Constitution

**Official name**
The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic of China

**Form of state**
Special administrative region of China, with its own constitution (the Basic Law), guaranteeing a ‘high degree of autonomy’ until 2047. Presided over by a chief executive appointed by China

**Head of state**
Hu Jintao, president of the People’s Republic of China

**Legislature**
Unicameral Legislative Council (LegCo), comprising 30 directly elected members and 30 members elected by functional constituencies

**Local government**
District Boards were renamed District Councils after elections in November 1999. Local government municipal councils (urban and regional) were abolished the following month. The powers of the municipal councils were retained by government departments, with only minor increases in the budgets to the advisory and partially appointed district councils

**Legal system**
Based on English law and the Basic Law, a mini-constitution underpinned by an international treaty. Foreign affairs and defence fall within the ambit of the central government in China. The SAR has autonomy in other affairs

**Elections**
The most recent LegCo election took place on Sep 12 2004, the next is due in 2008. Tung Chee-hwa was reappointed as chief executive in Mar 2002, but was replaced by Donald Tsang in Jun 2005

**Main political parties**
The pro-government Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) and the pro-business Liberal Party (LP) are the largest parties in LegCo, with 13 and 10 seats respectively. The pro-democracy Democratic Party (DP, Democrats) has nine seats but the wider pro-democracy camp holds 25 of LegCo’s 60 seats