

# Calendar of Events 2013

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## January

- 1 In response to pro- and anti-government rallies, the government reiterates that it fully respects the people's right to protest and their freedom of expression and will listen to people's views in a humble manner.
- 7 The Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsy Yuen, SC, signs an arrangement with the Macao Special Administrative Region to provide mutual recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards in Hong Kong and Macao.
- 9 A motion to impeach the Chief Executive, Mr C Y Leung (the first time such a motion is moved) is defeated in the Legislative Council.
- 10 Hong Kong is ranked the world's freest economy for the 19th consecutive year by the Heritage Foundation.
- 14 At the Ceremonial Opening of the new Legal Year, the Secretary for Justice speaks about Hong Kong's strengths as a leading international legal services and dispute resolution centre in the Asian Pacific Region.
- 16 In his maiden Policy Address, the Chief Executive lays out plans to tackle key issues of housing and land supply, poverty, an ageing population and the environment. He says achieving sustained economic growth is the key to tackling these problems and overcoming the challenges ahead.
- 17 The Chinese Medicine Development Committee is established to recommend the long-term development strategy of Chinese medicines in Hong Kong.
- 18 The International Monetary Fund says in a report on Hong Kong that the Linked Exchange Rate system remains the best arrangement for Hong Kong and commends the government's pre-emptive efforts to safeguard financial stability.
- 30 'The Wonders of Ancient Mesopotamia' exhibition of 170 treasures from the British Museum opens at the Hong Kong Museum of History, the first exhibition of Mesopotamian artefacts ever held in Hong Kong and the only venue in Asia to host the world tour of this exhibition.

## February

- 6 More than 200 exhibits from the Moscow Kremlin Museums and the Fersman Mineralogical Museum of Russia go on display at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum's 'Fabergé: Legacy of Imperial Russia' exhibition, including the famous Fabergé Easter eggs created for the Russian court.
- 21 Hong Kong cyclist Sarah Lee Wai-sze wins gold in the women's 500 metre time trial at the 2013 UCI Track Cycling World Championships in Minsk, Belarus.

- 22 To cool the property market, the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, announces the doubling of the rates of existing ad valorem stamp duty applicable to both residential and non-residential properties.
- 24 A record 72,000 runners take part in the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2013, raising funds for a range of charities.
- 25 The new Hong Kong Maritime Museum at Central Pier 8 is opened by the Chief Executive.
- 26 The Chief Executive meets the visiting Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, Her Excellency Yingluck Shinawatra, at Government House.  
Hong Kong and Thailand sign the Co-operation Arrangement on Strengthening Trade and Economic Relations.
- 27 The Financial Secretary puts forward a range of measures in his 2013-14 Budget to develop the economy, optimise human resources, invest in infrastructure and care for people's livelihood.
- 28 The government announces it will restart its land sale programme from 2013-14 and abolish the Application Mechanism to take back the initiative in land supply.

## March

- 1 The Import and Export (General) (Amendment) Regulation 2013 comes into effect, prohibiting the unlicensed export of powdered formula, including milk powder and soya milk powder, for infants and children under 36 months. An exemption allows persons leaving Hong Kong aged 16 or above to export no more than 1.8 kilograms of powdered formula in their accompanied personal luggage in any 24-hour period.  
The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mrs Carrie Lam, and a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government delegation attend completion ceremonies in Sichuan for two HKSAR reconstruction projects, bringing to 175 the number of HKSAR reconstruction projects completed in earthquake-stricken areas in Sichuan Province.
- 4 The HKSAR and the Czech Republic sign three bilateral agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Surrender of Persons Wanted for Criminal Proceedings, and Transfer of Sentenced Persons.
- 13 The Chief Executive chairs the first meeting of the Economic Development Commission. He says the government places as much emphasis on economic development as it does on livelihood issues, because only with persistent and more vigorous economic growth can Hong Kong have the necessary resources to address its deep-seated problems, including housing, poverty and an ageing population.
- 18 The Home Affairs Bureau launches a two-year pilot scheme under which community lawyers will provide free legal procedural advice for litigants in person who have commenced, or are parties to, legal proceedings in the District Court or higher courts and who have not been granted legal aid.
- 19 The Lands Department announces that two residential sites in Kai Tak will be disposed of by public tender under the 'Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People' measure, meaning that the flats to be built on the two sites can only be sold to Hong Kong Permanent Residents.

