

Calendar of Events 2014

January

- 1 A bilateral Working Holiday Scheme between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the United Kingdom comes into effect, allowing young people from one place to stay for up to two years in the other and to take up employment to finance their stay, pursue self-financed study or participate in volunteer services.
- 7 The Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mr C Y Leung, expresses his sadness at the death of Sir Run Run Shaw, founder of Shaw Brothers Studios and Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), at the age of 107.
- 13 At the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year, the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Geoffrey Ma Tao-li, says the salient features of the integrity of Hong Kong's legal system are a truly independent judiciary, judges who look no further than the proper application of the law both in letter and in spirit, and the importance of ensuring transparency in all that the courts do in order to demonstrate the integrity of the law.
- 14 Hong Kong is ranked the world's freest economy for the 20th consecutive year by the Heritage Foundation.
- 15 In his second Policy Address, the Chief Executive says the government is committed to promoting economic development, improving people's livelihood and taking forward constitutional development for more effective governance.
- 17 The government releases its *Assessment Report on Hong Kong's Capacity to Receive Tourists*, which concludes that Hong Kong will generally be able to receive the projected 70 million visitor arrivals in 2017, though hotel rooms will continue to be in tight supply.
- 28 Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market is closed for 21 days and 22,000 poultry destroyed after a batch of live chickens from Foshan, Guangdong, is confirmed with H7N9 avian influenza virus. During the closure period, trading of Mainland and local live poultry is suspended.
- 29 The Chief Executive announces that, from 5 February 2014, the government will suspend the 14-day visa free arrangement for holders of diplomatic or official passports of the Republic of the Philippines, as its government had failed to formally apologise to the Manila hostage incident victims and their relatives.

February

- 1 The Air Pollution Control (Air Pollutant Emission) (Controlled Vehicles) Regulation comes into effect, limiting newly registered diesel commercial vehicles to a service life of 15 years.

- 6 The six-month 'Bless Hong Kong' campaign is launched, encouraging the community to organise activities for the under-privileged as part of poverty alleviation efforts.
- 18 The government announces the resumption of local live poultry supply but continues to suspend the import from the Mainland of live poultry for slaughter and consumption as a precaution against the spread of H7N9 avian influenza.
The seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate dips to 3.1 per cent in the three months from November 2013 to January 2014, the lowest since the December 1997 to February 1998 period.
- 19 Presenting the Government Minute in response to the Public Accounts Committee's report on the ICAC's internal administrative controls over official entertainment, duty visits outside Hong Kong and bestowal of gifts, the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mrs Carrie Lam, says the inadequacies and incidents of non-compliance highlighted in the report had caused wide public concern and undermined the ICAC's image and Hong Kong's reputation as a corruption-free society. The Chief Secretary for Administration says the government is determined to introduce measures to restore Hong Kong people's confidence in the ICAC.
- 20 The Environment Bureau unveils 'A Food Waste & Yard Waste Plan for Hong Kong 2014-2022', which sets a target of reducing food waste disposal to Hong Kong landfills by 40 per cent by 2022.
- 25 The Central People's Government notifies the Hong Kong Government that the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Finance Ministers' Meeting, scheduled to be held in Hong Kong from 10 to 12 September 2014, will be postponed and relocated to Beijing.
- 26 In presenting a Budget with wide-ranging measures to boost Hong Kong's economy and sharpen the city's competitive edge, the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, says that his foremost priorities are to promote economic development and to maintain a sound business and employment environment.
The Chief Executive strongly condemns an attack on former *Ming Pao* chief editor Mr Kevin Lau and says Hong Kong is a lawful society and will not condone violence.
- 28 An exhibition featuring 120 works from world-famous Chinese artist Ju Ming's *Living World* series opens at the Hong Kong Art Museum.
The Stamp Duty (Amendment) Ordinance 2014 is gazetted, extending to 36 months, for residential properties acquired on or after 27 October 2012, the holding period during which Special Stamp Duty will be chargeable if the property is sold or transferred. The ordinance, which has effect from 27 October 2012, also increases the applicable Special Stamp Duty rates and introduces a Buyer's Stamp Duty, which is generally chargeable on the acquisition of a residential property by a person other than a Hong Kong permanent resident acting on his or her own behalf.

March

- 3 The new Companies Ordinance comes into effect, with the aim of enhancing corporate governance, facilitating business, ensuring better regulation and modernising the law to strengthen Hong Kong's status as an international commercial and financial centre.

