



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, April 19, 1973

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NEW REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR MINORS UNDERWAY

Age Of First Registration To Be Raised From Six To Eleven Years

The juvenile registration system is to be revised under amending legislation which will shortly be introduced.

Published in today's Gazette for general information is the Registration of Persons (Amendment) Bill 1973 which seeks to lower from 17 to 11 the age at which a person must use his registered name in dealings with the Government.

The Bill also aims at widening the powers of the Governor-in-Council to make regulations in connection with the principal Ordinance.

Commenting on the proposed changes, the Commissioner for Registration, Mr. J.V.G. Mitchell, said that, in effect, the age of registering for juvenile identity cards would be raised from six to 11 years.

At the same time, he added, it was intended to change the present form of the existing juvenile identity cards so that it would include the holder's photograph, full personal name in English and Chinese, date and place of birth and nationality.

The new form would be based on that of the adult identity card which is also to be modified by discontinuing the present practice of having the holder's thumbprint imposed on it.

Mr. Mitchell said it was also intended to raise the age of re-registering for adult identity cards from 17 to 18 years.

The planned new juvenile identity cards, he said, would bear the date on which it was to be exchanged for an adult card.

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Both the new juvenile and adult identity cards would be bilingual. Although thumbprints would not be included on the new cards, the applicant's prints would be taken on first registration for record purposes, he said.

In addition, it was intended to introduce a new system of numbering juvenile identity cards so that the same number allocated on first registration would be retained upon re-registration for adult cards at the age of 18.

Mr. Mitchell explained that the proposed changes were designed to make it easier for holders of juvenile identity cards to identify themselves when applying for jobs and for schooling purposes.

He noted that at present the juvenile identity cards only listed the holder's surname and the identity card number of the parent or guardian.

The improved juvenile card, he said, would bear the holder's full personal particulars, including his or her photograph, so that he or she would be readily indentifiable.

The Commissioner said: "In general it is intended that existing identity cards should continue to be valid. Subject to juvenile registration requirements, they would only be exchanged for new ones, at the request of the holder, if it could be satisfactorily shown that it was necessary and desirable to do so."

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BILL TO GIVE EFFECT TO NEW TAX PROPOSALS
Personal And Wife's Allowances To Be Raised

An amending bill, aimed at putting into effect certain tax proposals made by the Financial Secretary in his 1973 Budget Speech, will be introduced into the Legislative Council shortly.

If enacted, the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1973 will:

- * increase the personal and wife's allowances from \$7,000 to \$10,000;
- * increase the allowance for the first child from \$2,000 to \$3,000, for the second child from \$2,000 to \$2,500 and for the third child from \$1,000 to \$1,500. The maximum total allowance for children will be increased from \$9,500 to \$11,500;
- * extend the child allowance in respect of children of any age who are not employable because of mental or physical handicap;
- * abolish the lower income relief, and allowances for life insurance premia, contributions to Widows and Orphans Pensions Schemes, for working wives, and for independent parents.

The amending legislation also provides new rates for salaries tax and personal assessment.

Under the rates proposed, tax will be charged at five per cent upon the first \$10,000 rising in scale by five per cent on each succeeding \$10,000 up to a maximum rate of 30 per cent on any amount above \$50,000. The percentage charged on gross income (less expenses and charitable donations) will still not exceed 15 per cent.

A saving provision provides that the abolished allowances remain effective for years of assessment prior to that commencing on April 1, 1973.

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REGULATIONS ON "LUCKY" CAR NUMBERS EFFECTIVE TODAY

First Auction Will Be Arranged Shortly

Under regulations which come into operation today, all vehicle registration numbers without a prefix are designated as lucky numbers, together with a list of other numbers occurring in each prefixed series, e.g. AT, BC, etc.

Today's Gazette carries a formal notice that the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations are brought into operation.

Existing and future registered owners of vehicles bearing these designated lucky numbers may continue to hold them and, for a fee of \$200, may transfer the number from one vehicle to another, provided both vehicles are owned by the same persons.

But, if the owner of a vehicle with a lucky number applies to transfer the vehicle to someone else, the Transport Department licensing offices are required first to de-register the vehicle, recover the lucky number, re-register the vehicle with a non-lucky number, and then register transfer on payment of a fee of \$10.

The Transport Department will shortly arrange the first of a number of auctions of lucky number. All proceeds from the auctions, after deducting necessary expenses, will go to the Lotteries Fund for charitable purposes.

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Details of the auction and of the numbers to be auctioned will be published nearer the time.

These numbers have been accumulating for some time and there are now nearly 10,000 of them.

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KI LUNG STREET TO BE RECONSTRUCTED

The section of Ki Lung Street between Boundary Street and Cedar Street is to be reconstructed.

Work will begin in June and will be completed in about five months.

