



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Sunday, August 20, 1995

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Delegation for textiles consultations with the US

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A Trade Department delegation, led by Assistant Director-General of Trade, Mr Stanley Ying, left today (Sunday) for consultations with the United States to be held on August 22 and 23 in Washington DC.

The consultations will cover three main issues:

- * Firstly, the two sides will continue discussions on the US unilateral action to impose import control on Hong Kong's textiles and clothing products.
- * Secondly, the two sides will try to reach agreement on a set of arrangements necessary to the administration of US quantitative restraints on textiles and clothing imports from Hong Kong, for notification to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) under the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC).
- * Thirdly, Hong Kong will continue to demand the US to withdraw its call on Hong Kong's Category 440 imports (woven wool shirts and blouses).

"A first round of consultations with the US was held in June when we asked the US to revoke its decision to place Hong Kong's textiles and clothing products under import control, or at least suspend implementation until a mutually satisfactory solution is reached," said Mr Ying prior to departure.

"We are still awaiting a formal response," he added.

It has been the established practice for the past three decades that Hong Kong's textiles and clothing exports to the US are subject to export control by Hong Kong, as opposed to import control by the US.

One main difference between the two approaches is that under export control, Hong Kong's export data is used for quota control and accounting purposes; whereas under import control US uses its import data.

Mr Ying said: "Implementation of import control could have adverse implications for the trade. The drastic change in itself could bring uncertainty and disruption.

"Another problem is that unilateral import control would mean another set of data, in addition to that maintained by Hong Kong. There could be discrepancies in data, and confusion and uncertainty to the trade.

"Our export control system is well established and widely accepted by traders and all of our major trading partners. It is our right to expect the continuation of the system," he said.

"We will therefore reiterate our position that the US unilateral move is unjustified, and will continue to endeavour to protect our rights and ensure that our trade will not be unduly disrupted.

"We will also try to reach agreement with the US on a set of administrative arrangements for the implementation of Article 2 of the ATC. When agreed, the set of administrative arrangements will be notified to the WTO Textiles Monitoring Body in Geneva."

Under the ATC, Members have to agree bilaterally on a set of administrative arrangements they deem necessary for the implementation of provisions on quantitative restrictions in Article 2 of the ATC. Such arrangements reached by Members have to be notified to the Textiles Monitoring Body established under the ATC.

Mr Ying said: "Our position on US call on our Category 440 is simple. We think the call is unjustifiable both in principle because it contravenes the relevant provisions in the ACT, and in practice because the facts show that our very limited imports cannot have caused any damage to the US industry."

"We will therefore repeat our demand for the call to be revoked," he added.

In 1994, Hong Kong's Category 440 exports to the US was 5,046 dozens or 2.3 per cent of the total US market.

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Owners reminded to heed electrical regulations

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A spokesman for the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (Sunday) reminded owners of high voltage fixed electrical installation to have their installation inspected, tested and certified at least once every 12 months. He also urged the owners to submit a Periodic Test Certificate to EMSD for endorsement within two weeks after the date of the certification for their installation.

"Owners who fail to do so may be prosecuted and are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 for each offence," the spokesman said.

The warning follows 15 successful prosecutions between June and August for violation of the Electricity Ordinance.

The offences included violation of regulation 20(1)(c) and 20(5) of the Electricity (Wiring) Regulation under the Electricity Ordinance.

All the defendants had pleaded guilty and the fines imposed on them by the courts ranged from \$1,000 to \$4,000.

Regulation 20(1)(c) of the Electricity (Wiring) Regulation specifies that an owner of a fixed electrical installation with a high voltage should have the installation inspected, tested and certified at least once every 12 months.

A Periodic Test Certificate, known as Form WR2 as specified by EMSD, should also be prepared to certify the periodic test.

According to Regulation 20(5), the owner should send the certificate to the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services for endorsement within two weeks after the date of certification.

Meanwhile, the spokesman reiterated that under the Electricity Ordinance, only registered electrical contractors and electrical workers are allowed to undertake electrical work.

He stressed that unregistered contractors or workers undertaking electrical work are liable to prosecution.

"Four contractors who have not registered with EMSD were prosecuted in June and July for undertaking seven electrical jobs.

"All the defendants pleaded guilty and were fined \$2,000 to \$15,000," the spokesman said.

The offence committed by the unregistered contractors carries a maximum fine of \$50,000 on first conviction, and \$100,000 on a subsequent conviction for the same offence, in addition to imprisonment for six months.

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Fleet Veterans' Parade

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Over 100 Royal Navy veterans, many of whom served in Admiral Harcourt's Task Force which effected the re-establishment of British Sovereignty in Hong Kong on August 30, 1945, are back in the Territory to take part in the Fleet Veterans' Parade, at Edinburgh Place, Central, on Tuesday (August 22).

The parade is the first event of the 12-day commemorative programme to mark the 50th anniversary of the Liberation of Hong Kong and honours the veterans of the British Pacific and East Indies Fleets, some of whom saw service with Admiral Harcourt in his flagship, the aircraft carrier HMS Indomitable.

Attending the parade will be the acting Governor, Mrs Anson Chan, who will take the salute, and the Senior Naval officer Hong Kong, Captain Peter Melson.

Men from HMS Tamar, who will form a 24-man guard and colour escort, will parade alongside two 18-man unarmed platoons provided by personnel from HM Ships Peacock, Plover and Starling, the three ships of the Hong Kong Squadron. Also in attendance will be the British Army's Queen's Division Minden Band, who have flown out from their UK base at Colchester, to take part in the commemorations.

