

HKSARG warmly welcomes expansion of IVS to Taiyuan, Hohhot, Harbin, Lhasa, Lanzhou, Xining, Yinchuan and Urumqi

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) warmly welcomed and expressed sincere gratitude to the Central Government for further enhancing the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) to cover Taiyuan in Shanxi Province, Hohhot in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Harbin in Heilongjiang Province, Lhasa in Tibet Autonomous Region, Lanzhou in Gansu Province, Xining in Qinghai Province, Yinchuan in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Urumqi in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, in response to the HKSARG's proposal to further expand the IVS to let residents of the eight cities to explore Hong Kong's unique appeals as a tourism destination more flexibly and conveniently. Following the expansion of the IVS to Xi'an in Shaanxi Province and Qingdao in Shandong Province starting from March 6, the IVS will cover 59 cities, including all provincial capitals in our country." a Government spokesman said today (May 11).

"I wish to express my gratitude towards the Central Government's care for Hong Kong and full wing support to Hong Kong's advancement from stability to prosperity. Subsequent to the various measures rolled out this year for supporting and benefitting Hong Kong, the Central Government responded positively again to the HKSARG's proposal to extend the IVS to cover eight cities, making the applicable cities of IVS to 59 and covering all provincial capital cities. This is a measure with significant importance as this is not only boosting the tourism industry and the economic development of Hong Kong in general, but also facilitating the people-to-people bonds between the Mainland and Hong Kong," the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said.

"These eight cities are all provincial capital cities with large population, significant economic growth and high spending power. Further expanding the IVS will boost the economic activities of tourism, retail, catering, hotel and other related industries, bringing in huge benefits while promoting the two-way visits between Hong Kong and different provincial capital cities. We look forward to seeing the closer communication of the people between Hong Kong and the eight cities following the enhancement of IVS." Mr Lee said.

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "The Central Government has all along been providing staunch support towards Hong Kong's economy and tourism development. IVS visitors are a major driving force for the development of the tourism-related industries in Hong Kong, amongst others. Further enhancement of the IVS is conducive to the economic development of Hong Kong, benefitting various tourism-related industries such as retail, catering, hotel and accommodation. Various Government departments will step up co-ordination and maintain liaison with relevant organisations and the travel trade to establish and enhance the capacity of direct flights with the eight cities, and at the same time ensure smooth operation of

boundary control points, tourist and accommodation facilities as well as public transportation networks to welcome visitors. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will immediately step up promotion work in each city and invite representatives from the trade in relevant cities to come to Hong Kong to participate in promotion activities, co-operating with the travel trade to explore relevant source markets. Hong Kong's capacity to receive visitors has been enhanced in the past few years. The Government is confident in providing more visitors from different source markets with quality travel experiences."

Mr Yeung said that the recovery of Hong Kong's tourism industry was strong in the past year. However, in view of the evolvement of visitors' travel patterns, the travel trade and relevant industries in the HKSAR have to actively adapt to changes, making use of Hong Kong's characteristics to provide visitors with more novel and diversified travel experiences, with high quality service to make them feel at home. The HKSARG will continue to consolidate various sectors in the community to promote warm hospitality through developing novel travel itineraries and products to upgrade the quality of service continuously for achieving "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" to polish Hong Kong's brand as "the best tourism destination".

He continued to say that with the enhancement of the IVS, there would be more frequent contacts between Hong Kong and residents of eight cities which would strengthen people-to-people bonds. Hong Kong has a unique background with cultural integration and rich tourism resources, including theme parks, country parks, natural ecology, hiking trails, history and heritage, beautiful harbour, stunning high view, Eastern and Western cuisines, and uncountable traditional festivals and pop culture activities, to let visitors experience rich and wonderful metropolitan glamour throughout different periods over the year. Just between the period from May to June, Hong Kong has a series of mega events, from Cheung Chau Bun Festival, Celebration Carnival for Buddha's Birthday, French May, Chinese Culture Festival and Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, etc, as well as large-scale concerts to be held at the Central Harbourfront Event Space. We look forward to welcoming more visitors from different cities to come to explore Hong Kong in depth.

To introduce Hong Kong's tourist attractions and activities to visitors, the HKTB has consolidated a series of itinerary guides and provided information on different activities on its website [DiscoverHongKong.com](https://www.discoverhongkong.com) to facilitate visitors to plan for their itineraries in Hong Kong.

Under the IVS, which was implemented on July 28, 2003, in accordance with the main document of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, eligible residents of the designated Mainland cities can apply for an endorsement to visit Hong Kong in their individual capacity. The IVS was first introduced in four Guangdong cities (namely Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, Foshan) and the number of eligible cities was gradually increased in the following years to a total of 51 Mainland cities in March 2024. With the expansion of the IVS to cover Taiyuan, Hohhot, Harbin, Lhasa, Lanzhou, Xining, Yinchuan and Urumqi starting from May 27, 2024, designated Mainland cities eligible for the IVS will be increased to 59.

