



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of Governor's media session

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, after opening the Po Leung Kuk Vicwood K T Chong Building today (Wednesday):

Question: Governor, you mentioned in your speech that Po Leung Kuk has done a good job in helping those helpless people. But what about ... the situation of Hong Kong people in resolving the VM issue?

Governor: There is an important meeting in Vietnam this week following the Prime Minister's discussion with his opposite number at the Bangkok summit and officials from the Foreign Office in Vietnam this week, hoping to pave the way, prepare the way for a visit next month by the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Mr Hanley. And we very much hope that will help to speed up the return of Vietnamese migrants to Vietnam. We've seen in the early months of this year an increase in the number of Vietnamese migrants who are returning voluntarily to Vietnam. We've also seen as you know some efficiently carried through flights under the orderly repatriation programme. So we're still working very hard to get things back onto track and to ensure that we complete the job as soon as possible.

Governor: It's reported that your Government has appointed a senior official, Simon Vickers, for sending the archive, something concerning probably the civil servants. Do you think this will arouse the disagreement between both the Chinese and British sides for that?

Governor: No. There is an agreement between the British and Chinese sides which will be honoured by the British side to the letter.

Question: Has this official already been appointed?

Governor: I've answered the question.

Question: Will you meet with Lu Ping next month?

Governor: If Director Lu comes to Hong Kong, and even if he doesn't come to Hong Kong, I'd be delighted to see him at his convenience. You know perfectly well that that is the situation; you know perfectly well that there is a commitment on Director Lu and me as Governor to meet regularly; you know perfectly well that I'm prepared to meet Director Lu at anytime; you know perfectly well that Director Lu hasn't been prepared to meet me. I think that's bad for Hong Kong. But it's Director Lu who has to explain that, not me.

Question: (on the future of the UNHCR in Hong Kong)

Governor: I'm sure since you've been in Hong Kong for some time and know the difficulties and complexities of the problem, you'd recognise that giving predictions of dates when people will leave or when things will be finished doesn't make very much sense. But we'll obviously complete the job as rapidly as we can.

Question: Did you meet this morning with delegates from the Conference of European Security and Co-operation ...?

Governor: Yes, I did. I think they're here as part of a trip to the region. They've been in Taiwan; they're going on to China. They're spending a few days here and that I think I'm right in saying that you'd have to check with them. They're visiting some of the Central Asian countries as well. I think they're on a fact-finding trip.

Question: Did you talk about ...?

Governor: We talked about issues surrounding present regional concerns. I mean you don't have to be a genius to guess the sort of things we talked about. And I explained to them some of our anxieties here in Hong Kong.

Question: Have you got Mr Lu Ping's reply yet?

Governor: No. But it's for Director Lu Ping to reply. Anytime Director Lu Ping wishes to see me, I'm delighted to see him. You know perfectly well that it's not me who's avoided seeing him; it's Director Lu who's avoided seeing me. All around the world people even though they have disagreements and arguments meet one another and talk. It's only in this unique case of China that people seem to think they can behave in a totally different way to the civilised way in which the rest of the world behaves. But it's for them to explain, not for me.

Question: What are some of the topics that you will be discussing?

Governor: We'd discuss the whole range of issues which are concerning people in Hong Kong. I think there are three that are near the top of people's issues. The first is the whole question of right of abode. Britain has given a clear lead on visa-free access for SAR passport holders from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom, and I think that really underlines the importance of dealing with the right of abode issue, that people are concerned about nationality and abode issues.

Look at the queues for BNO passports outside the Immigration Department this morning. That's an indication of people's concern about these issues. So we'd first of all talk about right of abode. Secondly, I'm sure that the people of Hong Kong would expect us to talk about the protection of human rights in Hong Kong because there are anxieties both about China's commitment to report on the international covenants compliance and there are concerns about some of the threats to gut or fillet the Bill of Rights here in Hong Kong. And then there are concerns about the promises that have been made to Hong Kong about the development of representative government, of accountable government, the future of the Legislative Council.

There are, I understand, meetings in Peking taking place this week talking about these matters. Let's be absolutely clear what it's all about. Behind all the trips to Peking, behind all the airline flights, behind all the meetings, the issue is perfectly clear. We'll see of course attempts to justify the establishment of a provisional legislature which isn't required. We'll see attempts to justify that under the Basic Law. And I'm sure that people of Hong Kong will look at those attempts of justification with a good deal of scepticism.

But what is actually being attempted is perfectly plain. What Chinese officials want to do is to exclude certain particular individuals from the legislature, and what they want to do is to reduce the number of democrats in the legislature. There is no point in looking for more sophisticated motivations than that; there is no point in thinking the argument is about whether or not there is a better way of electing the legislature. The argument is about those two precise things. And that was what the argument was about during 17 rounds of talks.

