

Calendar of Events 2012

January

- 9 Speaking at the ceremonial opening of the new legal year, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Wong Yan-lung, SC, elaborates on Hong Kong's strengths as a prime legal services and arbitration centre in the Asia-Pacific region.
- 11 The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Stephen Lam, informs the Legislative Council of precautionary measures taken by the Government following the detection of Legionella bacteria at the new Central Government Offices and Legislative Council Complex at Tamar.
- 12 Hong Kong is ranked the world's freest economy by the Heritage Foundation for the 18th consecutive year.
- 13 Visiting a support centre for ethnic minorities in Wan Chai, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, promises to strengthen support services for Hong Kong's ethnic minorities by opening additional support centres in Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po and Tung Chung.
- 16 The Chief Secretary for Administration leads a Government delegation to inspect reconstruction projects funded by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in Sichuan Province's earthquake-stricken areas, including infrastructure, health and social welfare projects.
- The Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the UK Treasury announce the launch of a joint private-sector forum to enhance co-operation between Hong Kong and London in the development of offshore Renminbi business.
- The Asian Financial Forum, attended by some 2,000 government and business leaders from around the world, opens in Hong Kong.

February

- 1 The Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, unveils a raft of proposals in his 2012-13 Budget to improve people's livelihood, enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness and help businesses brace for tough times ahead.
- 5 More than 60,000 runners take part in the Hong Kong Marathon, the city's biggest participatory sporting event.
- 14 Hong Kong scientists win seven awards at the 2011 State Science and Technology Awards announced by the National Office for Science and Technology Awards in Beijing.
- 15 The Frontier Closed Area along the boundary with the Mainland is reduced by 740 hectares in the first stage of a plan to eventually reduce the area from 2,800 hectares to around 400 hectares.

- 20 The Community Care Fund launches three new assistance programmes: a subsidy for needy low-income elderly people for dental services; a one-off allowance for low-income elderly tenants in private housing; and an after-school care pilot scheme for Primary One to Secondary Three students of low-income families.
- 21 The summary results of the 2011 Population Census are announced, showing Hong Kong's resident population to be 7,071,576 as at end-June 2011.
- 26 The Chief Executive announces the setting up of an independent committee, chaired by former Chief Justice the Honourable Andrew Li, to review the regulatory framework and procedures for the prevention and handling of potential conflicts of interests concerning the Chief Executive, non-official members of the Executive Council and politically appointed officials.

March

- 2 Hong Kong City Hall, a performing arts icon in Central District, celebrates its 50th anniversary.
- 15 The Road Traffic (Amendment) Ordinance 2011 comes into effect, imposing stricter controls over drug driving and providing police with powers to combat drug driving more effectively.
- 16 More than 350,000 flowering plants transform Victoria Park for the Hong Kong Flower Show, which attracts a record 560,000 visitors over the show's 10 days.
- 20 The Executive Council approves in principle the Airport Authority's proposal to develop a third runway at Hong Kong International Airport to meet future demand.
- 23 Hong Kong Design Year 2012 is launched, bringing an array of events and activities to promote Hong Kong as a design hub.
- 24 Indonesia's president, Dr H Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, arrives in Hong Kong on the first official visit by an Indonesian president since the establishment of the HKSAR.
- 25 Mr C Y Leung is elected the fourth-term Chief Executive of the HKSAR by the Election Committee.
- 28 The Chief Executive accepts the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission that the Hon Mr Justice Robert Tang Ching, Vice-President and Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court, be appointed a permanent judge of the Court of Final Appeal from October 2012.
The State Council endorses Mr C Y Leung as the new Chief Executive of the HKSAR.

April

- 1 The Communications Authority is established as a unified regulatory body for the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors.
- 2 The Court of Final Appeal dismisses an appeal against a Government decision to charge higher obstetric fees to non-resident women. The Hospital Authority welcomes the judgment and confirms that the obstetric fees and booking system of public hospitals for non-locals is to ensure that local pregnant women receive priority for the authority's obstetric services.
- 9 Hong Kong is chosen by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to set up a first-of-its-kind centre to assist the WHO to help smokers quit smoking.

- 13 The Road Traffic (Amendment) Ordinance 2012 takes effect, imposing new laws for Public Light Buses, including a maximum speed limit of 80 kilometres an hour and the installation of approved speed limiters.

