



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
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Saturday, April 13, 1996

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STI welcomes Kantor's nomination as Commerce Secretary

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The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue, today (Saturday) welcomed the nomination of Ambassador Mickey Kantor as the US Secretary for Commerce following the tragic death of Secretary Ron Brown.

She also welcomed the appointment of Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky as the acting US Trade Representative.

Commenting on the announcements, Miss Yue said: "Both Ambassador Kantor and Ambassador Barshefsky know Hong Kong and China well. They should ensure maximum continuity of policy in our bilateral relations."

End

Hong Kong names representatives to APEC Business Advisory Council

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The Government announced today (Saturday) the appointment of three Hong Kong representatives to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Advisory Council.

They are Dr Victor Fung Kwok-king, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Prudential Asia Capital Limited; Mr Gordon Wu Ying-sheng, Managing Director of Hopewell Holdings Limited; and Mr Victor Lo Chung-wing, Chairman and Chief Executive of Gold Peak Industries (Holdings) Limited.

The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue said: "We aim to foster closer co-operation and involvement of the business sector in APEC activities."

"With their rich business experience, Dr Fung, Mr Wu and Mr Lo will definitely make significant contributions to this Council."

Last November, APEC decided to establish a Business Advisory Council to provide insight and counsel to APEC. The Council has two main functions : to advise on the implementation of the Osaka Action Agenda adopted by APEC to achieve free trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific, as well as on other business priorities; and to respond to APEC's requests for advice on business-related issues.

The Council will convene its inaugural meeting in June 1996, and will report its work to APEC Economic Leaders and Ministers.

End

Weather of March

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March 1996 was slightly warmer than normal, the monthly mean temperature of 19.7 degrees was 1.2 degrees above the normal figure.

There was rain everyday from March 9 till the end of the month, and the total rainfall for the month amounted to 83.1 millimetres, 16.2 millimetres above normal. The hourly rainfall recorded between 8 and 9 a.m. on March 29 reached 37.8 millimetres, the fourth highest for March. However, the accumulated rainfall since January 1, 111.6 millimetres, was still 19 per cent below the normal figure for the same period.

Fine weather prevailed during the first seven days of the month. As winds became light and variable on March 7, coastal fog occurred on the early hours the next day. A high-speed catamaran collided with a tug boat off Shek Kwu Chau that morning injuring four people.

An easterly surge of the winter monsoon arrived early on March 9. Winds strengthened and the weather turned cloudy with light rain patches. A further replenishment of the winter monsoon brought northerly winds that evening and temperatures fell to 10.8 degrees the next morning, the lowest for the month. It remained cool and overcast till March 13.

A warm southerly airstream replaced the northeasterly on the evening of March 14. It persisted for the next four days and brought the temperatures up to 28.5 degrees, the highest in the month, on March 17. Coastal fog occurred that evening. This was quickly cleared by an easterly surge of the winter monsoon the next day. Temperatures fell to 16.4 degrees on the morning of March 19 from a maximum of 26.2 degrees the previous day and there was almost continuous light rain for the next couple of days.

Coastal fog returned on March 20 and continued up to March 22. In particular, the eastern part of the harbour was also affected by fog on the morning of March 22 and visibilities at the airport fell to 400 metres. Air and sea traffic were affected.

The arrival of a fresh easterly airstream brought brighter weather to the territory on March 24 and 25. Winds moderated on March 24 but freshened again from the east on March 26. A scaffolding collapsed in Tsuen Wan damaging two buses and injuring two passengers.

An active trough approached from the northwest on March 29. Thunderstorms and heavy downpour associated with an intense rainband swept across the territory that morning. More than 100 shops were flooded in Mong Kok and air traffic was once again affected. Southerly airstream took over again on March 30 and the weather remained cloudy with some light rain patches until the end of the month.

Only one tropical cyclone occurred in the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in the month. Details of the issuance/hoisting and cancellation/lowering of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1.1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal of February are tabulated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Warnings and signals in March 1996

Warnings / Signals	Effective date and time
Flood Warning	29 Mar 0755 - 29 Mar 1100
Thunderstorm Warning	29 Mar 0710 - 29 Mar 1110
Fire Danger Warnings	
Yellow	1 Mar 0910 - 2 Mar 0600
Red	2 Mar 0600 - 3 Mar 0600
Yellow	3 Mar 0600 - 4 Mar 0600
Yellow	4 Mar 1115 - 6 Mar 0800
Gas Heater Alerts	9 Mar 1630 - 11 Mar 1635 12 Mar 1630 - 13 Mar 0600