- 5 The World Justice Project's *Rule of Law Index 2014* ranks Hong Kong fourth out of 99 jurisdictions for order and security, and 16th overall for rule of law.
- 7 The Hong Kong Flower Show 2014 opens at Victoria Park, with more than 350,000 flowers on display, including 40,000 pots of *kalanchoe*, the show's theme flower.
- 12 Caravaggio's masterpiece *Supper at Emmaus* (1605-1606) goes on display at the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre.
- 20 The Department of Justice jointly organises with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council 'Mediation Week 2014' to further promote and develop mediation services in Hong Kong.
- 21 The Chief Executive meets the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr John Key, at Government House.
- 24 Speaking at the Asian Investment Conference in Hong Kong, Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organisation, says the government should consider banning live poultry sales to restrict the spread of infectious diseases such as bird flu.

April

- 7 The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, announces that around 10,000 households in seven housing estates will participate in a six-month pilot scheme on municipal solid waste charging.
- 9 An International Monetary Fund Staff Mission to Hong Kong publishes its Preliminary Conclusions, following the 2014 Article IV Consultation discussions. The conclusions include that Hong Kong's financial system is well regulated and supervised in line with the needs of a major global financial centre and that the Linked Exchange Rate System is the best arrangement for Hong Kong.
The 'Legends of the Giant Dinosaurs' exhibition at the Hong Kong Science Museum closes after attracting a record of more than 770,000 visitors since opening on 8 November 2013.
- 15 The Mass Transit Railway Corporation says completion of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link will be pushed back from 2015 to 2016, and start operation in 2017.
- 23 The HKSAR Government and the Philippine Government issue a joint statement setting out their resolution of the four demands made by the victims and their families of the Manila hostage-taking incident in August 2010: apology, compensation, sanctions against responsible officials and individuals, and tourist safety measures.

May

- 5 The Chief Executive thanks the community for caring about Hong Kong's political development and submitting their views on the '*Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2016*' consultation document. The government received almost 125,000 submissions during the consultation period.

- 13 An exhibition of the layout designs of popular Japanese animation producer Studio Ghibli opens at the Heritage Museum.
- 15 Mr John E Scanlon, the Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), says that the government's destruction of the first tonne of 28 tonnes of confiscated elephant ivory 'sends a powerful message that Hong Kong does not accept and will not tolerate this illegal trade or the devastating impact it is having on the African elephant and on the livelihoods of rural communities.'
- 16 The government announces the setting up of an Independent Expert Panel, chaired by Mr Justice Hartmann, to review the project delay relating to the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link.
- 18 The Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities is extended to eligible children with disabilities aged below 12, benefiting some 9,000 children.
- 23 The International Monetary Fund releases a Financial System Stability Assessment report on Hong Kong, in which it notes that the financial sector is one of the largest and most developed in the world, ranking number one in the World Economic Forum Financial Development Index, and says that the sector is very well regulated, with the capacity to withstand a diversity of shocks.

June

- 9 As a fundraising project for WWF and to raise awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation, 1,600 papier mâché pandas created by French sculptor Paulo Grangeon arrive in Hong Kong, one for each of the 1,600 giant pandas left in the wild.
- 10 The Central People's Government (CPG) releases a White Paper on '*The Practice of the "One Country, Two Systems" Policy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*' to systematically set out the practice of the 'One Country, Two Systems' policy in the HKSAR as well as the CPG's review, evaluation and vision of Hong Kong's development.
- 14 At its 40th Anniversary Gala Concert, the Chief Executive congratulates the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra on reaching this milestone.
- 19 The Hong Kong Cultural Centre hosts the world premiere of *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, which was partly filmed in Hong Kong and is the latest of the popular 'Transformers' science fiction films.
- 20 An agreement between Hong Kong and the United States of America for exchange of information relating to taxes enters into force.
- 21 PMQ, a creative industries landmark which was previously the Hollywood Road Police Married Quarters, is officially opened.
- 30 With a monthly mean temperature of 29 degrees, June 2014 is the hottest June in Hong Kong since records began in 1884.

July

- 1 The government appeals to the community to forge consensus on constitutional development in a rational and pragmatic manner and on the basis of the Basic Law

and relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress as thousands of protesters march from Victoria Park to Central.

3 The Chief Executive meets the President of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr Nikola Gruevski, at Government House.