May

- 8 Twenty-five projects receive awards in Hong Kong's first Skyrise Greenery Awards, recognising exemplary projects that showcase the integration of skyrise greenery into the city's built environment.
- 9 The WHO designates the Department of Health's Chinese Medicine Division as the 'Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine' in Hong Kong, the first of its kind, to assist the WHO to formulate policies and strategies and set regulatory standards for traditional medicine.
- 15 The Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office opens in Taipei, marking a new milestone in Hong Kong-Taiwan relations.
- 19 A selection of 56 paintings and sculptures by Pablo Picasso from the Musée National Picasso in Paris go on public display at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum.
- 21 An annular solar eclipse is visible in Hong Kong, the first since 1958.
- 23 The HKSAR Government congratulates the former Hong Kong Director of Health, Dr Margaret Chan, on her re-election as Director-General of the WHO.
- The Community Care Fund launches two new assistance programmes: a one-off allowance for low-income persons who are inadequately housed; and a subsidy for the owners' corporations of old buildings to help improve building management.
- 28 The Law Reform Commission publishes a report proposing that a comprehensive regime for class action litigation be introduced in Hong Kong to enhance access to justice.
- 30 The Hong Kong Observatory signs a co-operation agreement with the Korea Meteorological Administration, the first such agreement the observatory has established in the Asia-Pacific region.
- 31 The Independent Review Committee for the Prevention and Handling of Potential Conflicts of Interests submits a report containing 36 recommendations to the Chief Executive, including a recommendation that legislation should be enacted to apply section 3 of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance to the Chief Executive so that the acceptance of any advantage by the Chief Executive requires the permission of a statutory independent committee.
- Hong Kong is ranked the world's most competitive economy for the second consecutive year by the International Institute for Management Development in its World Competitiveness Yearbook.

June

- 1 The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Edward Yau, opens the Woodside Biodiversity Education Centre in a restored 90-year old historical building in Quarry Bay.
- The phased introduction of Euro V emission standards for newly registered vehicles comes into effect, which will eventually reduce related nitrogen oxide emissions by 30 to 40 per cent.

- 7 The Government agrees with the Council for Sustainable Development's report on energy saving and the reduction of carbon emissions and undertakes to implement all its recommendations.
- 12 Responding to calls for a review, the Financial Secretary states that the linked exchange rate system has served Hong Kong well for more than 30 years, and that he sees no reason to change it and has no intention of doing so.
- 14 The Competition Bill is passed by the Legislative Council, providing a legal framework to curb anti-competitive conduct in various sectors of the economy.
- 15 The Mediation Ordinance, establishing a regulatory framework for the conduct of mediation in Hong Kong, is enacted by the Legislative Council.
- 19 The Financial Dispute Resolution Centre, aimed at resolving financial disputes between financial institutions and their clients, opens in Hong Kong to further improve investor protection in the wake of the global financial crisis.
- 25 Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao announce a regional co-operation plan to build a 'Quality Living Area' in the Pearl River Delta area.
The second inflation-linked retail bond (or 'iBond') issued by the Government is listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.
- 26 The Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Development, Mrs Carrie Lam, attend the opening of the first zero carbon building in Hong Kong.
- 28 The Central People's Government approves the appointment of the HKSAR Government's principal officials for its fourth term.
The first phase of a fare concession scheme comes into effect, allowing the elderly and eligible persons with disabilities to travel on the MTR for \$2 per trip, with the scheme to be extended to other public transport in phases.
- 29 Supplement IX to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement is signed by the Financial Secretary and the Vice-Minister of Commerce, Mr Jiang Yaoping, incorporating 43 measures to liberalise services and facilitate trade and investment.
President Hu Jintao arrives in Hong Kong for a three-day visit.

July

- 1 President Hu swears in the new Chief Executive, Mr C Y Leung, and the Principal Officials of the fourth term HKSAR Government at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. In his inauguration speech, the new Chief Executive pledges to develop the economy, improve people's livelihood, promote democracy and build a more prosperous, progressive and righteous society.
The Government says it respects the right to demonstrate and freedom of expression as tens of thousands of people march through the streets of Hong Kong.
- 6 The United Nations 2012 World Investment Report reveals that Foreign Direct Investment flows into Hong Kong exceeded US\$83 billion in 2011, an all-time high and an increase of 17 per cent on 2010.
The iconic Brussels statue Manneken Pis is dressed in a stylish Hong Kong suit to mark the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR.