We refuse to do that because we don't think that the objective of a fair election should be to ensure that the Government has political control over the legislature. We think that it's the people of Hong Kong who need to be represented in the legislature. So those are the issues that will really be on the table over the coming weeks and months. Whether or not individuals are excluded from the legislature because of their opinions, and whether or not attempts are really going to be made to reduce the number of democrats because they represent 60 to 70 per cent of the people of Hong Kong. Needn't be too sophisticated about it; that's what the argument's about. Bye.

End

Transcript of FS's media session

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, after officiating at the opening ceremony of the Clothing Industry Fair '96 this (Wednesday) morning:

Question: Mr Tsang, There has been a sharp drop in the private property on the market. How would it affect prices and also potential property buyers? Do you think there are needs for some changes to the present anti-speculation policy?

FS: Well, the anti-speculation policy has been very effective and we have been reviewing these measures regularly. They are taking good effect. The number of flats on the market particular on the supply side is determined by the market itself. It's not a question of what the government wants to do and what not to do. The present situation is supply has been lower than expected. You must look at the issue not only from the supply way, but also look at the number of vacant flats on the market and take a break for property under construction. And I believe the supply overall is still quite satisfactory because prices have been very stable and the whole property market has consolidated.

End

White Paper on Annual Report on HK to Parliament

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The Annual Report on Hong Kong 1995 to Parliament (Annual Report) has been presented to Parliament by Her Majesty's Government today (Wednesday).

As in past years, the Annual Report has been published in the form of a White Paper both in London and Hong Kong. It will be tabled at the Legislative Council on March 27.

A government spokesman said Her Majesty's Government had agreed in 1985, during the parliamentary debates on the Hong Kong Bill, to produce annual reports on Hong Kong and to lay them before Parliament.

The purpose of this series of reports is to keep Parliament informed of developments in Hong Kong on a regular basis.

The 1995 Annual Report is the eleventh such report. It contains a survey of major events in Hong Kong during 1995. Topics covered include visits to Hong Kong by government ministers and overseas visits by the Governor and the Chief Secretary of Hong Kong.

They also include constitutional development, contacts between Hong Kong and China, human rights, Vietnamese migrants, emigration and nationality, infrastructure, general economic and social conditions, law and order, legal and judicial systems and civil service.

Copies of the Annual Report and the Chinese translation will be available free of charge to members of the public from tomorrow.

They can be obtained from all District Offices, the Government Publications Centre, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, and the Marketing Section of the Information Services Department, 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 188 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

End

Government aims to provide effective transport system

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The Secretary for Transport, Mr Haider Barma, said the government's fundamental policy objective was to provide an effective transport system which would meet the economic, social and recreational needs of Hong Kong.

Speaking at the post-Budget press conference today (Wednesday), Mr Barma said this approach had served the community well.

He said in practice this meant expanding and improving the transport infrastructure; improving the availability and quality of public transport and managing road use to reduce congestion and giving priority to public transport.

In the past five years, the Government have spent a total of \$25.6 billion on capital projects on transport. In the next five years, it will spend another \$28.6 billion at 1995 price level.

Referring to the reduction in the total expenditure on transport by 9.1 per cent, Mr Barma said this arose mainly because expenditure on the Airport Core Programme related transport projects had peaked in 1995-96.

"If we disregard this portion and focus only on capital expenditure on other transport projects, the draft estimates have actually provided for an increase of \$765 million. This represents a real growth of 18.7 per cent," he said.

Mr Barma said the Government had the opportunity to invite private sector participation in Build Operate and Transfer projects and major transport modes were provided by the private sector without any government subsidy.

End

\$3.7 million spent on heritage projects

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The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, with the executive support of the Antiquities and Monuments Office, has disbursed grants totalling \$3.7 million to a wide range of heritage projects during 1994-95.

Presenting the second annual report at a press conference today (Wednesday), the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr Alexander Au, outlined the main activities of the Trust in the past year.

"The main focus of the Trust's programme of activities is to arouse community awareness of the importance of heritage preservation, as well as to promote learning opportunities and to support community initiatives in this area," he said.

The Trust spent \$1.5 million in sponsoring a 13-episode TV series produced by RTHK on Hong Kong's heritage last year and the programme had generated much publicity for heritage protection.

A total of \$700,000 had been used to fund a five-day international conference on archaeology in Southeast Asia which was organised by the University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong.

"The conference provided a forum for leading archaeologists to discuss the latest findings in archaeological research in South China and Southeast Asia. It was the first of its kind in Hong Kong and was a great success," Mr Au noted.

