

REACTION

# Ability to administer crucial, warns top solicitor

POLITICAL DESK

The legal profession and executive councillors welcomed the announcement.

Bar Association chairman Audrey Eu Yuet-mee QC, a former pupil in Mr Li's chambers, said: "Although he is a Queen's Counsel, he has had some quasi-judicial experience in the past. The most important thing is, he has had varied experience."

He has acted as a deputy

High Court Judge and a deputy District Court Judge.

The Chief Justice's key concerns, she said, were to preserve the independence of the Judiciary, uphold the rule of law and lead the Judiciary into a new era when constitutional law would become important.

Ms Eu was confident Mr Li would remain independent and objective.

The new Law Society president, Anthony Chow Wing-

kin, said familiarity with the operation of the Judiciary was the most urgent task facing Mr Li.

Mr Chow agreed with criticism that Mr Li lacked judicial experience, but said his role in the Executive Council could help him. "Ability in administration is also crucial to the post," he said.

He hoped Mr Li could maintain judicial independence regardless of pressures.

Past Law Society presi-

dent Christopher Chan Cheuk said: "Mr Li has strong analytical powers and a clear mind. He is also quite liberal."

Mr Chan rejected criticism of Mr Li's lack of judicial experience. "As a good Chief Justice, it is not enough for him to have only experience in Judiciary," he said.

A judicial source said it was not the first time senior barristers had been appointed directly as judges. Mr Jus-

tice Henry Litton and Mr Justice Charles Ching were directly appointed to the Court of Appeal.

Executive Councillors also backed the choice. Denis Chang Khen-lee QC, a former Bar Association chairman, said: "I would say he has keen awareness of the importance of human rights.

"He appreciates that judges have to learn about human rights culture. I hope he will turn out as I expected,

someone that will serve as a protector of human rights.'

Fellow Executive Councillor Felice Lieh Mak said: "He is liberal on issues concerning civil liberties and rights but more conservative on economic matters.

"He was obviously the best choice among the potential hopefuls," she said.

SAR executive councillor Henry Tang Ying-yen described the appointment as "a good choice".

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