



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of the Governor's media session in a counting station

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Transcript of the Governor the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's media session after visiting a counting station in Wan Chai:

Governor: First of all, I'd like to congratulate Justice Woo and the Boundary and Election Commission for organising once again a successful day for Hong Kong. I'd like also to thank all those returning officers and every one else who has helped with the arrangements for today's polling of the Municipal Council Elections. As you know, the overall result, I'm not talking about who wins which contest, but the overall result for Hong Kong is a good one. We've seen a higher turnout than the last Municipal Council Elections. Perhaps, more significant since we now have a record voter registration, a higher turnout has meant a very much larger number of people who have voted. Altogether about 168,000 more people have voted in these Municipal Council Elections than in the last one in 1991. That's an increase of over 40 per cent. It's also interesting that in the two District Board By-elections today, the turnout was actually higher than it was in the District Board Elections last autumn. So, I think that's an indication of the continuing interest of the people of Hong Kong in civic issues, in helping to put their stamp on the way Hong Kong is run and helping to affect the way day to day issues are dealt with. There were a couple of unfortunate incidents, I understand, involving scuffles around polling stations. Obviously those are matters for the Police and all of us regret that they have happened. But I think it's important to keep this sort of things in context and if you compare what had happened in some other communities where they held elections in the very peaceful way, an orderly way in which by and large we conducted our elections in Hong Kong. I think that does give you a further piece of evidence that these elections are part of Hong Kong's stability and demonstrates how mature and moderate people of Hong Kong are.

Question: There are two cases of scuffles, could you see it as rivalry between pro-Beijing faction and pro-democracy?

Governor: I don't want to comment on individual parties or disagreement that individual parties have. But by and large, however strong the feelings of individual parties and individual candidates, the argument has been kept within the bounds of civilised debate. That is something which has been a hallmark of political development here in Hong Kong. I repeat that one should perhaps compare what happens here with what happens in some other communities. I think you then realise that we don't have too much to worry about.

Question: Do you think the scuffles will.. to China and suggest that more direct elections can create chaos?

Governor: No.

Question: Could you elaborate?

Governor: I've pointed out that two scuffles should be kept in context while they're regrettable. I think you should compare the way we've held elections with the way little sort of things that happened in other communities. As I said earlier in the day, there are some communities where they've only able to have elections with the help of UN police and forces. So I think people should keep these things in context.

Question: Why there is lower voter turnout in rural areas?

Governor: I'm not sure. You have to ask the individual candidates I think. There may well be particular local reasons why the turnout is lower in some areas than others, why there are differences between urban areas and rural areas. But I don't think that you can generalise if you are answering a question on individual turnout of a constituency.

Question: While we know Hong Kong is not like Cambodia where UN officials....we didn't see any scuffles in the last District Board Elections..... ?

Governor: I do think, though I haven't had full reports on these two incidents, I do think that you should keep them in context. We had today a record number of people voting in Municipal Council Elections. It'd been a lovely day. The people of Hong Kong have taken this further development in the political life of the territory completely in their strides. In a couple of cases, people extremely ill-advisedly seemed to have lost their tempers. But I don't think that the behaviour of a handful of people should be held against the over half a million who voted and who went about their business for the great degree of consciousness. We've had, I think, probably a livelier campaign with the Municipal Council Elections than we've ever had in Hong Kong before, certainly a record number of candidates competing for votes from a record number who have registered to vote. While a couple of incidents are regrettable, I really don't think you should turn them into the equivalent of Pearl Harbour.

Question: Two elections have already passed. One more to go. What messages have you got to ....