- 25 The Court of Final Appeal holds that section 2(4)(a)(vi) of the Immigration Ordinance, which prevents persons who enter Hong Kong for employment as foreign domestic helpers from building up, while so employed, the period of ordinary residence necessary for acquiring Hong Kong permanent resident status, is consistent with Article 24(2)(4) of the Basic Law and constitutionally valid.
- 29 A new record is set with 1,172 flight movements handled at the Hong Kong International Airport in a single day, breaking the previous single-day record of 1,081 flight movements set on 22 December 2012.

## April

- 5 The Chief Executive meets the visiting President of Mexico, Mr Enrique Peña Nieto, at Government House.  
The first payments of the new Old Age Living Allowance, which aims to benefit over 400,000 elderly people, are made.
- 8 The Chief Executive accepts the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission that the Hon Mr Justice Joseph Paul Fok, Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court, be appointed a permanent judge of the Court of Final Appeal with effect from 21 October 2013.  
The Education Bureau announces the setting up of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education.
- 9 The Labour and Welfare Bureau announces the formation of the Standard Working Hours Committee.
- 11 The coxswains of the two passenger vessels which collided off Lamma Island on 1 October 2012, resulting in the sinking of one of the vessels and the death of 39 passengers, are each charged with 39 counts of manslaughter.
- 18 Professor Kenneth Young, Chairperson of the Curriculum Development Council, says that the impact of the first three-year cycle of the New Academic Structure, the New Senior Secondary curriculum and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education examination has been positive and there have been notable achievements.
- 19 The Commission of Inquiry into the Collision of Vessels near Lamma Island on 1 October 2012 submits its report to the Chief Executive, having conducted 50 days of substantive hearings between 12 December 2012 and 12 March 2013 and received evidence from 113 witnesses.
- 23 The Chief Secretary for Administration launches the eight-month 'Hong Kong: Our Home' campaign, which includes more than 1,100 events and activities under four themes: 'Vibrant Hong Kong', 'Hip Hong Kong', 'Caring Hong Kong' and 'Fresh Hong Kong'.
- 26 The government announces that Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have agreed to pursue a bilateral Free Trade Agreement.  
A major three-day cleanup operation is launched in all of Hong Kong's 18 districts to boost environmental hygiene and cleanliness.

## May

- 1 The statutory minimum wage increases from \$28 to \$30 per hour.

- 2 The 16.5 metre-high yellow ‘Rubber Duck’, a floating sculpture created by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, arrives at Ocean Terminal/Harbour City in Hong Kong on its world tour.
- 6 Striking dock workers accept a 9.8 per cent pay rise and end a 40-day stoppage at Kwai Tsing container terminal.  
The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, signs a bilateral working holiday scheme agreement with the visiting French Foreign Secretary, Mr Laurent Fabius, which will allow 200 participants from each side each year to stay up to 12 months in France or Hong Kong and to take up employment to finance their stay. Hong Kong has established similar schemes with Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Korea and New Zealand.
- 10 The Hong Kong Correctional Services Museum in Stanley welcomes its 600,000th visitor since opening just over 10 years ago.
- 13 The Court of Final Appeal declares unconstitutional statutory provisions in the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance and the Marriage Ordinance which preclude post-operative transsexuals from marrying in their reassigned sex.
- 18 The territory-wide Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign is launched to raise public awareness of the problem of food waste and to encourage the entire community, from individuals and households to commercial and industrial sectors, to reduce food waste.
- 24 The Chief Executive accepts Mr Barry Cheung Chun-yuen’s resignation with immediate effect from all public service positions, including the Executive Council and the Urban Renewal Authority, on the grounds that Mr Cheung is under police investigation.
- 28 The HKSAR and the Republic of Korea sign an Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