Missing woman in Sau Mau Ping located

A woman who went missing in Sau Mau Ping has been located.

Tse Yau-mei, aged 36, went missing after she left her residence in Sau Mau Ping Estate at noon on May 9. Her family made a report to Police yesterday (May 10).

The woman was located on Seabee Lane, Lantau North last night. She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

Murder in Yuen Long

Police are investigating a murder case happened in Yuen Long in the small hours today (May 11) in which a man died.

At 1.10am, Police received a report that the 50-year-old non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) man was injured and collapsed in a flat on Ping Fai Path.

Police officers sped to the scene and found the man lying in the flat. Sustaining head injuries, he was rushed to Pok Oi Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 2.28am.

Initial investigation revealed that the deceased allegedly had a dispute with his son and someone allegedly attacked the deceased during the incident. Police arrested the 32-year-old NEC man for murder at scene. He is being detained for further enquiries.

Post-mortem examinations will be conducted later to ascertain the cause of death of the deceased.

Active investigation by the District Crime Squad of Yuen Long District is underway. Anyone who witnessed the case or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 4641.

SJ's address at Ceremony for Admission

of New Senior Counsel (English only)

The following is the address by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the Ceremony for the Admission of the New Senior Counsel today (May 11):

Chief Justice, members of the Judiciary, Chairman of the Bar Association, President of the Law Society, fellow members of the legal profession, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Department of Justice, I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to the three new silks, Mr Benson Tsoi, Ms Frances Lok and Miss Queenie Lau. Their appointment as Senior Counsel is well deserved.

Let me start with Benson. I am particularly delighted at the appointment of Benson because we were chamber-mates at Parkside Chambers for many years before I joined the Government. He is one of the very few members in Parkside who specialises in criminal law practice. He is plainly a smart guy with great sense of humour even though he sometimes appears to be a bit cocky. What I still fail to understand is why he chose to hang a disproportionately big deer head with antlers on the wall of his relatively small room. This may well be a reflection of his sizeable ego.

Fortunately, his strange taste on indoor decoration is compensated by his wise choice on spouse. As you should all know, I am referring to Frances, who has a very successful civil law practice. Frances and Benson were truly made for each other. After their appointment has been announced, I wrote to Benson and asked whether there was anything that he wished me to say, or not to say, at this ceremony. In his surprisingly long reply, he started by saying, "Re Frances – she is boring so not much to say about her". He went on telling me that, in fact, they met in the small tutorial class in HKU's PCLL; and they started dating in the afternoon after their Bar Scholarship interviews. Benson then became very bitter by complaining that, among the seven interviewees on that occasion, six succeeded but he was not one of them. Similar to what they did on this occasion, they procured their call to the Bar in the same court on the same day on March 3, 2007, before Mr Justice Johnson Lam (as he then was). Benson told me that, due to their different areas of practice, they never appeared in the same court since then until today. At the end of his email, he made a most extraordinary request as follows, "I would really appreciate it if you can emphasise I remain two minutes more senior to Frances", in particular, when he had copied his email to Frances.

Perhaps not too surprisingly, Frances came back with a reply within an hour or so. Unlike Benson, her email was short and sharp. This is what she said, "To set the record straight, I strongly dispute that Benson is two minutes more senior to me. I believe it was only one minute, hence it is highly arguable that the de minimis rule applies."

The order of seniority of Senior Counsel is apparently a matter of

public interest. As the guardian of public interest in my present capacity, I had considered very seriously whether I should take out a formal application to invite the Chief Justice to rule on this matter as a preliminary issue this morning. However, since both the Judiciary and the Department of Justice are promoting mediation vigorously, I have decided to try to mediate the dispute between Frances and Benson by offering a small piece of advice to Benson. Benson, as a seasoned criminal justice practitioner, you must appreciate the significance of exercising your right to silence at critical moments. I can tell you from my personal experience that the motto "Silence is golden" applies not only to criminal suspects but also husbands in general.

Turning to Queenie, apart from having a very successful civil practice, everyone who knows her would agree that she is a most likeable and cheerful lady. She is also an extremely good photographer judging from the photos she posted on her Facebook from time to time. Queenie reminded me that, when I was still in my private practice, she had acted as my junior but also against me; and when I sat as a Deputy Judge, she had appeared before me. I must say that the experiences were equally pleasant irrespective of the different capacities we met each other in our professional life. Queenie, maybe you should consider to join the Department of Justice so that you may work with me again in yet another capacity.