Governor: I don't think it's a question of me sending messages. I think the messages are for the people of Hong Kong. What we've seen in the District Board Elections, in the Municipal Council Elections is many more people, hundreds of thousands more people in Hong Kong, taking the opportunity of behaving with civic consciousness and putting their own stamp on the sort of community that they want to live in. We'll see that further in the Legislative Council Elections in the autumn. I'm sure we'll have a vigorous campaign in the run up to those elections with everybody representing every point of view, including some points of view which Peking officials would find themselves in sympathy with, representing every point of view and putting those points of view before the electors, for the judgement of the electors. Now that is just an aspect of Hong Kong's maturity. The fact that it'd done on the whole in such a moderate and sensible way shouldn't surprise anybody, because this is one of the most sophisticated, well educated, prosperous, successful communities in the world. I've said earlier that that development doesn't represent a threat to anything or anybody. It doesn't represent a threat to Hong Kong's stability. Look at how stable we are and how prosperous we are today, nor does it represent a threat to anybody else's community or anybody else's stability. It's part of the maturing of this great territory. I hope that what has happened will help some people who appear not to have done so in the past to trust Hong Kong.

Question: Mr Li Peng said in his speech to the NPC that he was looking forward to Britain honouring the Joint Declaration and co-operating with China. What's your reaction to that?

Governor: We've seen the Government honouring the Joint Declaration today. This is part of what the Joint Declaration promised the people of Hong Kong. I very much hope that all of us can look forward to greater co-operation between Britain and China in the interest of Hong Kong. That's what all of us want to see. Of course, co-operation involves people grasping your hand when you put it out to them. So I trust that the Prime Minister's words will be reflected in actions and in the interest of the people of Hong Kong during the next two and a half years and beyond. I think that we've achieved a very great deal in Hong Kong. We've laid the foundations for an immensely successful future for the SAR. It's what all of us want to see. We've more likely to see it if we have positive and constructive co-operation from China in the JLG and elsewhere and I trust that we can look forward to that. I hope today will be the beginning of spring. Thank you very much.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Transcript of the Governor's media session outside press centre

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The following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after visiting the Press Centre for the Municipal Councils elections at the City Hall this (Sunday) afternoon:

Governor: I went to Yuen Long this morning to see the polling there and the figures that we heard this morning have been continued pretty well through the day. The turnout is fairly consistently higher than it was in the last Municipal Council elections. Perhaps even more significantly with a record voter registration this year, the actual number of people voting is very substantially higher, about 95,000 more people have voted by 4:30 pm than last time. And we're well on our way to passing the number who voted in 1991. There's still over five hours to go of what's been a beautiful sunny day. So I hope that everyone will take the chance of getting out and voting in these elections for their Municipal Councils which do an important job in Hong Kong, and I am sure that many people will want to put their imprint on the work of the councils over the next few years. The arrangements seem by and large to have gone even more smoothly in the Municipal Council Elections than in the District Board elections. There's still some time to go. But we're obviously learning some lessons very rapidly. And as I say by and large the elections have been as well conducted as they would be, I think, anywhere in the world. And that's a great credit to all the officials, all the civil servants and all the parties and candidates who've been involved. So, so far, so good. But five hours to go. And I hope that those who haven't yet voted will leave the television or whatever else they are doing for a few minutes and go down to the polling stations and cast a vote.

Question: What, do you think, would you hope Beijing will learn from this?

Governor: I think it's for people to take their own lessons, but clearly, candidates who would customarily associate themselves with some of the views expressed by Peking officials have taken an active part in this campaign. I think everybody welcomes that. It's important that all points of view are reflected in the campaign. And I think that what everybody knows is that conducting elections like this isn't a threat to anybody. Hong Kong manages these things by and large with considerable moderation and considerable success. What we're talking about is people having some influence over the day-to-day decisions that affect their lives. And I think that's something that should be welcomed here and everywhere else. So I hope that this will be one of the paving stones back to a more co-operative relationship in the last and important months and years of transition. I hope that we'll be able to say when we look back on today's elections that they've been as good a day for Hong Kong as the District Board elections polling day was.

Question: What is the factor for this high rate?

