hong Kong to be. And I think most people want Hong Kong to be an open, plural society and want both the present sovereign and the future sovereign powers to live up to the promises that have been given to the people of Hong Kong in good faith, that there would be a steady process of democratisation in the territory. One more question.

Question: There is fighting at one of the polling station ... what is your comment?

Governor: My comment is that after the District Boards and Municipal Councils elections, there is quite a lot of pressure from the media and from the Legislative Council that we should clean up the electoral register and remove people who won't be any more at that particular address. At the same time, we've tried to encourage more people to get on to the electoral register that is precisely what we've done. We've gone through a fair and reasonable process, people have had the opportunity if they think that they have been wrongly excluded from the register, of complaining to the REO, the Registration and Electoral Office which has done a terrific job and I am sure we'll handle any complaints appropriately. O.K.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Transcript of the Chief Secretary's media session

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, after touring the International Trademart Press Centre today (Sunday).

Question: Mrs Chan, in Yuen Long a group of people tried to ... into the polling station ... but they hadn't registered. What does that say about the organisations of this election?

CS: In general, I think we devoted substantial resources both in manpower, equipment and other things to ensure that this election would be conducted in a transparent, orderly fashion and so far, as far as I can ascertain, the voting has been conducted in a very calm, very responsible manner. If there are specific incidents in specific polling stations, then we have responsible officers who will sort out these difficulties. I do not anticipate any problems.

Question: How do you account for the low turnout compared to last time?

CS: I think it's a little too early to say that it's a low turnout. I've just said that in percentage terms, of course, it's slightly lower compared with 1991 but I don't think the emphasis should be placed on the percentage turnout, it should be placed on the total number of voters who have so far turned out to vote and as I said, we have 180,000 already having cast their votes, which is higher than the numbers in 1991. It's now only just past noon so there are still plenty of hours and I would urge all the registered voters to turn out to vote for their choice.

Question: Do you think voter sentiment has been affected by the threat by China to dismantle the new LegCo in 1997?

CS: I think the number of voters who have turned out actually to vote so far is encouraging but we have to see what happens in the remaining hours before the polling stations close. Okay? Thanks.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Elections acceptable to the people: Governor

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The fair and open Legislative Council elections have been proving extremely acceptable to the people of Hong Kong, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said after inspecting the vote-counting facilities and the Press Centre at the International Trademart in Kowloon Bay this (Sunday) evening.

"I think it is a vindication of the decisions taken by the Legislative Council in 1993 and 1994 with, of course, a lead being given by the Government," he said.

"What I think needs to be underlined once again is how Hong Kong takes these developments in its stride.

"As I have said before we've had a moderate sensible campaign. Today people are going about their civic responsibilities in a moderate and sensible way.

"Why should we expect anything else in Hong Kong because this is a sophisticated, well-educated community?"

Noting that the weather was still good, Mr Patten said he hoped that as many people as possible would take their civic responsibility seriously and vote.

Mr Patten said there were two lots of figures to be looking at.

"Looking in both the geographical and the functional constituencies, one is a percentage turnout, the other is the total number of people voting," he said.

With an increase of over 600,000 in the number of people on the electoral register, Mr Patten said a huge increase in the total number of people voting would be required in order to achieve the same percentage turnout rate as in the previous election.

"We have seen an increase of about 70,000 so far, which I'm delighted about.

"In other words, about 15 per cent more people have turned out at this stage than in 1991 but obviously I'd like to see the figures even higher and I'd like to see us getting as close to a million as we can by the end of the day," said the Governor.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Historic elections going well: Governor

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The most open elections in Hong Kong's history were going extremely smoothly, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said after visiting a polling station in Sheung Shui today (Sunday).

He thanked the news media for encouraging the community to vote and praised the work being done by 14,000 civil servants in polling stations across the territory.

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) was doing a superb job, he said.

"You've only got to see inside to see how they are helping people through the process and it's working extremely smoothly," Mr Patten said.

The Governor said the voter turnout was about the same rate as at the same point in the District Board and Municipal Council elections.

However, the electoral register was about 600,000 larger so an extra 20,000 people or more had voted during the morning, he said.

The actual number of people voting over the day would probably be much higher than at previous elections.