Table 1.2 Figures and Departures from Normal-March 1996

Total Bright Sunshine	104.9 hours; 8.5 hours above normal
Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation	10.41 MJ/SQM ; 0.83 MJ/SQM below normal
Total Rainfall	83.1 mm ; 16.2 mm above normal
Mean Cloud Amount	75% ; 1% below normal
Mean Relative Humidity	83% ; 2% above normal
Mean Daily Maximum Temperature	22.2 Degrees Celsius; 0.9 Degree Celsius above normal
Mean Air Temperature	19.7 Degrees Celsius; 1.2 Degrees Celsius above normal
Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	17.6 Degrees Celsius; 1.1 Degrees Celsius above normal
Mean Dew Point	16.6 Degrees Celsius; 1.6 Degrees Celsius above normal
Total Evaporation	70.7 mm ; 21.5 mm below normal

Remarks: All measurements were made at the Royal Observatory except sunshine, solar radiation and evaporation which were recorded at King's Park.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ Million</u>	<u>Time (Hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative Change (\$ Million)</u>
Opening Balance in the account	1,939	09:30	+795
Closing Balance in the account	1,759	10:00	+795
Change Attributable to:		11:00	+795
Money Market Activity	+795	11:30	+795
Laf Today	- 975		

Laf Rate 4% Bid/6% Offer TWI 124.1 *+0.0* 13.4.96

End

Transcript of the media session by the Governor

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The following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, at the Airport on his return from London this (Sunday) afternoon:

Governor: Good afternoon, nice to be back in Hong Kong. I've had a good and useful visit to the United Kingdom. I had valuable discussions with the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister and two meetings with the Governor of the Bank of England, mostly to discuss the strength of the Hong Kong economy and the guarantees of Hong Kong's autonomy in fiscal, economic and trading matters after 1997 and as you know, I made a number of speeches and had meetings with officials. There was one issue which caused a good deal of interest and which I know has been debated over the last few days in Hong Kong. And that was the whole question of right of abode which has been given a particular point in view of the decisions taken by the United Kingdom government about visa-free access for SAR passport holders. We've been studying both here and in London Director Lu's speech on the issue with considerable interest. I am bound to say we remain slightly puzzled as to why it's that this issue can't simply be resolved by a simple declaration of intent, but we obviously want to get into discussions with Chinese officials as soon as possible about what exactly they're proposing, because there are clearly quite a lot of questions which are unanswered. There are a lot of difficulties of implementation which I think we foresee, and many of the questions which are going to be asked by Hong Kong families including those who aren't at present in Hong Kong, are not questions that we can at present answer. So the sooner we can get into detailed discussions with Chinese officials the better and that frankly has been our position since last January when Mr Qian Qichen gave his undertaking to the British Foreign Secretary Malcom Rifkind during their meeting in Peking. I'd like to add my pleasure at the announcement we've heard from the courts in the Philippines about the imminent release of Mr Au and Mr Wong. I've asked the British Embassy in the Philippines to establish exactly when they are going to leave prison and I'll be writing urgently to President Ramos tomorrow, thanking him for the decision taken by the courts but just ask him for confirmation that it will be implemented as rapidly as possible, because I know that everybody will want to see Mr Au and Mr Wong home in Hong Kong as soon as we can get them here. Many of us have been involved in the effort to get them back to Hong Kong. And I am delighted that if it's going to end this satisfactory as now seems to be the case. Any questions?

Question: How do you work on the demonstration conflicts between the Police and demonstrators outside NCNA and the Grand Hyatt Hotel today?

Governor: I'll be answering questions on a number of subjects in the Legislative Council on Thursday, including questions on the handling of demonstrations here in Hong Kong which is of course one of the most peaceful, law-abiding, politically and socially stable places anywhere in the world. But perhaps I can make a couple of general observations about demonstrations and the showing of dissent in the context of the dialogue which appears to be taking place between the preparatory committee and Chinese officials and at least some representatives of opinion in Hong Kong. Clearly I think all of us believe that a dialogued discussion takes place best if everybody is involved in that dialogue and if everybody behaves in a rational and quiet and civilised way. That's my view, whoever's involved in the discussion and I think it's always better to try to win arguments than take your shirt off. I think that it always has more impact on people if you win a debate rather than feel that you have to employ more provocative or more demonstrative measures. We look in a free society and people have the freedom to set out their opinions in a peaceful way. I was pleased that some people have now been allowed to set out their views for the preparatory committee and for Chinese officials who's views may not accord precisely with those of Chinese officials. But I still think it's worrying that those who represent up to 70 per cent of opinion in Hong Kong are being excluded from the debate. I just repeat that I think that there are lessons for both sides. I think for Chinese officials, I think, one lesson is that this is a free and open society. We tolerate expressions of all sorts of opinion and it's a sign of strength and a sign of self-confidence if you try to embrace all shades of opinion in the debate and the message I suppose for people in Hong Kong is to make it clear to Chinese officials and to the world outside that we know how to conduct a debate on very important matters in a civilised way and don't need to break the law or flirt with breaking the law.