Governor: I think the main reason for the increasing number of people voting, if you look at the DB elections, if you look at the MC elections, is that people are not in any dangerous way; people are steadily more interested in having a say about the way their own lives are shaped. Obviously, people have been interested in the issues raised in the campaign. There have been some interesting, important debates. But, by and large, candidates have been talking about street corner, neighbourhood issues. And they involve people in that and that's why I think more people come out to vote. Clearly, the weather is a help as well. It's easier to go out to vote when the sun's shining than when it's pouring with rain. But nevertheless, I think overall this is part of the steady, unthreatening, maturing of this community and this society. And I think that should be welcomed. What I always think is surprising is when you go along to a polling station on a day like this, when you see Hong Kong conducting an election as maturely as this, you think to yourself what's all the fuss been about? What's the big deal? Hong Kong is capable of taking these sorts of things in its stride. One of the most sophisticated, one of the most successful, one of the most stable, one of the most prosperous communities in the world, of course, we can conduct things like the Municipal Council elections or DB elections or in the autumn Legislative Council elections without them being any threat to anybody, with them being part of the fabric of our society and of our Government.

Question: Do you think the high rate reflects a kind of degree of maturity in this civil mind of the people and so that becomes one of the threats that Beijing has to consider when .... constitutional affairs?

Governor: I don't think that any of us can make final judgments about the rate until 10.30 pm. There is still some time to go. And there are a lot of people who still haven't voted. But I think that it is important to look not just at the percentage turnout, but to remember that we're holding these elections against the backdrop of record registration of voters. So what's interesting is to see the absolute number of people who are going out and voting. And it's a very considerable increase and I have said in reply to two previous questions some of the reasons why I think that's happened. I think it is a totally natural development in a community like Hong Kong.

Question: About the incident this morning, what sort of appeal.....

Governor: I think everybody regrets any scuffles or punch-ups in the margins of polling day. I am sure the parties will want to ensure that its supporters, however enthusiastic they become, keep their enthusiasm within the bounds of vigorous politeness. You and I, I am sure, know that other communities, when they conduct elections, do it with rather more than the odd punch-ups. There are other communities not far from here where they have to have elections with UN policemen and others to make sure that it goes all right. In Hong Kong, I would guess that the amount of violence associated with politics and political campaigning is miles below the level that you find virtually everywhere else in the world, and that, again, is an aspect of the fact that this is a very stable, very mature, very sophisticated, very well-educated, very grown-up community. Any others?

Question: In what way do you think the Government should review about this kind of violence happen in election?

Governor: If this is a punch-up or two, that's a matter for the police and the courts. On the whole, as you know, the Government through the funding of the police, through the encouragement of the fight crime committees, and in other ways, helps to ensure that the level of crime in this community is well below that almost everywhere else in the world.

Question: Can we say in London the violence associated with politics is more serious than in Hong Kong?

Governor: I have seen in the UK from time to time political activities that are rougher than anything I have seen in Hong Kong in the last three years. But equally I have seen on my television screen much worse pictures from elsewhere in Europe, from North America and from other parts of the world. What I am saying is that a scuffle or two, though extremely regrettable and a cause of concern, shouldn't be got out of perspective. This is a community which carries out, which conducts political debate often on issues which people feel passionately about, conducts political debate in a very mature and calm and responsible way. Last question.

Question: Why did you repeatedly using the word "threats" or "threaten"? Who do you have in mind you may feel threatened, in what ways do you think he's threatened?

Governor: Sometimes, when we've talked about these issues in the past, some pro-Peking newspapers and some Chinese officials have given the impression that they think that honouring the Joint Declaration in the development of Hong Kong's governing institutions is in some way a threat either to Hong Kong's stability and prosperity, or perhaps to other things. And I was just pointing out that what has happened today is about as threatening as a pussy cat. I mean this is an example of a mature society, deciding sensibly in a civilised way how its local affairs should be run.

Question: How would you explain about Sir Hamish's budget proposal not including the 1996-97 budget to consult with the Chinese side?

Governor: Well, that was last week's question, which was asked on a number of occasions, and like Sir Hamish Macleod, I think that this is an issue which is best discussed in the Joint Liaison Group. Everybody knows that I set out in my speech to the Legislative Council last autumn proposals for consultation and co-operation with the preparatory committee and with Chinese officials over the budget and over the financial arrangements for Hong Kong in the future. That was set out with the very best intentions of Hong Kong in mind. We put those proposals in considerable detail to the Chinese side in November. We discussed them in the December JLG. And I think it would be sensible to go on discussing them in the JLG rather than to turn them into an unnecessary argument over the airwaves. I just hope that every future Financial Secretary, both before 1997 and after 1997, will produce as successful budgets as Sir Hamish Macleod has done. Thank you very much.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

#### HK manages elections with considerable success

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Hong Kong manages its elections by and large with considerable moderation and considerable success, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said this (Sunday) afternoon.