- 9 The Financial Secretary meets the Minister of Economy and Finance of Peru, Mr Luis Miguel Castilla, who is visiting Hong Kong with a delegation of Peruvian officials and business leaders seeking business ties with Hong Kong.
- 12 The Secretary for Development, Mr Mak Chai-kwong, resigns over allegations relating to housing allowance claims when he was a civil servant. He is subsequently replaced by former Legislative Council member, Mr Paul Chan Mo-po, on 30 July.
- 17 The Trade Descriptions (Unfair Trade Practices) (Amendment) Ordinance 2012 is enacted by the Legislative Council, creating new offences targeting common unfair trade practices such as misleading omissions and 'bait-and-switch' tactics.
- 20 The results are released for the inaugural Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, a significant step in implementing the New Academic Structure which provides students with six years of secondary education (three junior and three senior years) and extends undergraduate programmes from three years to four from the 2012-13 academic year.
- 24 As Typhoon Vicente nears Hong Kong, the Hurricane Signal Number 10 is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory for the first time in 13 years.

August

- 3 Sarah Lee Wai-sze wins a bronze medal in the Women's Keirin event at the Olympic Games in London, only the third medal Hong Kong has won at an Olympic Games.
- 7 The Government and volunteers continue to clean up plastic pellets scattered on beaches, at sea and at fish culture zones as a result of spillage from a cargo ship during Typhoon Vicente.
- 10 The three astronauts of China's Tiangong-1/Shenzhou-9 manned space docking and rendezvous mission arrive in Hong Kong for a four-day visit.
- 15 The Chief Executive congratulates the Hong Kong athletes on their performance at the London Olympics and says that Hong Kong people are proud of them.
- 21 The Government announces a new universal access policy to install lifts wherever site conditions permit at over 230 elevated walkways.
- 22 The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mrs Carrie Lam, and the Secretary for Development attend the commissioning ceremony for the Hong Kong West Drainage Tunnel, the largest flood prevention project in Hong Kong's history.
- 24 Mainland gold medallists from the London Olympics arrive in Hong Kong for a three-day visit.
The Chief Executive says that in 2013 there will be a zero quota for Mainland pregnant women to give birth in private hospitals in Hong Kong

September

- 1 The Immigration Department launches a new service allowing Taiwan visitors to register online free of charge prior to arrival in Hong Kong.
- 2-5 At the London Paralympic Games, Wong Ka-man wins a gold medal in the women's table tennis singles and Yu Chui-yee wins gold medals in the women's individual foil and epee fencing events.

- 6 The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, congratulates Professor Rossa Chiu of the Department of Chemical Pathology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong on winning the 2012 Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Science Prize for Innovation, Research and Education.
- 7 Hong Kong and Chile sign a bilateral Free Trade Agreement in Vladivostok, marking a new milestone in trade and investment co-operation between the two economies.
- 8 As thousands rally outside the Tamar Government Complex, the Government says it understands the community's concerns and decides not to impose any deadline for the introduction of moral and national education in schools and will leave it to individual schools to decide whether to implement the subject and, if so, the format and timetable.
- 9 The Legislative Council elections attract a voter turnout of 53 per cent in geographical constituencies, 52 per cent in the new District Council functional constituency and 70 per cent in the remaining 28 functional constituencies. In all, 70 legislators are elected, an increase of 10 over the previous election in 2008.
- 11 The Chief Executive welcomes the Hong Kong, China team on their return from the London Paralympics and congratulates them on winning three gold, three silver and six bronze medals.
- 12 The Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Ko Wing-man, thanks the volunteers and government departments who participated in cleaning up thousands of kilogrammes of plastic pellets scattered on Hong Kong's beaches and coastline following Typhoon Vicente in July.
- 13 The Government announces the appointment of the members of the Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee, set up to review the community's changing housing needs and priorities, and to recommend measures to address those needs.
- 18 The Chief Secretary for Administration outlines enhanced enforcement action to be taken against parallel trade activities in North District.
- Hong Kong retains its ranking as the world's freest economy in the Fraser Institute's 2012 report on Economic Freedom of the World.