HMS Plover, moored in Victoria Harbour, will fire two salutes, one to mark the beginning and one to mark the end of the two minutes silence after which a service of remembrance will be conducted by the Senior Chaplain to the Missions to Seamen in Hong Kong, Peter Ellis.

After the parade a short wreath-laying ceremony will take place at the Cenotaph followed by a reception at City Hall for the Fleet Veterans, hosted by Mrs Anson Chan.

Attention News Editors:

Media representatives covering this event should report to the press registration area at the Main Entrance of the Prince of Wales Barracks, Central, by 9.30 am where members of JSPRS will be on hand to register all members of the press and issue passes to them.

All press members should ensure they are in possession of a pass otherwise their entrance to the parade area will be denied.

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New social hygiene clinic in Chai Wan

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The Department of Health announced today (Sunday) that the new Chai Wan Social Hygiene Clinic would begin to operate on August 25 (Friday).

A spokesman for the department said the new clinic would provide services to dermatology patients and those seeking treatment on sexually transmitted diseases.

He said: "The clinic is located on the LG 5, Polyclinic, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, at No 3 Lok Man Street, Chai Wan. The registration hours of clinic are from 9 am to 12 noon between Monday and Saturday and from 2 pm to 4 pm between Monday and Friday.

"On the other hand, three part-time dermatology clinics, namely Shaukiwan Dermatology Clinic, Anne Black Dermatology Clinic and Tang Chi Ngong Dermatology Clinic, will be reprovisioned to the Chai Wan Social Hygiene Clinic on August 28, September 4 and September 18 respectively." he said.

He added that dermatology patients seeking follow-up consultations could book an appointment through the central booking hotline on 2517 1015 or 2517 1042.

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Reservoir fishing season to begin next month

Anglers wishing to indulge their hobby in local reservoirs during the coming fishing season may apply for a licence from the Water Supplies Department, starting tomorrow (Monday), before the next season begins on September 1.

Those who wish to apply can call at the customer enquiry centre on the first floor of Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai.

Applications can also be made at the ground floor office of the department's mainland depot at the junction of Sai Yee Street and Argyle Street in Mong Kok, customer enquiry centres on the second floor of Ngau Tau Kok Government Offices at 21, On Wah Street, and on the ground floor of Perfect Mount Gardens in Po Man Street, Shau Kei Wan.

Applicants will be required to produce their identity cards and pay a licence fee of \$22. A licence would normally be issued immediately upon submission of the application.

Applications can also be made by post to the department's headquarters at Immigration Tower, giving the applicant's name, address, photocopy of his identity card, together with a crossed cheque for \$22 payable to the "Hong Kong Government". A licence will then be sent to the applicant by ordinary mail. A licence will not be issued to people under the age of 13.

Anglers have to observe certain rules while fishing in reservoirs. They should not use a net or tools other than rod and line.

Explosives and toxic substances are prohibited. The use of a boat, dinghy or raft is also banned.

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37 New building plans approved in June

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The Buildings Department had approved a total of 37 building plans in June - 18 for Hong Kong Island, 11 for Kowloon and eight for the New Territories.

The approved plans include 10 for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, 11 for commercial development and four for factory and industrial developments.

In the same month, consent was given for work to start on 36 building projects, involving 28,029.4 square metres of usable domestic floor area and 117,440.1 square metres of usable non-domestic floor area. The department had also issued 28 Occupation Permits in June - nine for Hong Kong Island, nine for Kowloon and 10 for the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation in the month, usable floor areas for domestic and non-domestic uses are 24,550.2 square metres and 104,014.4 square metres respectively.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in the month amounting to about \$1,368 million.

In addition, 15 demolition consents involving 35 buildings were issued.

The Buildings Department's Control and Enforcement Division had received 757 complaints of unauthorised building works, and issued 125 removal orders on unauthorised works.

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Floating holiday reminder

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The Labour Department today (Sunday) reminds employers that the second floating holiday of this year falls on August 28, the last Monday of the month.

Under the Employment Ordinance, all employees shall be granted their second floating holiday on this date if the employer has not fixed a date for that holiday or if the employee has not requested it to be added to his paid annual leave. In addition, an employee is entitled to be paid for that holiday if he has worked for his employer continuously for three months preceding the holiday.

Holiday pay should be equivalent to an employee's earnings on a full working day and should include basic wages as well as allowances that can be expressed in money terms such as meals and cost of living allowances.

Where the earnings vary from day to day, holiday pay should be the average daily earnings during every complete wage period, which could be between 28 and 31 days, preceding the holiday.

If an employee is required to work on a statutory holiday, he must be given an alternative day off within 60 days before or after that day.

Enquiries about statutory holidays may be made at the Labour Department's General Enquiry Telephone Service on 2717 1771.

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Fresh water cuts in Sham Shui Po and Sai Kung

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Fresh water supply to some premises in Sham Shui Po and Sai Kung will be temporarily suspended from 11 pm on Wednesday (August 23) and Thursday (August 24) respectively to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains leakage detection.

The suspension will affect all the premises at Cheung Sha Wan Road, Camp Street, Fuk Wing Street, Pratas Street, Po On Road, Shun Ning Road and Kiu Kiang Street.

In Sai Kung, the affected areas will include all the premises at Hiram's Highway between Luk Mei Tsuen and Kau Sai San Tsuen, including Pak Wai, Sam Fai Tin and Pak Sha Wan.

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