The elections have been as well conducted as they would be anywhere in the world, Mr Patten added.

The Governor was speaking after visiting the Press Centre set up in the City Hall for the Municipal Council elections.

Mr Patten said the actual number of people voting was very substantially higher, and "we are well on our way to passing the number who voted in 1991," he added.

In reply to a question, Mr Patten said: "I think it's for people to take their own lessons, but clearly, candidates who would customarily associate themselves with some of the views expressed by Peking officials have taken an active part in this campaign.

"And I think that what everybody knows is that conducting elections like this isn't threat to anybody. Hong Kong manages these things by and large with considerable moderation and considerable success."

People were steadily more interested in "having a say about the way their lives are shaped", the Governor said.

Commenting on the report of scuffle, Mr Patten said: "I think everybody regrets any scuffles or punch-ups in the margins of polling day.

"I am sure the parties will want to ensure that its supporters, however enthusiastic they become, keep their enthusiasm within the bounds of vigorous politeness.

"I would guess that the amount of violence associated with politics and political campaigning (in Hong Kong) is miles below the level that you find virtually everywhere else in the world, and that, again, is an aspect of the fact that this is a very stable, very mature, very sophisticated, very well-educated, very grown-up community."

The Governor appealed to prospective voters to come out to cast their vote.

He said: "And I hope that those who haven't yet voted will leave the television or whatever else they are doing for a few minutes and go down to the polling stations and cast a vote."

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Transcript of the Governor's media session after visiting polling station

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The following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after visiting the polling station at Lutheran Primary School, Yuen Long, this (Sunday) morning:

Governor: Morning. I am pleased to see the election arrangements, proceeding as smoothly and efficiently as ever. It's good to see people turning out on a fine day to vote for the Municipal Councils. The last turnout figures, I saw for the whole of Hong Kong at 11.30, suggested that almost 40,000 more people had voted than at the similar time in the Municipal Councils elections in 1991. So I hope that stays up and that we have a good turnout today. The Municipal Councils do an important job and I hope that as many people as possible vote to put their stamp on the policies of the Municipal Councils in the years ahead.

Question: Do you think it is a smooth election as some supporters in Kwun Tong District fight each other?

Governor: I think there was a bit of trouble in one district, but overall, the arrangements have gone as smoothly as they always do in Hong Kong. This is an extremely responsible and moderate community, and as ever people are going about their duty as citizens in a very competent and moderate way. But where there is trouble, it obviously has to be dealt with.

Question: How to avoid this kind of fighting or... affecting the clean election?

Governor: I think that in elections anywhere in the world, there is from time to time a bit of trouble when people get very excitable at the polling booths. Perhaps the remarkable thing about Hong Kong is that there's as little trouble as there is.

Question: Governor, about the village representatives in Yuen Long, you are now in a place that native villagers and in a lot of villages, they still not agree to have one person one vote...village. How do you feel about that is it fair to the both sex?

Governor: I want to have a look at the details of the particular case before commenting on it.

Question: Are you optimistic of today's voting rate?

Governor: I hope that we'll have more people voting in Hong Kong today than in the last Municipal Councils elections. Traditionally what's happened is that the turn-out rate in the Municipal Councils elections has been lower than for the District Board elections, and the situation is likely complicated this time as well by two factors. First of all by the fact that we got a record number of candidates for the Municipal Councils elections. Secondly that the voter registration is at a record level. So in order to have the same percentage turnout, you need to have a lot more people voting. In the District Board elections, we did have a lot more people voted, a record number of voters in District Board elections. It will be interesting to see how today's turnout for the Municipal Councils election compares with the 393,000 people who voted in 1991. But as I said, I hope that as many people as possible will exercise their right to vote.

Question: There is a criticism that about the Municipal Election has become politicised. What is your comment on that?

