DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, December 28, 1973

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Friday, December 28, 1973

ADVERTISING AND DISPLAY LIGHTING BAN EXTENDED

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The ban on advertising and display lighting is to be extended by one hour with the introduction of summer time next week. This means that such lighting will only be allowed between 7 p.m. and 10.30 p.m.

At the same time, floodlighting of buildings will be completely prohibited.

Announcing these measures today, Mr. Roy Porter, Director of Oil Supplies, said that despite the Arab decision to increase production by 10 per cent we are still likely to be short of oil and it was still necessary to be prudent. It would be wasteful to allow display lighting during the extra hour of daylight, he added.

Mr. Porter said: "I appreciate that when new measures are introduced it is impossible to avoid hurting some sector of the community. This reduction of one hour in the permitted period for lighting display would, I think, cause less harm to Hong Kong's economy as a whole than any other power saving measures."

In explaining the ban on floodlighting of buildings, Mr. Porter said that floodlighting was one of the least essential uses of electricity.

On sports and recreation, Mr. Porter said: "I am writing to every sports club in Hong Kong asking them not to use floodlighting even during the permitted period except for major sporting events which large numbers of people would attend."

Mr. Porter again called on the public to exercise voluntary restraint. It was still essential for consumers to exercise economies in the use of electricity so that the need to introduce further mandatory measures, which would cause more hardship, will be avoided.

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EXPORT LICENSING OF PLASTIC MATERIALS

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A licensing scheme to check on the export and re-export of plastic raw materials from Hong Kong is to be introduced by the Commeroe and Industry Department.

From January 1 licences will be required for all exports and re-exports of plastic materials, regenerated cellulose and artificial resins.

The items concerned are classified under Group 581 of the Hong Kong Imports and Exports Classification List.

An amendment to permit licensing has been made to the Import and Export (General) Regulations.

The Deputy Director of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Jimmy McGregor, said today that licensing was being implemented as a precautionary measure on the advice of the Trade and Industry Advisory Board.

"It would be foolhardy to ignore the fact that our supplies of plastic raw materials may be affected considerably by reduced oil production," he added.

"We need, therefore, to keep a close check on re-exports, and the introduction of licensing will enable this to be done."

Mr. McGregor pointed out that during 1973 re-exports as a proportion of imports have been rising and this was causing concern to the industry. If this trend continued it may be necessary to restrict re-exports.

/"Much will .....

"Much will depend on the trade itself," he said. "We don't want to introduce restrictions if these can be avoided and will apply them only if they become necessary in order to assist our industry to retain essential supplies of these important materials."

In case export quota controls become necessary, the Commerce and Industry Department will call within a few days for past performance records of re-exports covering 1972 and 1973.

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GOLD RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

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Import and export restrictions relating to gold, diamonds and currency notes and coins will be removed with effect from January 1, 1974, a government spokesman announced today.

Consequently, licences will no longer be required for the importation or exportation of these items.

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NEW IMPORTS AND EXPORTS CLASSIFICATION LIST

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A new edition of the Hong Kong Imports and Exports Classification List will come into force as from January 1, 1974.

The new edition will incorporate the existing 1971 edition, as amended in 1973, as well as certain new amendments.

The classification list is made up of two parts, a countries list and a commodities list. The commodities list is based on the United Nations Standard International Trade Classification, Revised (S.I.T.C. Revised) and sets out the classified description of some 2,530 items.

The new amendments affect mainly items of plastic materials and clothing. These amendments are necessary in view of the importance of the trade in the items concerned and of the demand for separate classification. This will make it easier to compare the Hong Kong trade statistics with those of trading partners, and will therefore, enhance the value of Hong Kong's trade statistics.

Importers and exporters are urged to ensure that the staff responsible for completing trade declaration forms become fully conversant with the amendments as they affect the commodities with which they deal.

Copies of the new edition will go on sale from January 6 at $6 per copy at the Government Publications Centre at the Star Ferry Concourse, Hong Kong.

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NOVEMBER EXPORTS UP BY 44 PER CENT

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The value of Hong Kong's domestic exports last month amounted to $1,935 million -- an increase of $592 million or 44.1 per cent over November 1972, according to provisional trade figures released today by the Census and Statistics Department.

Imports increased by 58.9 per cent and re-exports by 57.6 per cent over the same month last year.

Commenting on the provisional figures, Mr. M.D. Sargant, Assistant Director of Commerce and Industry, said that during the period January to November this year domestic exports increased by 24.8 per cent over the same period last year, while re-exports rose by 56.9 per cent and imports by 31.2 per cent.

For the 12-month period December 1972 to November 1973, figures show an increase of 23.8 per cent for domestic exports, 55.2 per cent for re-exports and 29.8 per cent for imports over the previous 12-month period.

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Note to Editors: A statistical table of November's provisional trade figures is given below with comparative tables.

/MERCHANDISE .....