## June

- 9 The Chief Executive departs for New York for a two-day visit, his first official overseas visit since taking office in July 2012.
- 10 More than 710 hectares of land are excised from the Frontier Closed Area (FCA) in the second of three stages which will eventually reduce the FCA from about 2,800 hectares to about 400 hectares at the end of the third stage in 2015, allowing local residents and members of the public to enter the excised area without restriction.
- 12 The new Kai Tak Cruise Terminal welcomes its first cruise vessel *Mariner of the Seas*.
- 23 Whistle-blower Mr Edward Snowden, the subject of a request for provisional arrest to the HKSAR Government by the United States Government, leaves Hong Kong for a third country as a normal passenger through lawful channels.
- 24 Former Secretary for Development Mr Mak Chai-kwong is convicted of conspiracy to defraud and using documents with intent to deceive in connection with cross-renting his flat to another civil servant in the 1980s and fraudulently obtaining \$700,000 in allowances.
- 27 The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2013 ranks Hong Kong third in terms of global Foreign Direct

Investment (FDI) inflows in 2012, with FDI exceeding US\$75 billion, ranking behind only the USA and Mainland China.

## July

- 1 In response to a public procession, the government reiterates that it fully respects people's legal rights to take part in processions and their freedom of expression, and will listen to their views in a humble manner.
- 4 The government announces plans to proceed with two New Development Areas in the North East New Territories, at Kwu Tung North and Fanling North, as the first part of the North East New Territories Development Areas Project.
- 10 The Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill 2013 comes into effect, enabling Hong Kong to enter into tax information exchange agreements with other jurisdictions where necessary and enhancing the existing exchange of information arrangements under comprehensive avoidance of double taxation agreements.
- 12 The Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai Leisure and Cultural building is officially opened, incorporating an eight-storey public library which is the second largest in Hong Kong and the first with an open courtyard.
- 18 Comix Home Base, providing exhibition and studio space for comic artists and animators, is opened in a cluster of revitalised historic tenement buildings in Wan Chai.
- 19 The Trade Descriptions (Unfair Trade Practices) (Amendment) Ordinance 2012, which aims to provide greater protection for consumers by extending the ordinance's coverage from goods to services and specified unfair trade practices, comes into effect.
- 20 An exhibition marking the 40th anniversary of Bruce Lee's death opens at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, featuring more than 600 items relating to the famous martial arts movie star.
- 22 The Ombudsman, Mr Alan Lai, recommends in his Annual Report 2013 that the government consider legislation to enable government departments and public bodies to apologise without fear of incurring extra legal liability.
- 31 More than 130 costumes and accessories from the Palace Museum's collection go on show in 'The Splendours of Royal Costume: Qing Court Attire' exhibition at the Hong Kong Museum of History.

## August

- 1 Applications open for a scheme allowing Hong Kong elderly persons who live in Guangdong to receive a \$1,135 monthly old-age allowance without having to come back to the city every year, with the first payments to be made from 1 October 2013. The Chief Executive accepts the resignation of Mr Franklin Lam Fan-keung from the Executive Council.
- 13 The Typhoon Signal Number 8 remains hoisted for 12 hours (the longest since 2002) as Severe Typhoon Utor nears Hong Kong.
- 29 The HKSAR Government and the Central People's Government sign Supplement X to CEPA.

## September

- 1 The old swimming pool at Victoria Park closes. The first public swimming pool in Hong Kong when it opened in 1957, it is replaced by a new swimming pool complex of modern-day international standards on 16 September.
- 3 Hong Kong's Tai O Heritage Hotel wins an Award of Merit in the 2013 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. The awards recognise the efforts of private individuals and organisations that have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.
- 4 Hong Kong is ranked the seventh most competitive economy in the world in the World Economic Forum's 2013-2014 Global Competitiveness Report, a rise of two places from the previous year.
- 12 The 12th National Games held in Liaoning Province end, with Hong Kong athletes winning one gold, three silver and three bronze medals.  
A report by the Independent Review Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)'s Regulatory Systems and Procedures for handling Official Entertainment, Gifts and Duty Visits is published, with certain parts redacted as the ICAC is investigating complaints against its former Commissioner, Mr Timothy Tong Hin-ming.
- 18 Hong Kong retains its ranking as the world's freest economy in the Fraser Institute's Economic Freedom of the World 2013 Annual Report.
- 19 To assist visually impaired passengers go through departure clearance, an e-Channel with a voice navigation function is opened at the Departure Hall of the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point, the Immigration Department's first such facility in Hong Kong.
- 25 An exhibition entitled 'Journey with You: Hong Kong Bus Story' opens at the Hong Kong Museum of History to mark the 80th anniversary of the establishment of Hong Kong's franchised bus services.
- 28 The Commission on Poverty publishes the first official poverty line, which is defined as half of the median monthly domestic household income prior to government intervention such as tax and social benefit transfers. Using this definition, in Hong Kong in 2012 the poor population was around 1.02 million (403,000 households), representing a poverty rate of 15.2 per cent.