Governor: I think that the elections for Municipal Councils inevitably everywhere in the world have some politics about them. After all, the councils are talking about very important services and the expenditure of large amounts of money. And whether that's political with small "p" or a large "P", there is an element of politics about it. But I think that the electorate are sensible enough to choose the right men and women for the important job that needs to be done, and I am sure that they will weigh in the balance both the overall approach of the parties to which candidates belong if they do belong to parties rather than are independent, and will also weigh the individual qualities and the record of service to the community of the individual candidates.

Question: Up to now are you satisfied with the voting rate?

Governor: Up to now, the voting rate is higher than it was in the Municipal Councils elections in 1991. So I am reasonably pleased about that. But we obviously won't be able to get a better picture until much later in the day. I think historically it's been the case that the period of most rapid voting is in the early evening. All I would say is that I hope people will remember that this is an important day for the Government of Hong Kong and an important day for the provision of a lot of the services that people take most for granted. So I hope that they will turn out and express their views on the way Municipal Councils should be run. Okay?

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Transcript of Chief Secretary's media session

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Following is the transcript of Chief Secretary Mrs Anson Chan's media session after visiting the Press Centre for the Municipal Council elections and District Board by-elections today (Sunday):

CS: I've just cast my vote. Today is Sunday. It's a splendid sunny day. So, just the right day to cast one's vote. I've been looking at the figures, if you compare the figures with the elections in 1991, I think the voter turn-out so far is quite encouraging. Of course, I would urge all voters to turn out to vote and there's still so many hours to go. The Urban Council and the Regional Council provide very essential services in terms of health facilities and a whole range of cultural and sporting facilities. So I very much hope that all those registered voters will turn out to vote today.

Question: There's a fight this morning in Sau Mau Ping. You're probably aware of that. What sort of appeal you have?

CS: I would urge the voters to maintain law and order. I think that on this occasion, it was the supporters who got into a sort of a tussle. It's important to maintain law and order. Also, I think, not to affect other people who might want to vote and who might be put off by this disturbance, so I'd just urge everybody to maintain calm and maintain law and order.

Question: Do you know what sparked off the fight?

CS: I don't know. I haven't seen the details but I assume it was two groups of supporters, maybe just losing their temper. I think it's just essential to maintain law and order and not to get too carried away.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Voter turnout rate this morning encouraging

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, said the voter turnout at the Urban and Regional Councils elections so far this (Sunday) morning was quite encouraging as compared with the case in 1991. She was commenting on the elections after visiting the Elections Press Centre at the City Hall.

"I've just cast my vote. Today is Sunday. It's a splendid sunny day. So, just the right day to cast one's vote," she said.

"Of course, I would urge all voters to turn out to vote and there's still so many hours to go.

"The Urban Council and the Regional Council provide very essential services in terms of health facilities and a whole range of cultural and sporting facilities. So I very much hope that all those registered voters will turn out to vote today."

Replying to a question about an incident this morning in the Shun Sau constituency in Kwun Tong, she stressed the importance of maintaining order during the elections.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Baroness Dunn urges electors to exercise their right

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Hong Kong citizens have come to understand the importance of selecting their own elected representatives, particularly for the Municipal Councils whose work touched the daily lives of Hong Kong people, the Senior Member of the Executive Council, Baroness Dunn, said.

"So I hope that all those who have registered will come out and exercise their right and their duty actively today," she said.

Speaking to reporters after casting her vote at the Raimondi College polling station today (Sunday), she said it was a milestone in the history of Hong Kong's political development.

"For the first time there has been a record number of registered candidates and there has been a record number of registered voters. Over two million voters have registered," she said.

When asked about the Kwun Tong incident this morning, she said: "If we want our elected system to be a success, all those who participate in the system, whether as candidates, voters, or those who support different candidates, must respect the rules and the regulations of an elected system," she said.

Up to 2.30 pm this afternoon, 225,862 registered electors have gone to the polls, as compared with 158,918 in the 1991 elections.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

BEC satisfied with overall voter turnout number

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The Chairman of the Boundary and Election Commission, Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing, said the Commission was very satisfied with the overall voter turnout at yesterday's Municipal Councils elections.

