



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
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Tuesday, November 26, 1996

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Transcript of the Governor's media session

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The following is the transcript of the media session given by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten after the ExCo Meeting this (Tuesday) morning:

Governor: Good morning, let me save you the trouble of coming to the airport after lunch. As you know, I am going this afternoon on a short visit to Japan and the principal purpose of the visit is to take part once again in the Hong Kong Japan Business Co-operation meetings. These are annual discussions between Hong Kong and Japanese businessmen and I think they have been a useful feature of our economic and trading relationship with Japan. I will also be speaking at a number of other forums including one in Osaka to promote investment in Hong Kong and trade with Hong Kong. While I am in Japan, I will be seeing the Prime Minister Mr Hashimoto and other senior ministers principally the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for MITI - for Trade and Industry and the Finance Minister. I will also be seeing the Speaker, senior members of the Keidanren and giving a number of interviews and speeches, so I have got a busy programme for four days and I am back on Sunday.

Question: Have you been pleased by the police officers, by the fire servicemen about the initial finding of the cause of the fire in the Garley Building.

Governor: No, we had a briefing this morning from the Secretary for Security and the Secretary for Health and Welfare but we have not yet had any conclusions from the initial investigation by the Fire Services. As I said in the Legislative Council last week, we have asked the Director of the Fire Services to let us have his report within a fortnight and that he will of course be willing to do. I was able on behalf of the Executive Council this morning to thank very warmly the emergency services and the health and welfare services for the way they coped with that appalling disaster. The Executive Council underlined that gratitude and we also of course extended once again our condolences to all those families who have lost loved ones

Question: What about the SAR passports? Is Japan accepting SAR passports?

Governor: Japan is one of those countries which has a fairly tight visa regime. The principal task while I am in Japan will be to encourage the Japanese to ensure that SAR passports are treated differently from, and more favourably than, PRC passports. We would like them to be at least treated as well as BNO passports or BDTC passports today. That is in effect to give people, if they need a visa, a multiple visa over a longer period of time rather than just a single visa but Japan is a country like Australia, like the United States which has a pretty tough visa policy as a whole.

Question: Only a few can ... of the senior expatriate civil servants last week. The Court of Appeal simply ruling in favour of the senior expatriates. What would be the response from the Government to that verdict?

Governor: Exactly what the Civil Service Branch and the Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service have already said. We are studying the implications of the verdict by the Appeal Court and we will take the necessary administrative action.

Question: Excuse me, Mr Patten. A newspaper reported yesterday that the Chief Executive election has many under-the-table transactions and even Tung said that he has the courage to scold ...?

Governor: A what?

Question: ... said that he has the courage to scold the Communist Party but he has no courage to scold Mr C H Tung.

Governor: Who? I am not quite aware of the implication.

Question: Someone said that he has the courage to scold Communist Party but he has no courage to scold C H Tung.

Governor: That who has no courage?

Question: What?

Governor: Who has no courage?

Governor: ... said that he would not scold C H Tung but he would scold who?

Question: C H Tung - the Chief Executive candidate.

Governor: I do not want to comment on the whole business. I do not want to comment on the race, let alone what some people say is involved in the race. I am sure that all the Chief Executive candidates are aware of the importance of the community believing in the integrity of the process. Last question.

Question: Mr Governor, I would like to know how the Government is prepared to assist with the Chief Executive designate after he has been elected. Some say that the Government will at least provide him a provisional office or a secretary. Has the Government had a detailed schedule of this particular matter?

Governor: We have got a very clear idea of the sort of things that we should offer the Chief Executive Designate, but obviously the Chief Executive Designate will have his own ideas as well and will want I hope to come to a happy agreement and compromise.

Question: Can I just ask you a final, final question. Will you be raising in Japan the question of the Diaoyu Islands and the incident at the Japanese Consulate.

Governor: As you know, both now and after the 30th June, 1997 the Hong Kong Government is not responsible for Foreign Affairs and Defence. So we are not in a position where it is right or appropriate for us to do other than hope that the dispute can be peacefully and rapidly settled. Japanese Ministers and Japanese public opinion are well aware of the strength of public opinion in Hong Kong. They are well aware of the fact that like Japan this is a free society where people are able to express their views strongly within the law. I am sure they are also aware of the fact that where those expressions of opinion have got out of hand or been inappropriate they have not been supported in the community so that the protest, for example, outside the Japanese schools which I think was widely criticised by some of you newspapers and by the community. They are also aware of the fact that we don't approve of any breaking of the law and that we believe we have special responsibilities to protect the buildings of Consulates here in Hong Kong. Now, out of all that, I am sure that they will recognise that while this is a community with strong views, it is also a free society and partly because it is a free society it is a very successful society in which there is a great deal of Japanese investment and with which Japan does a great deal of trade. We want that trade and investment to continue but I am sure that while continuing to welcome up to two million Japanese tourists a year, while continuing to export as much as we do from Hong Kong to Japan, people here will also go on expressing their views as robustly as ever.