Other major projects of the Trust included:

- * the production of pamphlets and photo albums for free distribution to schools and the general public to promote the Ping Shan Heritage Trail;

- * the funding of district community organisations in staging 47 heritage-related activities for young people in the summer of 1994 ; and
- * the production of a teaching kit on local history for junior secondary school students.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Trust's Council Chairman, Mr Edward Ho, described the first School Heritage Festival which commenced just last week as the most exciting heritage event.

The two-week event, with indoor and outdoor activities specially designed for students, was to promote their interest in cultural heritage, he said.

Displays, demonstrations of traditional handicrafts, heritage tours to places such as the Kowloon Walled City and Tsang Tai Uk, archaeological workshops and environmental improvement programmes at historical monuments are highlights of the festival.

A series of English TV programme on Hong Kong's heritage has also begun, and there are plans for the Trust to take part in the establishment of a new heritage trail in Kam Tin.

Established in 1992, the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust is to provide an opportunity for the community to join hands to promote the preservation and conservation of Hong Kong's heritage.

End

Seminar on Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance

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About 170 officers from 80 government policy branches and departments today (Wednesday) attended a seminar offering practical guidance on complying with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Robin McLeish, and a specialist on employment law, Mr Michael Downey, presided over the seminar which provided an overview of the ordinance and dealt with common questions about its implementation.

The seminar was attended by officers directly involved in the handling of personal data or who have responsibility for preparing for compliance with the ordinance, or whose work comes under its purview.

Separately, the Home Affairs Branch (HAB) has produced a number of publicity items to promote public awareness of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, particularly among users of personal data.

Some 50,000 copies of a bilingual guide on compliance with data access and correction requests for data users have recently been published.

The booklet gives detailed guidance on the rights of subject access and data correction, and the requirements on complying with requests for such access and correction.

Some 60,000 copies of two posters publicising the major principles of data protection and the concept of "protect privacy, respect personal data" have also been distributed.

Posters promoting the six principles of data protection have been put up in all Mass Transit Railway stations.

About 60,000 copies of a bilingual leaflet giving an introduction to the key provisions of the ordinance have also been distributed to data users in both the public and private sectors.

Copies of the booklet, leaflet and posters have been sent to private sector professional bodies which have notified their members about the availability of these publicity materials.

Such information materials have also been distributed to government departments, public bodies, schools, tertiary education institutions and social welfare organisations.

All publicity items are available at district offices and the Marketing Office of the Information Services Department on the 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 176-192 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai.

End

Meter Approval Scheme

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The Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) today (Wednesday) announces commissioning the British Approvals Board for Telecommunications (BABT) to provide consultancy for establishing a telecommunications meter approval scheme for Hong Kong.

The Telecommunications Authority sees the requirement to set up such a scheme for the regulation of the fixed and cellular telecommunications carriers.

The aim is to establish customer confidence in the metering and billing operations of the telecommunications carriers by:

- (a) laying down and maintaining a basis on which meter systems and billing systems of the telecommunications carriers will be evaluated;
- (b) monitoring the ongoing compliance of the telecommunications carriers with the requirements of the approval scheme; and
- (c) approving the meter systems and billing systems that meet the requirements of the approval scheme.

The Telecommunications Authority has also in mind to extend the scheme at a later stage to cover the Internet and other value-added services providers.

BABT, an internationally renowned testing and approving body in the telecommunications field, has been appointed by the United Kingdom Department of Trade and Industry to approve the meters operated by the public telecommunications operators in UK.

In this consultancy, BABT will recommend to OFTA an implementation plan for the establishment of a telecommunications meter approval scheme that can be adopted and used for the next 15 years.

To start the consultancy, an industry workshop will be held on March 26 with both the fixed and cellular telecommunications carriers.

BABT will submit a final report to the Telecommunications Authority by June.

End

Land Registry keeps customers better informed

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The Land Registry has started to display in all of its regional offices its performance pledges as well as the actual performance levels and estimated service delivery time achieved by that particular office.

This is to keep customers better informed of the Registry's performance and standard of services they can expect from the office they visit, the Land Registrar, Mr Kenneth Pang, said today (Wednesday).

"We believe that well-informed customers will help us monitor our services more effectively and provide the feedback we need to further improve our services," he said.

Unveiling a plaque of performance pledges at the Urban Land Registry, Mr Pang said the Registry has achieved very satisfactory results in meeting all its enhanced performance pledges for 1995-96, both in terms of service delivery time and the quality of service.

"The new arrangement will also give due recognition to staff, especially those working in offices which have done well in meeting the performance pledges," he said.

"The Land Registry provides four major areas of services to the public, namely, registration of land documents, search of land records, supply of copies of records and certification of land documents.