This is indeed a joyful week for the Hong Kong legal community. Apart from today's ceremony, there are at least three matters that are worth celebrating. First and foremost, on Wednesday, the Legislative Council resolved to endorse the appointment of the Honourable Mr Justice Allsop as a Non-Permanent Judge of our Court of Final Appeal. The second and third matters are that the International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) Congress 2024 and the Mediation Week were both very successfully held this week. The ICCA 2024 had attracted more than 1 400 participants coming from more than 70 jurisdictions. All participants spoke extremely highly of the event. As to the Mediation Week, more than 2 000 people took part in person or online in various thematic events, including the use of mediation to resolve school, employment, consumer and family disputes. These events are important to strengthen Hong Kong's status as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre, and to promote access to justice and the rule of law in Hong Kong.

While a lot of people had contributed to the success of these events, there is no doubt that Senior Counsel plays an indispensable role. Suffice for me to give a few examples. ICCA 2024 was hosted by HKIAC (Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre) in which Rimsky Yuen, SC, was a co-chairman. Anthony Neoh, SC, Teresa Cheng, SC, Winnie Tam, SC, and Victor Dawes, SC, spoke on numerous official and side events of ICCA 2024. Turning to the Mediation Week, I am indeed most grateful to Queenie who was the moderator in a panel discussion in the consumer mediation seminar. I hope to be forgiven for not naming others.

The point that I wish to make is that, as is often said, appointment of Senior Counsel is more than a recognition of the appointee's ability and integrity. It carries a legitimate expectation and perhaps a duty that the

appointee shall make good use of his or her legal expertise and standing in society to promote and strengthen the rule of law in different ways in addition to his or her own legal practice. It is essential to bear in mind that providing public service in different manners is very often extremely time consuming and requires a lot of efforts. It is most desirable, if not necessary, for each and every Senior Counsel to contribute in some ways so that the heavy burden would not fall on the shoulders of a few more enthusiastic members. As I repeatedly said, a strong and respectable independent Bar is crucial to preserving the rule of law based on our common law system, which is a unique advantage of Hong Kong under the principle of "one country, two systems" that we cannot afford losing. Our Bar will only be strong and respectable if its members, in particular senior members, are seen to be not only competent lawyers but also passionate fellow citizens who are willing to sacrifice for the well-being of society as a whole. I do count on Benson, Frances and Queenie to set good examples.

On this note, may I wish all three of you all the best and every success. Thank you.

[CJ's address at Ceremony for the Admission of the New Senior Counsel \(with photos\)](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The following is the full text of an address by Chief Justice Andrew Cheung Kui-nung, Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, at the Ceremony for the Admission of the New Senior Counsel today (May 11):

Secretary for Justice, Chairman of the Bar, President of the Law Society, fellow judges, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Judiciary, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to this year's Ceremony for the admission to the rank of Senior Counsel of Mr Benson Tsoi, Ms Frances Lok, and Miss Queenie Lau.

First of all, congratulations are in order to each of our three new Silks on all your accomplishments and on your appointments as Senior Counsel. The appointments are hard-earned, and well deserved. To become a Silk is no simple achievement. It is the culmination of many years of rigorous study, tireless work, and countless hours spent in the preparation of cases and appearance in court. It demands a deep understanding of the law, the ability to navigate complex legal and factual matrices, and the skill to present attractive arguments that best portray a client's case. I am sure you have all sacrificed much to reach this significant career milestone. Equally, I

must extend my congratulations to your families, friends and colleagues, for whom this must also be a proud moment. No doubt they will also have made sacrifices to support each of you so that you might reach this point, and it is appropriate and quite right to take this moment to express gratitude for their support.

The Inner Bar is not merely an exclusive rank or title. It is a longstanding tradition of the independent Bar, a reflection of Hong Kong's longstanding common law tradition that is preserved by the Basic Law and the "one country, two systems" arrangement. Along with that common law tradition comes the maintenance of a split profession, between barristers and solicitors. Similarly, the rank of Senior Counsel has also been maintained in Hong Kong, and the appointment of Senior Counsel is enshrined in statute. Not only does Hong Kong maintain the benefit of being a common law jurisdiction in a civil law country, and a bilingual legal system that ensures ease of accessibility for those wishing to enforce or defend their rights before the Courts, all persons who seek to do so have a deep pool of Silks to choose from where their case is particularly difficult, complex or specialised.