MERCHANDISE : Domestic Exports : $1,935 million

Imports : $3,049 million

Re-exports : $ 656 million

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

	November 1973 $ Mn.	November 1972 $ Mn.	Increase or decrease $ Mn.	%
Domestic Exports	1,935	1,343	+ 592	+44.1
Imports	3,049	1,919	+1,130	+58.9
Re-exports	656	416	+ 240	+57.6

	Sept.-Nov. 1973 $ Mn.	Sept.-Nov. 1972 $ Mn.	Increase or decrease $ Mn.	%
Domestic Exports	5,755	4,317	+1,438	+33.3
Imports	8,756	5,721	+3,036	+53.1
Re-exports	2,140	1,203	+ 936	+77.8

	Jan.-Nov. 1973 $ Mn.	Jan.-Nov. 1972 $ Mn.	Increase or decrease $ Mn.	%
Domestic Exports	17,515	14,032	+3,483	+24.8
Imports	25,948	19,784	+6,164	+31.2
Re-exports	5,904	3,764	+2,141	+56.9

	Dec. 1972 - Nov. 1973 $ Mn.	Dec. 1971 - Nov. 1972 $ Mn.	Increase or decrease $ Mn.	%
Domestic Exports	18,728	15,132	+3,596	+23.8
Imports	27,928	21,510	+6,418	+29.8
Re-exports	6,295	4,057	+2,238	+55.2

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NEW ESTATE TO HOUSE 27,000 PEOPLE

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The Housing Authority is to build a new public housing estate, the Shing On Estate, in the Shek Wai Kok area in Tsuen Wan to provide homes for 27,000 people.

As a new feature of the estate, the living units will be planned on the new space allocation standard of 50 square feet per person.

About 1.5 million square feet of land adjacent to the Cheung Shan Estate is to be resumed for the housing project. Details of the lots of land affected are published in today's gazette.

Shing On Estate is one of several estates included in the earlier part of the ten year housing programme.

It will be carried out in two stages. The first phase, to be completed in about four years, will provide self-contained units for about 17,000 people. The second phase will be finished in the following year and will house another 10,000 people.

The estate will have all the essential recreational, welfare, educational and medical facilities similar to those provided in existing public housing estates.

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TIGHTER CONTROL ON QUARRIES SAFETY STANDARDS

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The government is to tighten control over safety standards in quarries.

The Quarries (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 1973, which will become effective on January 1, 1974, offer a greater degree of safety to workers operating at a height on the face or top of quarries. Commissioner of Mines, Mr. I.R. Price, said the amending regulations were yet another in a series to bolster Hong Kong's safety legislation.

Expressing deep concern about the safety and welfare of workers engaged in quarry work and in other fields, Mr. Price said: "It is my duty to ensure that safety measures in all places of work are always up to the required standard to safeguard the workers' well-being."

Almost all falls of persons from quarry faces, he said, resulted in fatal injuries. Since the enactment of the original quarries regulations four years ago, 10 of the 14 fatal accidents recorded in quarries had resulted from falls. In seven of the accidents the workers had not been secured by safety ropes. In another case the safety rope had broken.

"The amending regulations therefore specifically require a quarry proprietor to provide each of his workers with a safety harness, which the worker has to wear, and a safety rope, one end of which must be securely attached to the safety harness and the other to an anchorage," he said. "Any person who contravenes the regulations is liable on conviction to a fine of $5,000."

/The regulations .....

The regulations also impose a duty on a quarry supervisor to inspect anchorages, safety harnesses, ropes and helmets, and mechanical equipment. "A supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that no person should use such equipment until it has been put into safe and efficient working order," he added.

The Commissioner stressed that management of quarries must organise their operations in such a way that workers engaged in hazardous work were properly secured as required by the law. Quarry workers on the other hand should take utmost precautions at all times.

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APPOINTMENTS OF DISTRICT JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES

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Authority to appoint temporary District Court Judges and Magistrates is to be delegated to the Chief Justice, by viture of two new bills published in today's gazette.

At present, temporary appointments to the District Court are made by the Governor, although the Chief Justice appoints Commissioners to the Supreme Court.

The District Court (Amendment) Bill will enable the Chief Justice to appoint temporary District Judges.

Under the Magistrates (Amendment) Bill, the Governor will be able to delegate his authority regarding the appointment of Magistrates to the Chief Justice. The wording of existing legislation at present precludes the delegation of such powers.

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DIAMOND HILL SITE CLEARED FOR UNDERGROUND RAILWAY STATION

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A site in Tai Hom Village in the Diamond Hill area was cleared this (Friday) morning to make way for the Mass Transit System.

The land will be used as a work site for the construction of the Diamond Hill Station.

A total of 163 structures, 82 of them illegal, were demolished in the clearance operation.

Nearly 600 people from 116 families who were affected by the clearance had moved into public housing units at Sau Mau Ping Estate. Another 226 people from 41 families have been offered sites at Yan Oi licensed area to rebuild their homes.

Mr. Chiu Shing, Senior Clearance Officer in charge of this morning's operation, said he was thankful for the co-operation of the squatters.

"Without their support," he said, "I am sure the operation would not have been carried out so smoothly."

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TAXI FARE INCREASE APPLICATION BEING PROCESSED

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The Transport Department today indicated that the government may prove sympathetic to a request by Kowloon taxi operators to increase their fares on the basis of more recent figures supplied by a taxi operators association.