Thank you very much indeed.

End

Financial Secretary's transcript

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Following is a transcript of the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang's media session before leaving a hotel in Manila this (Tuesday) morning:

Question: What did you discuss (with Qian) last night?

Financial Secretary: It so happened we had about half an hour. We had half an hour together that he was free and I was free. We had a general chat. I updated the Vice-Premier on the present date economy of Hong Kong. And I also updated him on the civil service as well. We had a very general and cordial chat.

Question: What is his response?

Financial Secretary: He was very interested.

End

JLG experts to discuss government assets

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Experts from the two sides of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group will meet in Hong Kong on November 27, 1996 to discuss the question of the Hong Kong Government's assets.

The British team will be led by British Representative, Mr Alan Paul. The Chinese team will be led by Chinese Representative, Mr Chen Zuo'er. They will be assisted by experts from the two sides.

End

SG briefs UN Committee on Implementation of ICESCR

* * * * *

The Solicitor General, Mr Daniel R Fung, QC, said in Geneva today (Tuesday) that the Government continued to exercise its fullest endeavours to realise the rights in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, notwithstanding the challenges of the final period before the transfer of sovereignty.

Speaking at a hearing of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR) as a member of the British Delegation, Mr Fung said that since the last appearance before the Committee in November 1994, the Government had continued to pursue a wide range of initiatives to secure and improve the enjoyment of these rights at an exceptional time in Hong Kong's history.

The presence at the hearing of a strong team of Hong Kong Government officials as part of the British delegation, Members of Hong Kong's Legislative Council and the Hong Kong media was testimony to the state of health, awareness and value placed on the rights enshrined in the Covenant in Hong Kong, he added.

Mr Fung said that on July 1, 1997, or in barely 200 days, Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region of China, preserving its own lifestyles and freedoms with its own Chief Executive, executive authorities, legislature and judiciary, operating its own legal system based on the common law and enjoying full monetary and fiscal autonomy subject to important conditions and safeguards.

"The Hong Kong Government is working hard to fulfil its part in a successful transition. It is committed to cooperating with the Preparatory Committee and the Chief Executive (Designate) when selected next month," he added.

Briefing members of the UNCESCR on a few of the more significant and recent developments in Hong Kong, Mr Fung said, "In April this year, we implemented a comprehensive package of improvements to enhance the assistance provided under our social security system so that it continues to meet the basic and special needs of financially vulnerable people in Hong Kong."

"In March this year, we provided additional funding to the Employees Retraining Board to facilitate the provision of retraining programmes for workers affected by the economic restructuring process so as to help them re-enter the job market.

"Over the course of the last year, we have been able to reduce our unemployment rate from a peak figure of 3.6 per cent to a more customary level, for Hong Kong, of 2.6 per cent."

Mr Fung also explained that the first Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data was appointed in August this year and the relevant Ordinance would come into effect in December.

In the area of equal opportunities, Mr Fung said that following the enactment of the Sex Discrimination and Disability Discrimination Ordinances, Hong Kong established its Equal Opportunities Commission in May and the Commission started work in September.

He added that last month, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was extended to Hong Kong, and Britain and China had agreed that this treaty would continue to apply to Hong Kong after June 30, 1997.

Mr Fung pointed out to the Committee hearing the problem that Hong Kong had. "Hong Kong has its problems. Two of the most critical challenges facing us are the inter-related issues of a rising population and the demand for housing," he said.

"Over the last ten years, Hong Kong's population has risen from 5.5 million to 6.2 million people. This growth has included many people, currently some 55,000 a year, who come from China and they need help to integrate into Hong Kong society."

He emphasized that it was one of the Hong Kong Government's key objectives to help all households gain access to adequate and affordable housing.

"Our extensive public housing programmes have helped to reduce the number of inadequately housed families by 25 per cent over the last five years and we will continue to make every effort to address this problem and to give full effect to the Covenant in Hong Kong," he added.

Mr Fung also told the Committee that the Hong Kong economy continued to prosper and that Hong Kong was the eighth largest trading economy and the fifth largest banking centre in the world.

During the last decade, the average GDP growth rate was 6.5 per cent, and in 1995, per capita GDP reached US\$23,300 and is expected to rise to US\$25,100 this year.