11 Formal negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement between Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) begins in Hong Kong.

15 The Chief Executive submits to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress his report on whether there is a need to amend the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the HKSAR in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council of the HKSAR in 2016. At the same time the government publishes its *'Report on the Public Consultation on the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2016'*.

17 With an order by the Court of Final Appeal in a 2012 judicial review coming into effect, the Registrar of Marriages begins treating those who have had full sex reassignment surgery as being of the sex to which they are reassigned.

24 A new set of Hong Kong definitive stamps is launched, with the Hong Kong Global Geopark of China as its theme and featuring 16 geosites in Sai Kung Volcanic Rock Region and Northeast New Territories Sedimentary Rock Region.

25 The final electoral registers for 2014 are released, containing a total of 3,507,786 electors for the geographical constituencies, 232,677 electors for the functional constituencies, other than the District Council (second) functional constituency, which has 3,251,274 electors. The final register for the Election Committee subsectors contains 239,089 voters.

The Stamp Duty (Amendment) (No 2) Ordinance 2014 is gazetted, increasing with effect from 23 February 2013 the ad valorem stamp duty rates generally on property transactions except where the purchaser acquiring a residential property is a Hong Kong permanent resident acting on his or her own behalf and is not a beneficial owner of any other residential property in Hong Kong at the time of acquisition.

30 The police announce that Hong Kong's overall crime figure for the first half of the year dropped 6 per cent year-on-year to 33,916 cases, the lowest since 1980.

31 The month is the hottest July on record in Hong Kong, with a monthly mean temperature of 29.8 degrees.

August

4 The Hong Kong team win 92 medals to take the FISAC-IRSF World Rope Skipping Championships (held in Hong Kong for the first time), with some team-members breaking world records.

31 The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress makes its decision on the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the HKSAR in 2017. It decides that a nominating committee of the same size and composition and formed in the same way as the Election Committee for the fourth Chief Executive shall nominate two to three candidates for the office of Chief Executive, each of whom must be endorsed by more than half of the members of the nominating committee. All eligible electors of the HKSAR will have the right to vote in the election of the Chief Executive.

September

- 2 Hong Kong is ranked seventh of 144 economies in the World Economic Forum's 2014-15 Global Competitiveness Report, and first for infrastructure and financial market development.
- 5 Live poultry imports from the Mainland resume after being suspended in January to prevent the spread of avian influenza.
- 11 The government issues its first Islamic bond (*sukuk*) under the Government Bond Programme.
- 14 The 2014-15 horse racing season opens, with a crowd of 69,878 at Sha Tin racecourse and turnover of \$1.139 billion, both the highest for a season opener in 20 years.
- 17 The Chief Executive meets the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, at Government House.
The government announces the Railway Development Strategy 2014, outlining plans for seven new railway projects to be completed by 2031. They will lengthen Hong Kong's railway network from 270 kilometres in 2021 to over 300 kilometres by 2031 and increase the number of stations from 99 to 114.
- 25 Corporate Governance Watch 2014, a joint report released by CLSA and the Asian Corporate Governance Association, rates Hong Kong's corporate governance as the best in Asia.
- 28 As the organisers of 'Occupy Central' announce the start of their civil disobedience campaign, the government appeals to them to accord priority to the overall interest of Hong Kong.
Police use tear gas to disperse protesters outside the Central Government Offices at Tamar. Protesters later occupy these areas, blocking major roadways to Central District and surrounding areas.
- 29 'Occupy' protests spread to Mong Kok and Causeway Bay.
- 30 The monthly mean minimum temperature of 27 degrees is the hottest for September on record.

October

- 2 As protests continue, the Chief Executive appoints the Chief Secretary for Administration as the government representative to meet representatives of the Hong Kong Federation of Students to discuss Hong Kong's constitutional development.
- 4 The Asian Games in South Korea end, with Hong Kong having won a record 42 medals, including six gold. Cyclist Sarah Lee Wai-sze wins gold in the Women's Keirin and Sprint Track events.
- 7 The Fraser Institute's *Economic Freedom of the World 2014* annual report ranks Hong Kong as the most economically free jurisdiction of 152 surveyed.
- 9 The Free Trade Agreement signed between Hong Kong, China and Chile in 2012 enters into force. It encompasses 98% of the Chilean tariff lines on goods originating from Hong Kong and other areas such as services and investment.