A spokesman stressed, however, that the decision lay with the Governor-in-Council and it was not possible to say more at this stage.

Commenting on recent statements by some Kowloon taxi operators, the spokesman said that hotheaded demands for time limits and demonstrations by some of the operators were pointless and would not affect the issue.

"Instead of attracting public sympathy, such demands are more likely to antagonise people," he warned.

The mistaken impression among some of the operators that the government was blocking a legitimate demand for a fare increase, he said, was unfortunate and the department was anxious to dispel this wrong view.

"Recent statements in the press about giving the government a time limit within which to agree to a fare increase," he added, "were based on misunderstandings."

He explained that a year ago a taxi operators association proposed to raise the level of Kowloon taxi fares to that of Hong Kong taxis, on the grounds that it cost Kowloon operators more to run a taxi.

The Kowloon taxi operators were then asked to provide audited accounts of a few typical taxi operators, to substantiate their claim and to indicate what level of increase might be justified.

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"But the figures provided did not prove anything, so the exact requirements were spelt out again to the association.

"It was explained that applications for taxi fare increases must be considered against the same criteria for increases of bus, tram and ferry fares.

"There was no question of approving taxi fare increases unless a good case was made out, and the case must demonstrate what the increase should reasonably be.

"This has somehow been misinterpreted as an outright refusal by the Government to consider a Kowloon fare increase," he said.

"In fact, on the basis of more recent figures supplied by a taxi operators association, it is possible that the Government may prove sympathetic towards the request, but the decision lies with the Governor in Council and it is not possible at this stage to say more."

The Transport Department welcomed the statements by responsible officials of the taxi operators associations for taxi men to exercise patience, he added.

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DELAYED CHRISTMAS SEA MAIL FROM U.K. ARRIVES

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The Christmas sea mail from Britain which was delayed en route to Hong Kong arrived yesterday on board the "Hong Kong Express".

Three containers with 729 bags of letters and cards and 117 bags of parcels were delivered to the General Post Office yesterday afternoon, and all of these were delivered to the addressees today (Friday).

Another container from the ship with 343 bags of parcels from the United Kingdom reached the G.P.O. this morning and these parcels will be delivered tomorrow.

A Post Office spokesman said 10 other containers of mail from the United States were received at the G.P.O. on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. This consignment consisted of 494 bags of letters and cards and 1,377 bags of parcels.

Post office staff worked throughout the two holidays to ensure that this mail was delivered on December 26 and 27, he said.

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Note to Editors: Copies of a photograph showing the unloading of the U.K. mail at the G.P.O. wharf this morning are boxed for collection.

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Friday, December 28, 1973

CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

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The following prices were realised today (Friday) at sales under the Rice Control Scheme and at the Vegetable Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market and the Fish Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market at Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon:

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Rice

Grade	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/catty)
		Average
China Rice		
See Mew - old crop	Good	1.64
See Mew - new crop		1.72
S.C.Jion - old crop	Good	1.66
Po Ngai	Good	1.42
Chu Cho	-	-
Thai Rice		
100% Whole	-	-
10-15% Brokens	-	-
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.45
A1 Super	Good	1.37
Whole Glutinous	Limited	1.52
U.S. Rice	Good	1.62
Australian Rice	-	-
Pakistan Rice	-	-
Taiwan Rice	-	-

/Supplies and .....

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Marine Fish

Species	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/catty)		
		High	Low	Average
Golden Thread	Limited	5.3	3.2	4.0
Big-Eyes	Good	2.5	0.7	1.8
Squid	Limited	6.0	3.0	4.5
Hair-Tails	Normal	2.1	0.8	1.7
Lizard Fishes	Limited	2.9	1.0	1.8
Croakers	Normal	2.2	1.0	1.6
Conger-Pike-Eels	Limited	3.2	2.5	2.8
Melon Coat	Good	2.6	1.65	2.0
Breams	Limited	4.5	3.0	4.2
Yellow Belly	Good	1.4	0.7	1.2
Mackerels	Good	3.8	2.5	3.5
Red Coat Fish	Good	3.1	0.65	2.2
Fork-Tail	Normal	1.2	0.8	1.0
Horse-Head	Limited	5.5	3.0	4.2
Melon Seed	Normal	3.3	1.4	2.5
Pomfrets	Scarce	8.5	7.0	8.0
Garoupas	Normal	7.5	5.5	6.0
Yellow Croaker	-	-	-	-

/Supplies and .....

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Locally Produced Vegetables

Type	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/catty)		
		High	Low	Average
Flowering cabbage	Limited	2.8	1.2	2.0
White cabbage	Normal	1.2	0.5	0.8
Chinese Lettuce	Normal	1.0	0.2	0.6
Chinese Kale	Normal	1.4	0.4	0.9
Spring onion	Normal	1.2	0.5	0.8
Spinach	Normal	1.8	0.8	1.3
Water cress	Normal	1.5	0.5	1.0
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	1.2	0.4	0.8
Tomato	Normal	1.6	0.8	1.2

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/ picul) (Average)
Pork	Good	285

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