"These are credible, fair elections, they're the most open elections in Hong Kong's history and I am sure everybody will hope that the legislature that will emerge as a result of today's historic events, carries out its responsibilities for its full term," Mr Patten said.

"I am sure in that the way they vote today, people are thinking not just of the short term, not just of next week's problems and next month's problems. I am sure they're expressing a view about the sort of place they want Hong Kong to be.

"And I think most people want Hong Kong to be an open, plural society and want both the present sovereign and the future sovereign powers to live up to the promises that have been given to the people of Hong Kong in good faith, that there would be a steady process of democratisation in the territory."

Asked about reported problems at some polling booths, Mr Patten said the voter registration process had been fair and reasonable.

People who thought they had been wrongly excluded from the register could complain to the REO which would handle each case appropriately.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Voter turnout encouraging: CS

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, said she was encouraged by the total number of people who had voted up to noon when she toured the press centre at the International Trademart in Kowloon Bay today (Sunday).

"In general, I think we devoted substantial resources both in manpower, equipment and other things to ensure that this election would be conducted in a transparent, orderly fashion," Mrs Chan said.

"As far as I can ascertain, the voting has been conducted in a very calm, very responsible manner. I do not anticipate any problems."

Mrs Chan said 180,000 people had already voted, which was a higher figure than at the same stage of the 1991 election.

"It's now only just past noon so there are still plenty of hours and I would urge all the registered voters to turn out to vote," she said, declaring that the turnout so far was encouraging.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Very important day for Hong Kong: FS

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It is a very important day for Hong Kong in terms of the number of registered electors and the number of participating candidates, the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, said today (Sunday).

"We have the highest-ever figures," he said after casting his vote at the German Swiss International School on the Peak.

Mr Tsang stressed that everyone should come out as soon as possible to perform their duties as electors and at the same time elect someone who could represent their own interests and represent the interests of Hong Kong in a long term.

Meanwhile, the Attorney General, Mr Jeremy Mathews, also said he hoped as many people as possible would get out and vote.

He said: "I hope as many people as possible would seize the opportunity to get out and to vote because it really counts.

"You've got to be really in it."

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

BEC chairman urges electors to update information

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The Chairman of the Boundary and Election Commission, Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing, today (Sunday) urges electors to update their registration information with the Registration and Electoral Office without delay.

Mr Justice Woo made the remarks after a number of people were turned away from two polling stations in Yuen Long and Tai Po after finding their names were not on the Electoral Roll.

The office confirmed that the names of some 110,000 former electors were deleted from the Register because they had not responded to REO's written enquiry during the vetting exercise conducted during January and March this year to improve the accuracy of the voter register.

The Chairman said information of some 1.4 million electors were updated during the exercise.

He explained that electors whose information was suspected to be outdated in the vetting exercise were sent written inquiry and given one month to confirm their up to date particulars.

If they did not respond, then, their names would be included in the Proposed Omission List in the Provisional Register published on June 21 and they were given a statutory appeal period to lodge claims or objections.

Mr Justice Woo said it was only after this procedural safeguard, and when no further response was received would their names be deleted from the Final Register published in August.

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SCA looks forward to increased turnout

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The Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Nicholas Ng, was out early today (Sunday) to cast his vote at a polling station in Causeway Bay.

After leaving the station at Kung Lee College in Tai Hang Drive, Mr Ng urged people to vote and looked forward to an increased turnout in the Legislative Council election.

Mr Ng said the last two elections, the District Board elections last September and the Municipal Council election in March, showed a higher turnout than for previous polls.

"We look forward to the same pattern this time," he said.

"What we are striving at today is to elect a representative Legislative Council who can represent Hong Kong people, who are returned in an open and fair manner."

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Elections smooth and orderly: SCA

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The whole electoral system has been designed with the objective of an orderly, a smooth, an open and a fair election in mind.

"And so far if you look at it across the board generally, it has been a very smooth and orderly election," the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Nicholas Ng, said today (Sunday) after touring a polling station in Kwun Tong.

"Hong Kong people are pragmatic. They realised that this is an opportunity. This is an opportunity for a fair and open election. And they certainly would make the best use of this opportunity.

"And if you look at the turnout in absolute number, it's more than that in 1991," he said.