He was briefing reporters early this (Monday) morning at the press centre after the close of poll.

"A total of 561,943 voters have cast their votes in the MC elections. This represents 25.8 per cent of the total number of voters. There has been an increase both in terms of absolute number and the turnout rate when compared to the corresponding figures in the 1991 MC elections," Mr Justice Woo said.

"The number of voters has increased by 168,011 and the turnout rate has also increased by 2.7 per cent."

As far as the District Board by-elections are concerned, the figures were as encouraging, Mr Justice Woo said.

"Some 2,064 votes (28.1 per cent) were cast in the Yau Ma Tei Constituency and 3,147 votes (41.3 per cent) in the Lower Ngau Tau Kok Constituency," the Chairman said.

Mr Justice Woo noted that these figures were again higher than those in the last District Board elections in the respective constituencies.

On the operation of the elections today, Mr Justice Woo said things went smoothly and "we are quite happy with the arrangements at the various polling stations".

He attributed the success of today's elections to the effective publicity at the central and district levels, active campaigning by the candidates, a better understanding of the elections by voters and the good weather.

The Commission would learn from the experience and plan for the Legislative Council elections in September, Justice Woo added.

End/Monday, March 6, 1995

Secretaries pleased with voter turnout

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The overall voter turnout rate of 25.8 per cent at yesterday's election was the highest record in all Municipal Council Elections, the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Nicholas Ng, said in comment on the elections this (Monday) morning during his visit to the Counting Centre at the Henry G Leong Yau Ma Tei Community Centre.

Mr Ng noted that the increase in the actual number of people who had cast their votes this time showed that registered voters had participated more actively in the elections than in 1991.

The fact that the elections were conducted in a peaceful, legal and orderly manner meant that public's knowledge of elections had increased. There was also keener involvement in public affairs, Mr Ng said.

He wished more people, either as candidates or voters, would take part actively in the Legislative Council Elections in September.

Mr Ng was satisfied with the electoral arrangements. He said that the Boundary and Election Commission would review the arrangements and make improvements.

Meanwhile, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, also found the voter turnout encouraging.

Speaking at his visit to the Counting Centre at Tai Po Community Hall, Mr Suen said that the over 500,000 voters turnout indicated that the public showed a better understanding of and had marked improvements in the participation of election activities.

Mr Suen noted that of the over 400 complaints received, there were only two serious ones and they were only individual incidents.

He added that most people had been carrying out electioneering activities calmly.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

BEC Chairman urges physically handicapped electors to vote

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The Chairman of the Boundary and Election Commission, Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing, this (Sunday) morning urges physically handicapped electors to come out in force to the polls.

This, he believes, would arouse more candidates to concern about the welfare and interest of these electors.

"This would be mutually beneficial to both parties," the Chairman said.

Mr Justice Woo was speaking to the press after visiting a Sha Tin polling station where a number of physically handicapped electors cast their votes.

He said the Commission was in close contact with groups representing the interest of the physically handicapped for advice to improve polling arrangements and design of the polling station.

Of the 377 polling stations opened today for Municipal Council elections, 144 are accessible to physically handicapped electors.

A number of templates are also made available in each polling station for blind electors to mark their vote on the ballot paper.

The Chairman said the Commission would review the polling arrangements after the elections to see what further improvement could be made.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Record number of candidates contest Municipal Council elections

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The Attorney General, Mr Jeremy Mathews, said today's Municipal Council elections were important as there was a record number of candidates contesting 59 seats. A total of 135 nominations were received for the elections.

He was speaking to the media after casting his vote at the German Swiss International School this morning.

"So it's very important that everybody who is a registered elector gets out to vote."

Mr Mathews said it was a good day for the elections as the weather was good.

"So I hope that as many who can get out will get out and vote, for this is very important elections," he said.

In the first four hours of polling which started at 7.30 am, 114,459 registered electors have cast their votes. In the previous elections in 1991, 78,801 people voted in the corresponding period.

A total of 377 polling stations across the territory are open until 10.30 pm tonight.

Of the stations, 163 are accessible to physically handicapped electors.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Constitutional Affairs Secretary calls on residents to vote

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The Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Nicholas Ng, urged the people of Hong Kong to actively take part in the Municipal Councils elections today (Sunday).