- 21 The Chief Secretary for Administration, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Raymond Tam, the Director of the CE's Office, Mr Edward Yau, and the Under Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Lau Kong Wah, hold discussions on constitutional development with representatives of the Hong Kong Federation of Students, broadcast live on television.
- 24 The government announces that the Antiquities Authority has declared Lin Fa Temple in Tai Hang, Hung Shing Temple in Ap Lei Chau and Hau Wong Temple in Kowloon City as monuments under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance.
- 28 The World Bank Group's report *Doing Business 2015* ranks Hong Kong third for ease of doing business out of 189 economies surveyed.
- 29 The Hong Kong Tourism Board launches the first Hong Kong Pulse 3D Light Show on the façade of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and the Clock Tower in Tsim Sha Tsui. The carriage used for the coronation of Emperor Alexander II in Moscow in 1856 is one of the highlights of the 'Treasures from Tsarskoye Selo, Residence of the Russian Monarchs' exhibition which opens at the Hong Kong Museum of History.
- 31 The Ko Shan Theatre New Wing is officially opened, incorporating a 600-seat auditorium with facilities tailor-made for Cantonese opera productions.

November

- 8 The Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui celebrates the 25th anniversary of its opening.
- 17 The Shanghai – Hong Kong Stock Connect is launched, allowing investors in Hong Kong and overseas to invest directly in 570 Shanghai-listed shares while Mainland investors can invest directly in 270 Hong Kong-listed shares. At the same time, the daily conversion limit of RMB20,000 for Hong Kong residents is lifted.
- 18 Bailiffs assist the plaintiff in a civil case to enforce an interim injunction order by removing protest barricades outside Citic Tower, Admiralty.
- 19 The China Maritime Arbitration Commission sets up its first arbitration centre outside the Mainland in Hong Kong to provide arbitration services for maritime disputes.
- 26 Police, together with bailiffs, assist the plaintiff in a civil case to enforce an interim injunction order by removing protest barricades from certain streets in Mong Kok.

December

- 3 Hong Kong is ranked 17th least corrupt in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2014, a survey of the perceived level of public sector corruption in 175 countries and territories. The three co-founders of the 'Occupy Central' movement, along with 21 others, turn themselves in to the police at Central Police Station for their role in a civil disobedience movement and unlawful demonstrations.
- 5 The Hong Kong Observation Wheel, a 60-metre high Ferris wheel, opens on the Central harbour front.
- 10 The Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Mr Roberto Azevêdo, congratulates Hong Kong on being the first of the WTO's 160 members to join the

- WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The agreement sets out binding obligations for all WTO members to improve and harmonise their import-export and customs procedures and aims to benefit the world economy by removing inefficiencies in the movement of goods.
- 11 Bailiffs assist the plaintiff in a civil case to enforce an interim injunction order by removing protest barricades on the roads around Admiralty and police arrest 249 people who refuse to leave.
- 15 The remaining roads blocked by protesters in Causeway Bay are cleared by the police, 79 days after the unlawful protests began.
- 16 The government announces its new Long Term Housing Strategy, the first since 1998. It includes building more public rental housing units, providing more subsidised sale flats and stabilising the residential property market through steady land supply and appropriate demand management measures.
- 18 An agreement is signed under the framework of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement to achieve basic liberalisation of trade in services between Guangdong and Hong Kong. The Mainland opens up 153 services trade sub-sectors in Guangdong to the Hong Kong services industry, accounting for 95.6 per cent of all services trade sub-sectors.
- The Employment (Amendment) Bill 2014 is passed. The new law will provide three-day paternity leave to eligible male employees with pay at four-fifths of their average daily wages and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, says it marks a milestone in promoting family-friendly employment practice.
- 23 Former Chief Secretary for Administration Mr Rafael Hui is sentenced to a total imprisonment term of seven and a half years at the Court of First Instance for one count of conspiracy to offer an advantage to a public servant, one count of conspiracy to commit misconduct in public office and three counts of misconduct in public office involving payments, unsecured loans and flat rental fees totalling over \$25 million. Three businessmen are also convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit misconduct in public office and two of them convicted of one count of conspiracy to offer an advantage to a public servant. They are variously sentenced to imprisonment terms of five and six years.
- 28 The MTR West Island Line connecting Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town opens.
- 31 The government announces the closure of Cheung Sha Wan Poultry Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market after a number of samples from a consignment of imported live chickens tested positive in H7 avian influenza.