As has been said before, the rank of Senior Counsel is both a badge of excellence and a badge of responsibility. As a mark of distinction, it represents a public recognition by the Judiciary and the legal profession of an appointee's achievement to date, of his or her excellence, experience and expertise. As a badge of responsibility, it denotes our community's trust and expectation that an appointee will put his or her excellence and experience to good use by faithfully discharging the responsibilities placed on them, thereby serving the public interest. Members of the Inner Bar are therefore chosen with care every year, and indeed there is no obligation to make any selection at all. The appointment process involves consulting not only with the senior ranks of the Judiciary, but also the two branches of the legal profession. Thus, each candidate for Silk must demonstrate not only expertise and eminence in their fields of practice, but also industry and integrity, and one must also consider each candidate's potential contributions to the Bar and the law, as well as to the rule of law and future of Hong Kong.

Each of today's new Silks specialises in different areas of the law, and their admission to the Inner Bar will serve to reinforce and reinvigorate the senior end of the Bar. The fact that their appointments were well supported during consultations is a sign of the respect each of them commands in their respective practices.

Mr Benson Tsoi was called to the Bar in England in 2005, and subsequently returned to Hong Kong and was called here in 2007. He specialises in criminal law, with a particular emphasis on white-collar crime, having appeared in a number of big money laundering and fraud cases. His expertise in criminal law is generally recognised in the legal field.

Ms Frances Lok was a Rhodes Scholar in 2002 and a Bar Scholar in 2006. She was called to the Hong Kong Bar in 2007 and the New York Bar in the following year. She practises in commercial, company and insolvency law, specialising in company law, construction and arbitration, and probate and trusts.

Miss Queenie Lau was previously qualified as a solicitor in both Hong Kong and England before being called to the Hong Kong Bar in 2008. She closely carries on a general civil and commercial practice, which includes audit and professional negligence, defamation, employment disputes and probate litigation. She is actively involved in a very substantial number of public or statutory bodies, thereby demonstrating a strong spirit of public service.

The respective backgrounds of each of today's three appointees serves to illustrate the quality that the title of Senior Counsel implies. It can thus be seen that the Inner Bar will be greatly strengthened with the addition of such talented and well recognised members. Moreover, with such depth of legal talent continuing to be available in Hong Kong, the rule of law is also strengthened by a thriving and competitive market for legal services. We are all no doubt delighted by their appointments.

Beyond their legal expertise and experience, members of the Inner Bar must also set and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional integrity as well as advocacy, legal research and analysis. Members of the Inner Bar are first and foremost leaders of the independent Bar, and they must lead by example, in thought and deed, as well as by word. Silks must always apply themselves fully to the cases that they do, whether they are instructed to act alone or with juniors. Indeed it is worth remembering that a Silk is almost by definition regarded as a source of inspiration, a mentor and a guiding light for the younger generations of lawyers. And rightly so. Therefore, whether a Senior Counsel likes it or not, whatever he or she says or does in or outside court is often closely observed and even mimicked by those they are leading or working with, and maybe by those on the opposite side also. Senior Counsel must uphold a high standard of court etiquette, be courteous not only to the court but to all other court users and staff, and never be rude and overbearing. It goes without saying that in addition to the wisdom and maturity that their expertise and experience has brought them, they should also always be professional and fair, and contribute to the affairs of the Bar and public service when there is a need to do so. A Senior Counsel must in this way be generous with their time and public spirited. Not only do Hong Kong's Senior Counsel appointees strengthen the Bar with their knowledge and expertise, many ultimately bring those strengths with them to the Judiciary, further enhancing the pool of knowledge and expertise at the Bench and thus the rule of law in Hong Kong. This must ultimately be the highest calling for any legal professional.

In short, as the most pre-eminent amongst members of the independent Bar, Senior Counsel must be prepared to uphold the rule of law and ensure the proper administration of justice, speak out against those who would seek to undermine the rule of law, maintain the highest standards of professional conduct, discipline and etiquette both in court and outside it, and protect the right of all persons to have access to the Courts, apart from being highly capable and reliable advocates when appearing in Court.

So returning to our three new Silks today, your appointments as Senior Counsel represent public recognition that you possess the necessary qualities to discharge these responsibilities, thereby upholding the best of the

independent Bar. They also mark how much trust and confidence the Courts, your clients, and even opposing counsel may have in you and your work. On this occasion when you don the traditional dress of the Inner Bar for the first time, it is apposite to be reminded that the robes of the silks are a symbol of an important office. As Silks, you now have different wigs and gowns. You now have the privilege of being listed ahead of ordinary counsel on the Bar List, illustrating how seriously the rank of Senior Counsel is taken at the Bar, and indeed in Hong Kong. We are confident that with these trappings of your new titles, you will also take on your new roles and duties as leaders at the Bar with the same industry and integrity that has brought you to this moment. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I wish each and every one of you success in your new careers as Senior Counsel.