"Currently the Registry's target is that at least 95 per cent of the requests for services is met within the pledged delivery time."

End

Value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in January

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The value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand for local production in January 1996 increased by 2% over a year earlier, according to the provisional results of a monthly survey released today (Wednesday) by the Census and Statistics Department.

Comparing January 1996 with January 1995, increases in the value of orders were registered in the electrical products industry (+9%), the fabricated metal products industry (+9%), the electronic products industry (+7%) and the printing and publishing industry (+1%).

The value of orders for the plastic products industry showed little change.

On the other hand, decreases in the value of orders were recorded in the textiles industry (-8%) and the wearing apparel industry (-2%).

Compared with December 1995, and bearing in mind this comparison may be affected by seasonal factors, the value of manufacturers' orders-on-hand in January 1996 increased by 6%.

The Monthly Survey of Orders-on-hand covers a sample of some 300 manufacturing firms engaging 50 or more workers.

Manufacturers' orders-on-hand refer to orders and parts of orders received earlier by manufacturers for local production which remain unfilled as at the end of the reference month.

Orders received by traders not engaged in production are included if such orders are further placed to manufacturers for production locally.

However, orders placed to manufacturing firms for production in China and other places outside Hong Kong are not included in this series of orders-on-hand statistics.

A spokesman of the department pointed out that caution should be exercised in interpreting the manufacturers' orders-on-hand figures in a single month. Instead, the trend movement of the series as displayed over a wider span of time points should be looked at.

The survey report for January 1996, at \$7 a copy, is now on sale at the Government Publications Centre, Queensway Government Offices, Low Block, ground floor, Queensway, and at the Census and Statistics Department Publications Unit, 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries about the survey results may be made to the Industrial Production Statistics Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6441.

The following table shows the year-on-year percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in different manufacturing industries:

	Percentage changes in the value of orders-on-hand in	
	December 1995 <u>over December 1994</u> (Revised)	January 1996 <u>over January 1995</u> (Provisional)
All industries covered in the survey	+4	+2
* Wearing apparel	#	- 2
* Textiles	- 15	- 8
* Electronic products	+12	+7
* Electrical products	+6	+9
* Fabricated metal products	+5	+9
* Plastic products	#	#
* Printing and publishing	+10	+1
# Changes within +/-0.5%		

End

Enrolment for safety and health management symposium starts

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Enrolment has started for a symposium on safety and health management organised by the Labour Department and Occupational Safety and Health Council to be held on April 2.

The symposium will provide an opportunity for the management and staff of Hong Kong companies who are concerned with safety and health in workplace to share their experiences in safety management.

Three experts from Australia, Singapore and the United Kingdom will be giving talks. Participants will also be briefed on the future Hong Kong legal framework and government strategy in safety management.

The symposium is designed for managers and supervisors in industries and construction companies as well as people who are responsible for safety and health at work. It will be held at J W Marriott Hotel, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Enrolment fee (including lunch) per person is \$500. Forms can be obtained from the Labour Department's Industrial Safety Training Centre, 13th floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, and all branch offices of the Factory Inspectorate Division.

For enquiries, please call 2852 3562 during office hours.

End

Application for Putonghua summer courses grant invited

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Primary and secondary schools are invited to apply for an Education Department grant to organise a 20-hour introductory Putonghua course for their students during the summer holidays in 1996.

Applications are open to government, aided and caput schools, all English Schools Foundation institutions and special schools (except those for the severely mentally handicapped), which can not at present offer Putonghua as a subject within school hours or as a special programme after school hours.

The course is part of the Government's three-year programme to provide Putonghua education from 1996 to 1998 to schools which do not yet have formal Putonghua classes.

The course will be free to students. The school will receive a grant of \$5,400 per class. Each primary school may apply to run up to two classes and each secondary school four. Related seminars will be organised for teachers and teaching materials provided for their reference.

Relevant circulars have been sent to schools. Applications should be received by the department by April 22.

Enquiries may be directed to the Chinese and Chinese History Section, Advisory Inspectorate, Education Department on 2892 6477 and 2892 6538.

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	2,007	0930	+794
Closing balance in the account	2,370	1000	+800
Change attributable to :		1100	+795
Money market activity	+763	1200	+795
LAF today	-400	1500	+814
		1600	+763

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 123.6 *-0.2* 20.3.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.68	2 years	2802	5.16	98.42	6.14
1 month	4.90	3 years	3901	5.57	98.15	6.38
3 months	5.14	5 years	5103	6.75	99.46	7.00
6 months	5.21	7 years	7302	6.02	93.65	7.33
12 months	5.60	5 years	M502	7.30	100.54	7.29

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$34,362 million

Closed March 20, 1996

End