"The Hong Kong Government's approach to the economy is one of minimum executive interference and maximum support.

"Our main role is to provide the necessary infrastructure and a sound, impartial, legal and administrative framework conducive to economic growth and prosperity.

"Most importantly, we make use of the wealth generated to meet the rising standards of public service that the people of Hong Kong expect and require in areas such as housing, health-care, welfare, education and cultural life," he stressed.

Mr Fung is leading an eight-member Hong Kong team, comprising officers from Housing, Education and Manpower, Health and Welfare, Security, and Home Affairs Branches, at the hearing of the UNCESCR, for the examination of the Third Periodic Report in respect of Hong Kong under Articles 2 to 16 of the ICESCR.

The report, submitted by the British Government on behalf of Hong Kong, covers developments in Hong Kong on a wide range of social issues, including housing, social welfare, education, health and employment.

The Hong Kong team assists the British delegation in answering questions arising from the report by the members of the UNCESCR. The hearing continues tomorrow (Wednesday, Geneva time).

End

Government to re-enter sewage collection tunnel construction sites

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The Government has today (Tuesday) issued forfeiture notices with respect to the two tunnel contracts which comprise part of the sewage collection system for SSDS Stage I.

A Government spokesman said that the decision was made after the deadline set for the contractor to respond had passed without the contractor agreeing unconditionally to resume work.

Between June and July this year, the contractor unilaterally suspended works for the six tunnels under the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme (SSDS) Stage I after he claimed that the water inflow problems to two tunnels were unexpected and beyond the terms contemplated by the contract.

A number of meetings have been held with the contractor to discuss technical changes and any further impediments for him to proceed with the works but the parties were unable to reach agreement.

The Consulting Engineer issued a warning letter and gave three weeks for the Contractor to rectify the situation. However, the deadline passed without the Contractor agreeing unconditionally to resume work in accordance with the contract. On 23 November, the Consulting Engineer wrote to the Director of Drainage Services certifying that the Contractor had failed to proceed with due diligence to construct the tunnels in accordance with the terms of the contract.

"Given the lengthy stoppage of work and having exhausted all other options, the Government has decided to issue the forfeiture notice and is taking steps to make alternative arrangements for completion of the remaining works," the spokesman said.

"All of the other works on SSDS Stage I are proceeding on schedule," he added.

End

Senior government appointments announced

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The Government announced today (Tuesday) the appointments of Miss Elaine Chung as Director of Urban Services, Mrs Lessie Wei as Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Miss Au King-chi as Deputy Director of Information Services (Public Relations).

Miss Elaine Chung, currently Secretary-General, Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service, will take over from Mr Albert Lam as Director of Urban Services. Mr Lam will be retiring in February 1997 after 37 years of service in Government.

Mrs Lessie Wei, currently Deputy Secretary for Financial Services, will take over from Dr Lawrence Lee as Director of Agriculture and Fisheries. Dr Lee will be retiring in February 1997.

Miss Au King-chi, who has recently returned from a Government-sponsored overseas course, will join the Information Services Department in December 1996 with a view to taking over from Mr Akber Khan as Deputy Director of Information Services (Public Relations). Mr Khan will be retiring in March 1997 after 25 years of service in Government.

Commenting on the appointments, Mrs Anson Chan, the Chief Secretary, expressed full confidence in the three officers, saying that "they are all very capable and experienced officers well-suited for the new posts they are going to take up".

"With 27 years of service in Government and experience in a wide variety of posts, Miss Chung is eminently qualified to head the Urban Services Department. Her long association with community and public works issues will stand her in good stead as Director of Urban Services. The experience in civil service matters that she gathered as Secretary-General, Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service will also be relevant in the management of the Urban Services Department, which has a staff of over 16,000 coming from 60 civil service grades," Mrs Chan said.

"Mrs Wei is a very competent officer with 26 years of experience in Government. Her abilities have been proven in a wide range of posts. She has extensive experience in policy formulation and her administrative skills have been well tested in her tenure as Deputy Director of Urban Services and Deputy Director of Administration in the Chief Secretary's Office," Mrs Chan said.

"Her demonstrated competence in financial and resource management will serve her well as the new Director of Agriculture and Fisheries."

Mrs Chan said Miss Au was a very promising officer with experience in various facets of Government work. She said Miss Au had a solid record of service and would bring dynamism and vision to the post of Deputy Director of Information Services (Public Relations).