Speaking to media members after casting his vote at Kung Lee College this morning, he said it was a civic responsibility to participate in elections.

The two councils provide important recreational and cultural facilities as well as environmental hygiene services to more than six million people of Hong Kong, he said.

The elections today will select 59 councillors to serve on the councils.

A total of 377 polling stations throughout the territory are open from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm.

When asked to forecast the turn-out rate, Mr Ng said: "I think it's rather speculative to say what is the turn-out rate, but we certainly look forward to high turn-out for today's voting.

"The weather is fine. People are used to the elections, and people're realising the importance of the Urban Council's and the Regional Council's activities, so we look forward to active participation by the people of Hong Kong," he said.

In the first hour of polling which began at 7.30 am, 9,344 registered electors have gone to the polls, as compared with 7,304 in the 1991 elections.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Voter turnout exceeds last MC Elections

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The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, this (Sunday) evening called on those who had not voted in the municipal council elections to do so in the remaining hours.

Commenting on the voter turnout during his visit to the press centre, Mr Suen said there had been an improvement as so far (7.30 pm) the number of people who had come out to vote had exceeded that of the last time.

"More than 410,000 people had cast their vote by now and I hope more will do so in the few hours to come," he said.

"Of course this time we have got more competitions, we have got more campaigning and we have got good weather.

"I would take this opportunity to call on all those voters who have not come out to vote to take this opportunity to elect their own representatives.

"It is important that everyone should come out and exercise their choice to ensure that people who they think can represent them are elected," he added.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Go to the polls: Urban Services Director

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The Director of Urban Services, Mr Albert Lam Chi-chiu, called on residents to spare a few minutes today (Sunday) to exercise their civic duty to vote in the Urban and Regional Councils elections.

After casting his vote at the King's College Old Boys' Association Primary School, he told reporters that he was satisfied with the atmosphere at the polling stations.

"Since polling began at 7.30 am, more and more people have been turning up at the polling stations to cast their ballots," he said.

In response to a question about the turnout rate this morning, Mr Lam said according to experience in the previous elections, residents usually went to the polls later in the day.

He said residents now had a better understanding of the activities and services of the two Municipal Councils and he urged everyone to support today's elections.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

BEC closely monitors election activities

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The three-member Boundary and Election Commission (BEC) today (Sunday) toured a number of polling stations throughout the territory to ensure that the Municipal Council elections were conducted openly, fairly and honestly.

On three different routes, the BEC Chairman, Mr Justice Woo Kwok-hing, and members Mr Norman Leung and Mr Chan Wing-tai, saw how different election activities were conducted in various districts.

The Chairman also talked to representatives of the Rehabilitation Alliance Hong Kong at a Sha Tin polling station and listened to their views on how to further improve polling arrangements to facilitate voting for physically handicapped electors.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Schools reminded to return questionnaires on DSS

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The Education Department reminds schools to complete and return the questionnaire on the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) on or before Saturday (March 11).

A spokesman for the Education Department said the survey by the Private Schools Review Committee was aimed to find out any problems or worries on the part of prospective schools, and reasons why they are not interested in joining the scheme.

The spokesman said the implementation of the DSS was to encourage the growth of a strong private school sector to provide parents with more alternatives. Participating schools would enjoy a high degree of freedom with regard to curricula, fees and entrance requirements for students.

He assured that the DSS would not affect the Government's commitment to the provision of free and compulsory education, and that children would not be compelled to attend a DSS school.

All completed questionnaires should be returned to the Private Schools Review Committee at Room 1153, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai on or before Saturday (March 11).

The DSS was recommended by the Education Commission in its report No. 3 published in 1988 and endorsed by the Governor-in-Council in 1989.

At present, a total of 12 secondary schools, including five international schools and seven other schools, are participating in the scheme which has been implemented since 1991.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

#### Stamps feature international sport events

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A set of special stamps will be issued on March 22 on the theme of "Hong Kong International Sporting Events", the Postmaster General, Mr Mike Pagliari, announced today (Sunday). There will be four denominations: \$1, \$1.9, \$2.4 and \$5. The stamps were designed by Mr Kan Tai-keung and printed by Leigh-Mardon Pty Ltd of Australia.