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TIN HAU FESTIVAL WILL BE CELEBRATED ON WEDNESDAY

Parade To Be Held In Yuen Long

One of Hong Kong's most colourful Chinese festivals -- the Tin Hau Festival -- will be celebrated by boat people on Wednesday (April 25).

Thousands of holiday-makers are expected to flock to Yuen Long for the annual parade spectacular. Boat people, in their gaily decorated junks, will make their way to Joss House Bay to pay homage to Tin Hau.

Tin Hau, the "Goddess of Heaven", is the patron saint of the boat people and others who depend on the sea for their livelihood.

There will also be celebrations at other Tin Hau temples on a number of outlying islands on Wednesday.

The Commander British Forces, Lt.-Gen. Sir Richard Ward, and Lady Ward, will be among 3,000 guests invited to watch the annual procession in Yuen Long.

Local dignitaries, members of the Heung Yee Kuk, rural leaders as well as senior Government officials have also been invited to the function.

Organised by the Shap Pat Heung Rural Committee, the procession will feature altars to honour local gods, dragon, lion and unicorn dances, Chinese folk dances, floats and stilt walkers.

It will start from the Eastern Bus Terminus and run along the southern lane of the main road to the stadium where the celebration will be held.

For the convenience of visitors, additional bus services will be operated between the Jordan Road Ferry Concourse and Yuen Long.

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The number of people visiting the Tin Hau Temple at Joss House Bay during the festival has increased enormously in the past years.

As many as 80,000 people, mostly boat people, are expected to turn up this year.

In view of the expected congestion, lion, unicorn or other dance parties will not be allowed ashore.

Additional precautionary measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the visitors. These will include the provision of first aid facilities on shore and a helicopter pad for emergency use.

A fire boat will be standing by in case of fire.

As in previous years, the Army will provide a temporary pontoon to facilitate the landing of passengers from boats.

To cope with the large number of visitors, the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company will be operating special services to Joss House Bay on Wednesday.

Starting at 5.30 a.m., ferry services will be operated at half-hourly intervals between Wanchai Ferry Pier and Joss House Bay until 3.30 p.m.

Three triple-decker luxury ferries will be available to take visitors and tourists to Joss House Bay. The ferries will leave the Central pier at 8.30 a.m., 9.00 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.

Note to Editors: We have been asked by the Shap Pat Heung Tin Hau Festival Organising Committee to issue press badges for the event in Yuen Long.

The badges will be available for collection from the Duty Officer, Government Information Services, as from 9 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR MARCH

The General Consumer Price Index (Sept. 63/Aug. 64 = 100) for March 1973 was 154, two points higher than that for the previous month.

There were increases of three points in the index for foodstuffs and seven points in the index for housing.

The indexes for durable goods and miscellaneous goods went up by three points and two points respectively.

Increases of one point each were also recorded in the index for clothing and footwear, and the index for services.

Movements in the indexes for other sections of commodity were insignificant.

Compared with the previous month, there were increases in the average retail prices of rice, fresh vegetables, pork and beef.

On the other hand, the average retail prices of salt water fish, fresh water fish, poultry, fresh fruits and eggs dropped.

As to non-food items, the index for housing was raised seven points as a result of adjustments made to the index for rents of private post-war built dwellings.

The Modified Consumer Price Index for March 1973 was 159, three points higher than that for the previous month, and twenty-three points higher than that for the corresponding month in 1972.

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PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL INTERCHANGE

Work To Start In June

Work is to begin in June to provide direct and convenient access to the 1,300-bed Princess Margaret Hospital, construction of which is progressing well in advance of schedule.

The multi-million-dollar project, to be known as the Princess Margaret Hospital Interchange, includes two flyovers totalling 1,760 feet long.

Spanning Kwai Chung Road, both flyovers will accommodate two-lane one-way traffic between the hospital complex and the busy road area.

One of the flyovers will allow westbound traffic on Kwai Chung Road to turn right to the hospital. The other will enable vehicles leaving the hospital to join westbound traffic on Kwai Chung Road.

Eastbound traffic will enter the hospital via Lai Chi Kok Terrace Road. Work on the extension of this road will soon be carried out under a separate contract.

The Interchange will also include a down ramp so that vehicles leaving the hospital may also join eastbound traffic to Kowloon.

At the same time, both carriageways of Kwai Chung Road within the Interchange area, and for some 1,700 feet to the west, will be widened to four lanes.

The widened carriageways will help improve traffic flow to and from the Container Terminal, as well as the general traffic between Kowloon and Kwai Chung and Tsuen Wan.

Work on the foundations of the Interchange is already underway. Completion of the whole Interchange has been timed with the opening of the Princess Margaret Hospital towards the end of next year.

Note to Editors: Copies of an artist's impression of the Interchange are distributed separately in the press boxes this evening.

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Release Time: 7.00 p.m.