Question: What do you think about Raymond Ch'ien's comment on the provisional legislature ...?

Governor: I answered questions on that in London. You may not have seen the answers that I gave. Nobody is in any doubt the Government's view. Nobody is in any doubt about the Legislative Council's view. Nobody is in any doubt about British Government's view. I think the community's view on the so called provisional legislature is also pretty clear. I've always taken a view that the Executive Council should reflect a broad sway of opinion in the community. I'd deliberately chosen an Executive Council which represents all shades of opinion, as intelligently and articulately as possible. And I am certainly not going to say that I can only work with an Executive Council which is a rubber stamp. I am certainly not going to try to exclude discussion and debate within the Executive Council when all of us are calling for wider discussion and debate with Chinese officials. Raymond Ch'ien is an extremely intelligent man. He's a very good and effective businessman and he's been a very considerable contributor to the Executive Council over the last four years and I am certainly not going to insist that he or anybody else takes a Trappist vow of silence for the next year. But he knows and other members of the Executive Council know exactly what the views of the Government are.

Question: ... The right of abode question. Is that on the agenda for discussion between ...?

Governor : It will certainly be one of the issues which they will discuss. One of the important issues that they'll discuss. I've seen lots of speculation about what they may or may not talk about. I can assure that one very important issue for the British Foreign Secretary will be a follow-up the discussion that they had last January on right of abode, particularly in view of the British Government's subsequent decision.

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Meeting between HK and Guangdong Customs in Shantou

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A seven-member delegation of Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department led by Deputy Commissioner Li Shu-fai this (Sunday) morning left for Shantou, Guangdong to attend the 14th Annual Review on Customs Liaison Arrangements between the Hong Kong and Guangdong Customs.

The meeting to be held between April 15-19 is to review the current co-operative arrangements and to develop practical ways to enhance co-operation between the two customs authorities.

Both sides will discuss issues of mutual interest including drug trafficking, smuggling of general items and pirated goods between Hong Kong and China.

After the meeting, the Hong Kong delegation will travel to Fujian and visit the Customs set-ups and facilities there. The delegation will return to Hong Kong on Saturday (April 20).

End

Wealth of information built up in Government home page

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A wealth of information on Government activities and services available to the public is gradually being built up on the Internet, according to Deputy Director of Information Services (Overseas) Mr Robin Gill.

This information can be found through accessing the Government home page known as the Government Information Centre (GIC).

Since the Government launched its GIC in December 1995, three policy branches, 15 government departments and agencies have set up their own home pages. Included is customised information unique to the branches and departments, specially arranged and edited for Internet purposes.

A special home page to promote the awareness of the AIDs disease was also launched in January by the AIDs Unit of the Department of Health.

Other government departments are also taking an active approach in making use of the Internet and at least 15 government agencies are preparing for the launch of their own home pages over the next few months.

In order to allow users to obtain general information on the Internet about departments which have not yet developed their own home pages, fact sheets related to the work of some of these departments have been put under the section "government and related information" within the GIC.

Press releases in both English and Chinese are now put on the GIC on a daily basis.

Mr Gill noted that the number of people accessing the GIC is increasing steadily. Since its launch, the site has been accessed on over 72,000 occasions.

The daily average of visitors to the site has increased from 521 in December 1995 to 765 in March 1996.

The number of visitors doubled on Budget Day to 1,168 and rose to 1,276 the following day as users were keen to access first-hand government information from the Internet about the Budget speech.

Mr Gill said that departments were designing their home pages with their "customers" requirements and interests very much to the fore. The Government Supplies Department's home page contains up-to-date information about tenders. The Royal Observatory, which launched its home page on March 23, has quickly attracted users with its frequently updated weather information and forecasts. The Labour Department's home page has also included considerable information on relevant legislation and its labour relations activities.

Other departments which are making good use of the Internet include the Marine Department, whose page has won awards from Internet users for being the maritime site of the week, the Civil Service Branch, which advertises civil service vacancies, and the Census and Statistics Department, which provides users with up-to-date statistical information about Hong Kong.

Mr Gill accepts that it will take some time before all government departments and agencies have set up their own home pages. But he is pleased with the positive start made and confirmed that the Information Services Department would monitor Government sites so as to ensure that the material is kept up-to-date and that high standards of accuracy and presentation are maintained.

Members of the public who would like more information on what is at present available on the Government home page are welcome to send e-mail enquiries to oprs@isd.gcn.gov.hk. The government home page can be accessed at <http://www.info.gov.hk>.

End

AMS better equipped with electronics life-saving device

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The paramedic role of the Auxiliary Medical Services (AMS) in serving the community has recently been given a welcome boost with the purchase of 12 sets of automated external defibrillators (AED), thanks to a \$1.08 million donation from the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

AED, with a size slightly bigger than a portable computer, is an electronic life-saving device to provide first aid for people suffering from cardiac arrests.

