

The SAR's Superlady

Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor (林鄭月娥) is now the second highest ranking politician in the Hong Kong government. Let us learn more about what makes the 'Iron Lady' of Hong Kong so iconic

GLANCING through a sea of black-suited male figures in most government presentations and press conferences, there is always a short female figure dressed in white. We often see the **trademark** smile moulded on a familiar face, speaking **eloquently** in front of microphones and cameras. She is the second top official in Hong Kong and her name is Carrie Lam.

A path to success

CARRIE LAM studied **Social Science** in the University of Hong Kong (HKU, 香港大學) and joined the government upon graduation in 1980. She joined as an executive officer and has taken up roles in many different governmental departments.

It has taken more than 20 years for her to rise to the top of the ladder in her career. Carrie Lam is now the Chief Secretary for Administration and reports directly to Leung Chun-ying (梁振英), the Chief Executive of Hong Kong. She is mainly responsible for making cross-department decisions.

The ideal candidate

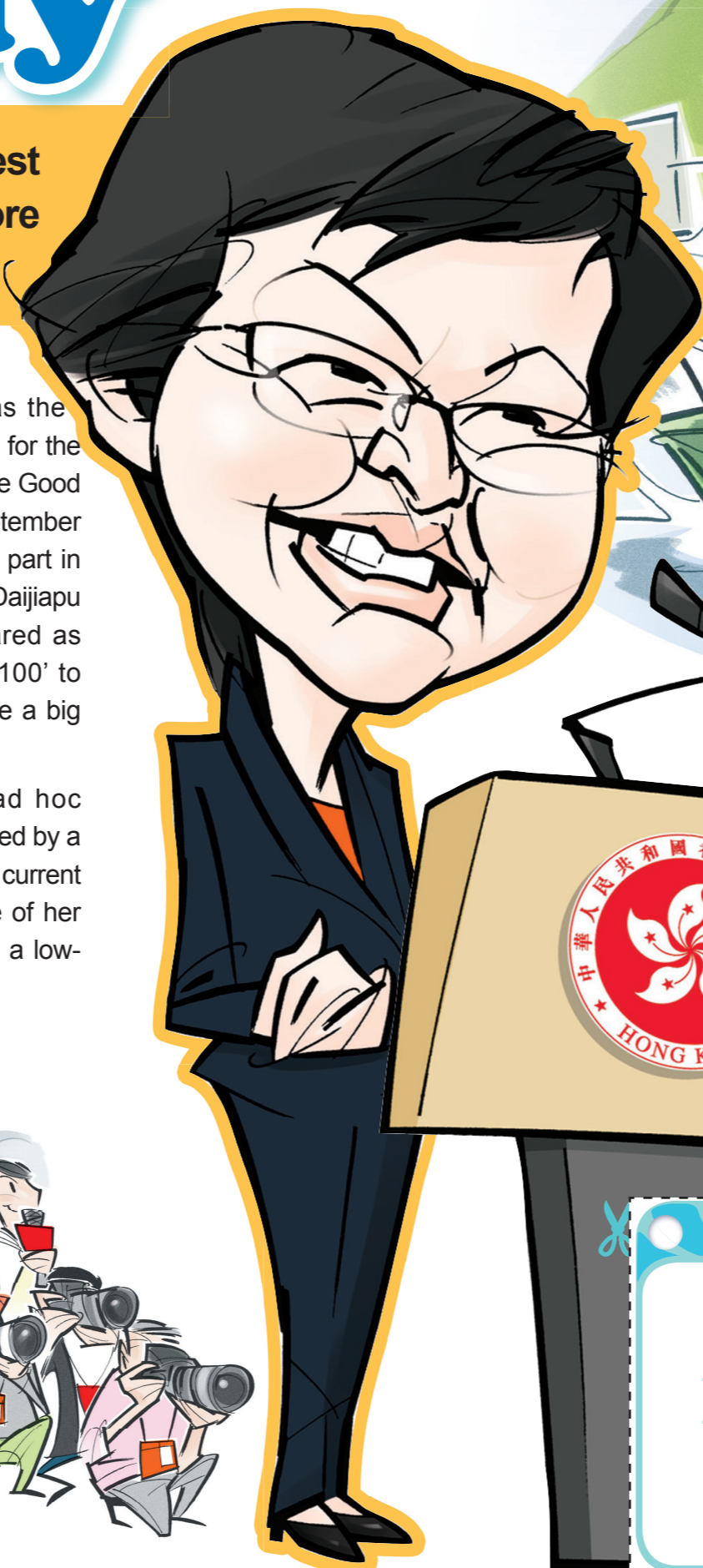
PERHAPS because of her academic background, she is often **appointed** as the person to handle difficult social issues such as the **demolition** of the Queen's Pier, and the Central and Wan Chai Reclamation as well as the row over illegal structures built on many of the residences in the New Territories.

She has gradually gained a reputation for being tough while maintaining a rational and open mindset in dealing with voices and opinions from all sectors.

The human touch

AMONG political friends, she is known as the Superlady because of her longstanding work for the government. She is also credited as being 'the Good Fighter' who supports many causes. In September 2012, she cheered on pensioners who took part in an annual fast to raise money for Suichuan Daijiapu School (江西戴家埔中心學校). She appeared as the honorary guest and donated 'a big \$100' to demonstrate how small donations can make a big difference to good causes.

She is also remarkable at giving ad hoc speeches and statements. She was interviewed by a local TV station expressing her views on the current government in which she wept about some of her political decisions. But she is, by and large, a low-profiled yet successful politician.



Carrie's profile

- Lam was born on May 13, 1957.
- She joined the government's Administrative Service in 1980 after studying Social Science at HKU.
- She was the Director of Social Welfare between 2000 and 2003.
- She held the position of Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands between 2003 and 2004.
- Lam was Director-General of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London 2004-2006.
- She became Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs in 2006. She held this position until she was promoted to Secretary for Development in 2007. She became Chief Secretary for Administration on July 1, 2012.

Idiom

By and large

This can be used as an alternative to 'generally' or 'usually'. It means when everything about a certain situation is considered together.

- Tom is, **by and large**, a nice gentleman.
- Amy can be stingy, but **by and large** she is friendly.

Side facts

- She wept during an interview because her reputation had dived ever since she joined the new government. She mentioned that she had decided to join the government because she wanted to 'use' her reputation to help CY Leung at that critical moment.
- When she shed tears in front of the camera during an interview last November, the media dubbed them '**crocodile tears**', accusing her for false and hypocritical weeping.



Did you know?

1. Her family – two sons and a husband – currently live in the United Kingdom.
2. One of her closest associates, Mak Chai-kwong (麥齊光), was arrested for improper use of government allowance decades ago.
3. Although she keeps a low profile, her public approval rating has always been amongst the top.

Critical questions

1. What makes a good politician? Can you name some criteria?
2. Can you name other female politicians in Hong Kong?
3. Do you think civil servants should be regarded as politicians?