## October

- 5 The Chief Executive departs for Indonesia to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation 2013 Leaders'Week and other related meetings in Bali.
- 6 Two thousand swimmers take part in the annual cross-harbour race, with the winner, Christian Reichert from Germany, completing the 1.5 kilometre course from Lei Yue Mun to Quarry Bay in 15 minutes and 45 seconds.
- 15 The Chief Executive in Council approves in principle the applications of Fantastic Television Limited and HK Television Entertainment Company Limited for a domestic free television programme service licence, and rejects the application by Hong Kong Television Network Limited, saying it has decided that a gradual and orderly approach in introducing competition into the free TV market is prudent and in the

public interest. It is the first time in almost 40 years that new free television licences have been awarded in Hong Kong.

- 17 The Chief Executive sets up a task force led by the Chief Secretary, with the Secretary for Justice and the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Raymond Tam, as members, to handle the public consultation on the methods for selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council in 2016.

On the day marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Linked Exchange Rate System, the Financial Secretary says the system has been integral to economic and financial stability in Hong Kong over the last 30 years and the government sees no need, and has no intention, to change the system.

- 21 A two-storey museum with more than 1,200 exhibits illustrating the early history of public housing opens in the restored Mei Ho House in Shek Kip Mei, one of the first six-storey resettlement blocks built in 1954 to resettle squatters left homeless after the Shek Kip Mei fire on 25 December 1953.

- 24 The Steering Committee on Population Policy launches a public engagement exercise to deepen public understanding of demographic challenges and forge a consensus on policy direction.

- 25 The Air Pollution Control (Air Pollutant Emission) (Controlled Vehicles) Regulation is gazetted, aimed at phasing out some 80,000 pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles and introducing a 15-year service limit for newly registered diesel commercial vehicles.

## November

- 1 The Steering Committee on Review of the Regulation of Private Healthcare Facilities endorses a report submitted by the Working Group on Differentiation between Medical Procedures and Beauty Services which recommends that high-risk cosmetic procedures should be regulated and that some procedures should only be performed by registered medical practitioners or registered dentists.

- 8 Robotic model dinosaurs (including one 30 metres long and 10 metres high) and more than 190 fossils and other exhibits feature in the 'Legends of the Giant Dinosaurs' exhibition which opens in the Science Museum.

- 22 The government announces that the Antiquities Authority has declared the Cenotaph in Central and the Béthanie in Pok Fu Lam as monuments under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance.

- 23 The Chief Executive meets the President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel Barroso, at Government House.

- 28 The HKSAR and the Kingdom of Sweden sign a bilateral agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.

## December

- 2 The Community Care Fund rolls out the 'One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving CSSA assistance programme to help low-income households, with subsidies of \$3,500 for one-person

households, \$7,000 for two-person households and \$10,000 for three-or-more-person households. An estimated 78,700 households (or over 210,000 persons) will benefit. The Government Laboratory marks its centenary with a four-day international conference.

The first human case of avian influenza A(H7N9) in Hong Kong is confirmed.

- 3 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment 2012 finds that Hong Kong 15-year old students rank second in reading and scientific literacy and third in mathematical literacy among students from the 65 countries/regions participating in the study.

The Hong Kong, China delegation attends the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation in Bali, Indonesia.

- 4 The government launches a five-month public consultation on the methods for selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council in 2016.

- 5 The Chief Executive meets the visiting Queen of the Belgians, Her Majesty Queen Mathilde, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs of Belgium, Mr Didier Reynders, at Government House.

- 12 Under a reciprocal arrangement with the Republic of Korea, holders of HKSAR passports can enrol to use automated immigration clearance services in the Republic of Korea.

- 17 The Court of Final Appeal declares unconstitutional the seven-year residence requirement imposed since 1 January 2004 on applicants for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and restores the pre-existing residence requirement of one year.

- 30 Hong Kong's cycling team performs at the new Hong Kong Velodrome to mark the completion of Hong Kong's first indoor cycling track.