October

- 1 Two passenger vessels collide off Lamma Island, causing one to sink with the loss of 39 lives.
- A free trade agreement between Hong Kong and the member states of the European Free Trade Association comes into force in respect of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, with Norway to follow on 1 November.
- 4 Flags fly at half-mast as the Chief Executive, members of the Executive Council and government staff observe three minutes' silence on a day of condolence for those who died in the Lamma ferry tragedy.
- 8 The Government accepts the recommendation of the Committee on the Initiation of Moral and National Education Subject to formally shelve the subject's Curriculum Guide to allay public concerns.
- 11 The Secretary for Food and Health announces the setting up of a steering committee to review the regulatory regime for private healthcare facilities in Hong Kong

following public concern at the death of a woman who, with three others, suffered septic shock after receiving intravascular infusions at a beauty centre.

17 In an address to the Legislative Council, the Chief Executive outlines his views on several important relationships, including those between the executive and the legislature and between Hong Kong, the Mainland and other countries, and issues including housing and political development.

22 The Chief Executive in Council appoints a Commission of Inquiry into the collision of two passenger vessels off Lamma Island.

26 The Financial Secretary announces measures to cool the property market by extending the application of the Special Stamp Duty from two years to three and introducing a Buyer's Stamp Duty of 15 per cent for buyers of residential property who are not Hong Kong permanent residents.

The Chief Secretary for Administration reaffirms the Government's plan to build a multi-purpose sports complex at Kai Tak.

November

1 Hong Kong is ranked first for the second consecutive year in the Financial Development Index, a study compiled by the World Economic Forum which ranks the breadth, depth and efficiency of 62 of the world's leading financial systems and capital markets.

9 The Chief Executive appoints the members of the new Poverty Commission, which will review existing policies and formulate new policies to prevent and alleviate poverty.

15 In Madrid, the Chief Secretary for Administration signs agreements between Hong Kong and Spain on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

21 The Community Care Fund launches a new assistance programme to subsidise persons with severe physical disabilities from low-income families in renting respiratory support medical equipment.

26 The Hong Kong Museum of History exhibition of terracotta warriors from the Qin Dynasty closes, after attracting more than 420,000 visitors since opening on 25 July.

December

4 The Government announces that Central Government Offices' West Wing will be used to provide offices for the Department of Justice and legal services-related non-governmental organisations, reversing an earlier decision to redevelop the site.

7 The Legislative Council approves a funding application for a new Old Age Living Allowance to provide more financial help to elderly people in need.

8 Hongkong Post issues a set of commemorative stamps to mark the 150th anniversary of the issuing of Hong Kong's first postage stamps.

10 The Chief Executive responds to questions at the Legislative Council about unauthorised building works on his property, saying he believes his replies and the action being undertaken will ease public concern and refocus attention on day-to-day business.

- 11 Hong Kong Primary 4 students are ranked first in reading literacy in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2011, while Hong Kong Secondary 2 and Primary 4 students are among the top five performers in mathematics in Trends in the International Mathematics and Science Study 2011.
- 12 An International Monetary Fund (IMF) Staff Mission to Hong Kong reaffirms the IMF's long-standing support for the linked exchange rate system and commends the Government's proactive policies to support growth and preserve financial stability. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, announces the decision by the Chief Executive in Council to adopt the Minimum Wage Commission's recommendation to increase the statutory minimum hourly wage from \$28 to \$30 with effect from 1 May 2013.
- 13 The Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, says that the opening in Hong Kong of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law represents a significant vote of confidence in Hong Kong, both as a regional legal services centre and as a springboard for the Hague Conference to further develop its work and extend its influence in the region.
- 16 Asia's largest exhibition of Andy Warhol's works goes on display at the Hong Kong Museum of Art.
- 19 The Independent Police Complaints Council issues its final report on complaints against the police arising from the visit of Vice Premier Mr Li Keqiang in August 2011, recommending improvements in the planning and execution of security measures by the police.
- 22 Hong Kong International Airport handles a record 1,081 flight movements on 22 December at the start of the Christmas holiday, exceeding the previous daily record of 1,057 flight movements set on 20 January.
- 31 A ban on trawling in Hong Kong waters comes into effect, aimed at rehabilitating Hong Kong's marine ecosystem.