Mrs Chan also thanked Mr Albert Lam, Dr Lawrence Lee and Mr Akber Khan for their dedicated and meritorious service in Government. Both Mr Lam and Dr Lee have devoted more than thirty years to serving the community of Hong Kong.

Following are their biographical notes:

Mr Albert Lam Chi-chiu, OBE, JP

Aged 56. Mr Lam joined the Education Department in 1959 as a teacher. He became an Executive Officer in 1964, and was appointed an Administrative Officer in August 1966. He was promoted to his present rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade A in 1993.

During his long career in the Administrative Service, Mr Lam served in a variety of branches and departments including the former New Territories Administration, Homes Affairs Department, Civil Service Branch, Secretariat of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service and the London Office. He was Deputy Secretary for Transport from 1989 to 1991, and Regional Secretary for the New Territories from 1991 to 1993. He has been Director of Urban Services since November 1993.

Miss Elaine Chung Lai-kwok, JP

Aged 51. Miss Chung joined the Hong Kong Government as an Administrative Officer in July 1969 and rose to her present rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 in 1995.

Over the years, Miss Chung has served in a number of offices including the former Economics Branch, Home Affairs Department, Housing Department, Housing Branch, Radio Television Hong Kong, the former City and New Territories Administration, Health and Welfare Branch and the former Administrative Services and Information Branch. She was Deputy Secretary for Works from 1989 to 1994 and Deputy Director of Education from 1994 to 1995. She has been Secretary-General of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service since October 1995.

Dr Lawrence Lee Hay-yue, ISO, JP

Dr Lee joined the civil service as Assistant Pest Control Officer in June 1963. He was appointed Assistant Agricultural Officer in June 1967. Through a series of promotion, he rose to the present rank of Director of Agriculture and Fisheries in March 1986. He will proceed on pre-retirement leave on 10 February 1997 at the age of 59.

Mrs Lessie Wei Chui Kit-ye, JP

Aged 49. Mrs Wei joined the Hong Kong Government in May 1970. She was a Trade Officer for 13 years before becoming an Administrative Officer Staff Grade C in 1983. She rose to her present rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 in January 1996.

While in the Administrative Service, Mrs Wei has taken up postings in the Trade Department, Security Branch, Urban Services Department and the Chief Secretary's Office. She was Deputy Director of Urban Services from 1990 to 1991 and Deputy Director of Administration from 1991 to 1994. She has been Deputy Secretary for Financial Services since October 1994.

Mr Akber Khan

Mr Khan joined the Hong Kong Government in December 1971 as an Assistant Information Officer I. He was promoted to Information Officer in April 1975, and rose to his present rank of Deputy Director of Information Services in October 1995.

Apart from serving in all the Divisions within the Information Services Department, he has also served in the Police Public Relations Branch, the Secretariat Press Office and the Office of the Chief Secretary. Mr Khan will be 50 by the time he retires in March 1997.

Miss Au King-chi

Aged 36. Ms Au joined the Hong Kong Government as an Administrative Officer in August 1982 and rose to her present rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C in 1992.

Over the years Ms Au has served in a variety of offices including the former City and New Territories Administration, the former Medical and Health Department, Education and Manpower Branch, the former Municipal Services Branch and Monetary Affairs Branch. She was a Principal Assistant Secretary in Trade and Industry Branch from 1991 to 1995 before she went on overseas training at Harvard University. On return to Hong Kong in July this year, Ms Au served for a brief period as Assistant Director of Administration and attended a Tsinghua Course in October.

New rules for Considerate Contractors Site Award Scheme

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The Secretary for Works, Mr Kwong Hon-sang, today (Tuesday) said the absence from conviction of a number of additional worksite related regulations would be included as new requirements in appraising the performance standards of participants in the Considerate Contractors Site Award Scheme.

Mr Kwong said that after completing a comprehensive review of the scheme, two major changes would be introduced to further elevate the standards of performance of the participants.

Firstly, any breaches in the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance; the Builders' Lift and Tower Working Platforms (Safety) Ordinance and the Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations would also be considered by the judging panel.

Secondly, the appraisal period would be increased from six months to 12 months to tie in with the calendar year instead of half-yearly.

Speaking at the Phase III of the Considerate Contractors Site Award Scheme Ceremony today, Mr Kwong said it was promising to note the feedback from the participants that the scheme did help increasing the site safety awareness of both contractors and workers, and remind them to pay more attention to site management.

The first two phases of the scheme were conducted between April 1995 and March this year to recognise contractors with outstanding records of safety and site management. For the Phase III of the Scheme, a total of 13 contractors chosen from 40 government work sites were presented with award certificates and award plaques by the Works Branch.