Commenting on the complaints received, Mr Ng said there had been a few isolated incidents.

"Obviously we do not want any disorderly proceedings at the polling station and in the election process," he said.

"But generally my understanding was that the complaints received so far are minor and a lot of them have been dealt with fairly satisfactorily on the spot," he added.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Come out for this meaningful election: SHA

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The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, called on registered voters to turn out for the "very meaningful" Legislative Council election today (Sunday).

After casting his vote in the Shan Kwong Road polling station this morning, Mr Suen said voters should take this opportunity to select someone who could represent them and take their interests to heart.

"There are many hours of the day left for people to come out and I take this opportunity to appeal to them to come out for this very meaningful election," he said.

"We hope that they will be able to come out in large numbers so that we would exceed the turnout rate which we achieved last time.

"We hope that we would be able to achieve more than 40 per cent of the turnout rate."

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

\$14.2M allocated to language projects

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Funds totalling \$14.42 million have been approved for the first batch of 10 language improvement projects among 98 applications in the second allocation exercise of the Language Fund.

Of the 10 successful applications which are aimed at improving language proficiency of teachers, students and members of the public, nine are on Chinese language and one is on English language.

"There is a good combination of research projects, learning packages, curriculum and student activity projects," an Education Department spokesman said.

"They all meet the stringent criteria set by the Language Fund Advisory Committee and should be a great help in raising language standards, enhancing existing efforts and meeting temporary shortfalls in language teaching resources."

The spokesman noted that three of the successful bidders encourage parents to read together with their children so as to assist them to cultivate a reading habit and brush up their language skills.

There is also a proposal on the production of a multi-media software package for the learning of Chinese characters and words for use by primary school pupils.

Invitation for the third allocation exercise of the Language Fund will close on September 30.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Education roving exhibition moves to Sha Tin

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The Education Department's roving exhibition on Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) will move to the Entrance Arena of Sha Tin New Town Plaza tomorrow (Monday).

The exhibition, which is dotted with lively, colourful cartoons, shows parents and teachers the merits of the new curriculum which encourages teachers to bring life, interest and active participation into the classroom.

It features the concept and merits of the new curriculum, assessment and reporting, along with feedback from parents and pilot schools.

It is the second roving exhibition on TOC, and is aimed at introducing the curriculum to parents who have to choose discretionary school places for their children this month in order to enter Primary 1 in September 1996.

A total of 439 schools have already indicated intention to adopt TOC in Primary 1 in the 1996-97 school year. The Government has said the secondary school places allocation system will be modified in 2001 to follow the development of TOC.

The list of schools adopting TOC in September next year will be available for viewing at the exhibition. Leaflets will be distributed and Education Department officers will be on hand to answer questions from parents.

A video on TOC will also be shown at the exhibition which opens daily from 12 noon to 7 pm.

The venues of the exhibition are: Entrance Arena, Shatin New Town Plaza (September 18 and 19); Exhibition Hall, Lok Fu Shopping Centre Phase I (September 20 and 21); Level 2, Metroplaza, Kwai Fong (September 22 to 24); Shopping Mall, Telford Centre, Kowloon Bay (September 25 and 26); and Centre Bridge, Level 2, Cityplaza, Taikoo Shing (September 27 and 28).

A spokesman for the Education Department urges parents who have to choose a primary school for their children, as well as teachers, to visit the exhibition.

End/Sunday, September 17, 1995

Water cuts in Kwun Tong and Aberdeen

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Kwun Tong will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (September 20) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains leakage detection.

The suspension will affect all the premises in Kwun Tong Road, Hong Ning Road, Kung Lok Road, Tung Ming Street, Hang On Street, Luen On Street, Yee On Street, Ming Chi Street, Horse Shoe Lane, 297-375 Ngau Tau Kok Road and Lotus Tower.

Flushing water supply to all premises in Aberdeen, Tin Wan and Shum Wan will also be suspended from 10 am to 3 pm on Thursday (September 21) because of maintenance works.

The areas affected will include all the premises bounded by Tin Wan Hill Road, Yue Kwong Road and Aberdeen Praya Road, those along Shum Wan Road, Welfare Road, Nam Long Shan Road as well as Shek Pai Wan Estate.

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