Designed with the aid of latest computer technology, the device is a paramedic equipment which can generate electric-shock and monitor irregular heartbeat. It has been developed to increase the survival rate of cardiac arrest cases.

"Complementary to the basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) technique, AEDs increase the chance of recovery of those who suffer from cardiac arrests due to cases such as heart attacks, drowning or electric shocks," said Mr Chan Shing-wah, Operations and Training Officer of AMS.

"AEDs will help analyse the state of the heart. No electric shock will be needed if the heart is in normal sound rhythm. However, if ventricular fibrillation or ventricular tachycardiac (abnormal sound rhythm) of the heart is detected, this new device will instruct medical staff that an electric-shock is required and give them indication to administer the operation."

"By using its electric charge to disrupt the irregular heartbeat (fibrillation) of the patients, the AED allows the heart's natural electrical activities to function correctly and helps it return to normal heartbeat.

"After providing the necessary medical treatment to the injured on the spot, AMS members will, with no delay, convey the casualties to hospitals," added Mr Chan.

"Speedy paramedic treatment on-the-spot to the injured, particularly for those suffering from heart problem, is very important to eliminate the chance of complication. In acute cases, it could be a matter of life and death as every minute counts."

At present, in addition to the 12 AEDs newly-purchased, AMS owns a total of 16 sets of AEDs.

Mr Chan noted that with the new acquisition, AED has become a standard equipment on all the AMS ambulances. Four sets have been assigned to the Emergency Response Task Force which provides on-the-spot paramedic service to the public round-the-clock.

Very shortly, all the six AMS motor-cycles will be modified to equip with such device for providing first-aid coverage for community events like the Walks for Million, Fireworks Display and for rendering better first-aid services to picnickers at country parks during weekends and public holidays.

To make efficient use of the new equipment, intensive training on defibrillation and the operation of the equipment has been stepped up.

Mr Chan noted that since 1993, after the initial purchase by AMS of four sets of AED, 165 AMS members have attended the one-day provider courses on AED jointly organised by the Hong Kong Society for Medicine and Surgery and the Justice Institute of British Columbia.

AMS has now a force of 218 volunteer members who have been trained and are proficient in the operation of such device, including 17 qualified instructors.

End

Building management seminar

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Building management professionals, flat owners, office-bearers of owners' corporations and mutual aid committees as well as other interested people are invited to take part in a seminar on May 18 to promote effective building management.

Under the theme of "Participation and Commitment", the Building Management Seminar '96 will be jointly organised by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Housing Department at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai.

An HAD spokesman said today (Sunday) that the seminar will give participants an opportunity to acquire a good working knowledge of effective building management and to share their own experiences with others.

Topics to be covered include the contracting out of estate management, the security personnel permit, proper accounting of management fees and special funds, the role of property managers in building management and legal aspects of building management.

Speakers will include representatives of the Housing Department, the Police, the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Co. Ltd., an account and a solicitor.

A question-and-answer session will follow each presentation to allow participants to raise questions. Concluding the seminar will be an open discussion in which participants and speakers can exchange views on various issues relating to building management.

Admission is free. Seating is on a first-come-first-served basis. Application forms are now available at district offices.

Completed forms should be returned to the HAD headquarters, 29th floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai before April 30.

Enquiries can be made on 2835 1496.

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Employment exhibition at City Hall

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An "Employment Information Post" exhibition will be held at the Hong Kong City Hall on Wednesday (April 17) to help job-seekers find jobs and assist employers to recruit suitable staff.

Job-seekers can obtain the latest information on vacancies and retraining courses direct from representatives of the participating organisations.

A total of 23 employers from different trades including manufacturing, catering, department store, tourism, retail, property management, trade and community services as well as three retraining institutes will take part in the event.

Some 700 vacancies will be provided for application at the venue. Job interviews can be arranged by respective employers on the spot or on a later date.

Talks will also be given by retraining institutes and employers on their retraining courses and the most recent information on the labour market.

Visitors will be briefed on employment services being provided by the Labour Department's Job Matching Programme and they can register for the services on the spot.

The event is jointly organised by the Labour Department, the Employees Retraining Board, the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce and the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce.

All Hong Kong residents looking for jobs are welcome to visit the Employment Information Post from 11 am to 6 pm at the Exhibition Hall, Hong Kong City Hall, Lower Block, Central. Admission is free.

End

Fresh water cut in Mong Kok

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Fresh water cut to some premises in Mong Kok will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (April 17) to 6 am the following day for detection work on watermains to be carried out.

All premises in the area bounded by Lai Chi Kok Road, Shanghai Street, Mong Kok Road, Nathan Road and Prince Edward Road West including Concourse Hotel will be affected.

End