Also officiating at the ceremony were the Acting Commissioner for Labour, Mr Alfred Chan, the President of Hong Kong Construction Association, Mr Peter Lam, and the Executive Director of Occupational Safety and Health Council, Mr Yip Yuk-lun.

Mr Kwong said he was glad to note that comparing to the last two phases, it was evident from the increase in the percentage of winning sites from 30 to 38 per cent that more contractors are aware of the importance of site safety and having a considerate attitude.

"As regards the future of the Scheme, it is worthwhile to consider expanding it to cover also the private sector by making use of the valuable experience gained from the previous phases."

"I will review the Scheme again with a view to assessing its effectiveness in achieving its objectives under the above changes and identifying what revision is necessary to cover the private sector," he added.

End

Transport Complaints Unit gets more complaints

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The number of complaints and suggestions received by the Transport Complaints Unit (TCU) of the Transport Advisory Committee between July 1 and September 30, 1996 increased by 15.7 per cent to 3,928 as compared with 3,395 in the previous quarter.

During the period, the major areas of complaint were related to public transport (76 per cent), road traffic conditions (11 per cent) and enforcement (8 per cent).

The number of complaints about public transport increased by 19.8 per cent from 2,502 in the previous quarter to 2,998.

More significant increases were noted in complaints against taxi driver malpractices (up from 1,364 to 1,519), Kowloon Motor Bus (up from 265 to 402), Citybus (up from 81 to 112), green minibuses (up from 236 to 358) and ferry services (up from 52 to 85).

However, complaints about rail services dropped by 51.7 per cent from 89 to 43. Complaints against China Motor Bus also dropped from 186 to 185.

During the same period, the number of suggestions for additional traffic signs and aids increased from 89 to 122. Complaints about traffic congestion also increased from 196 to 226.

Complaints about the malfunctioning of traffic signs and aids dropped by 23.7 per cent from 59 to 45. Complaints about road conditions also dropped from 91 to 76.

All suggestions and complaints received by TCU had been referred to the relevant authorities and government departments for investigation.

Members of the public may complain direct by dialling the 24-hour Transport Complaints Unit hotline 2577 6866 or 2889 9999 throughout the year.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

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Tender date	: 26 November 1996
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q061
Issue	: 27 November 1996
Maturity date	: 27 December 1996
Coupon	: -
Amount applied	: HK\$18,390 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$5,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 4.78 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 4.78 PCT
Pro-rata ratio	: 100 PCT
Average tender yield	: 4.85 PCT

Tender date : 26 November 1996
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q648
Issue : 27 November 1996
Maturity date : 26 February 1997
Coupon : -
Amount applied : HK\$8,670 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$2,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 4.84 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 4.86 PCT
Pro-rata ratio : About 32 PCT
Average tender yield : 4.88 PCT

Tender date : 26 November 1996
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Y696
Issue : 27 November 1996
Maturity date : 26 November 1997
Coupon : -
Amount applied : HK\$3,485 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$500 MN
Average yield accepted : 5.22 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 5.23 PCT
Pro-rata ratio : About 23 PCT
Average tender yield : 5.24 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning 2 Dec 1996

Tender date : 3 December 1996
Paper on offer : EF bills
Issue number : Q649
Issue date : 4 December 1996
Maturity date : 5 March 1997
Tenor : 91 days
Amount on offer : HK\$2,000 + 500 MN

Tender date : 3 December 1996
Paper on offer : EF bills
Issue number : H679
Issue date : 4 December 1996
Maturity date : 4 June 1997
Tenor : 182 days
Amount on offer : HK\$1,000 + 300 MN

Tender date : 3 December 1996
Paper on offer : EF bills
Issue number : Q062
Issue date : 4 December 1996
Maturity date : 2 January 1997
Tenor : 29 days
Amount on offer : HK\$5,000 MN

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	3,404	0930	+90
Closing balance in the account	3,392	1000	+90
Change attributable to:		1100	+90
Money market activity	+90	1200	+90
LAF today	- 102	1500	+90
		1600	+90

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.6 *+0.2* 26.11.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF Bills		EF Notes/MTRC Notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.87	2 years	2811	5.72	100.20	5.69
1 month	4.86	3 years	3910	6.28	100.84	6.04
3 months	4.86	5 years	5109	7.32	103.42	6.58
6 months	4.94	7 years	7311	7.80	100.09	6.90
12 months	5.21	10 years	1610	7.37	102.48	7.14
		5 years	M503	7.35	102.13	6.93

Total turnover of EF Bills and Notes - \$12,713 million

Closed November 26, 1996

End