This set of stamps features four major international sporting events that have become synonymous with Hong Kong:

- \* the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens (\$1) organised by the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union;
- \* the China Sea Race (\$1.9) organised by the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club;

- \* the International Dragon Boat Races (\$2.4) organised by the Hong Kong Tourist Association, and
- \* the Hong Kong International Races (\$5) organised by the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club.

The stamps will be displayed for advance information of the public at the General Post Office, Sha Tin Central Post Office, Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office and Tsuen Wan Post Office from March 8. Official first day covers will be placed on sale at all post offices from March 8 at \$1 each.

Advance orders for serviced first day covers at \$13.8 each will be accepted from March 8 to 15. The minimum number of serviced first day covers per order is five.

Each customer queuing on the first day of issue can buy up to two sheets of stamps of each denomination (viz 100 sets of stamps).

A beautifully designed presentation pack containing the four stamps will also be available for sale at \$18 each at all post offices from March 22.

Serviced first day covers affixed with the set of stamps and cancelled with the first day of issue postmark will be placed on sale at \$13.8 each on March 22 at the following seven philatelic offices: Beaconsfield House Post Office

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

On the first day of issue on March 22, hand-back service will be provided at all post offices for official and privately-made covers bearing the first day of issue indication.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

"Peace In My World" poster contest

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A Hong Kong student winning in the "Peace In My World" poster contest may have a chance to win a grand prize to visit the United Nations in New York City in March this year.

The "Peace in My World" poster contest -- organised by the Education Department's Community Youth Club (CYC) and sponsored by the Lions Club International 303 -- attracted 949 entries from 104 primary and secondary students aged between 11 and 13 to take part.

The champion's poster will be forwarded to compete in the 7th Annual International Peace Poster Contest in USA.

The grand prize winner in the International Contest will receive a trip to New York City with two family members for a behind-the-scene visit to the United Nations and a cash price of US\$1,500.

The Deputy Director of Education, Miss Elaine Chung, will tomorrow (Monday) present prizes to the winning students at a prize-presentation ceremony.

The first three winners will receive book/stationery tokens of \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 respective and merit prizes of \$500 book/stationery tokens will be awarded to 40 outstanding students.

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Attention News Editors:

The Deputy Director of Education, Miss Elaine Chung, will present prizes to the winners of the "Peace In My World" poster contest at a prize-presentation ceremony which will be held at 5.30 pm tomorrow (Monday) at the Landmark Room, The Hong Kong Overseas Bankers Club, 43rd floor, Gloucester Tower, The Landmark, Central.

Your representatives are invited to cover the event.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995

Leaflets to promote family services

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The Social Welfare Department has produced a leaflet advising members of the public to make better use of existing services to handle their family problems.

The leaflet, printed in Chinese, is now available for collection at all district offices of the department and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

"Members of the public who have any family problem are advised to approach various family services centres throughout the territory as early as possible to avoid their problems from further deteriorating," a spokesman for the department said today (Sunday).

"We believe that the earlier a family problem is addressed, the better chance for a solution to be worked out," he said.

At present, there are a total of 62 family services centres throughout the territory. Thirty-nine of them are directly managed by the department while the others are run by subvented non-governmental organisations.

"Family services, through counselling and assistance of professional social workers, are aimed at helping individuals and families cope with family or social adjustment problems, with a view to preserving and strengthening the family as a unit and improving the quality of family life.

"Individuals and families having difficulties in family or interpersonal relationships, behavioural or adjustment problems, hardship arising from financial difficulties or poor health may approach family services centres for assistance," the spokesman said.

"Couples who encounter any marriage crisis or are considering divorce can also seek help.

"If the problems cannot be dealt with within the scope of family services, the department will refer the case to appropriate departments or organisations for assistance in housing, employment, medical care, schooling or vocational training," he added.

The leaflet also contains a comprehensive list showing the addresses and telephone numbers of all 62 family services centres throughout the territory.

End/Sunday, March 5, 1995