



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, November 17, 1972

## HA TSUEN RANGE

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New measures to eliminate problems over the use of the Ha Tsuen Range were announced today when the Hong Kong Government confirmed that the live-firing range must continue to be used.

Fundamental to the new measures will be the building of a new access road and gun positions by British Army engineers. Completion of this new project will take about one year.

As a result more than 600 acres of land at present within the gazetted area of the range will be excluded when the new gazetted boundaries of the range are drawn up. This includes the private agricultural land west of Ha Tsuen Village. The new high velocity gun positions will also be 2,000 metres or more further away from the Ha Tsuen villages, thus considerably reducing noise nuisance and inconvenience to the public.

Announcing the new measures today a Government spokesman reiterated that it had always been the Government's and the Army's policy to minimise such inconvenience to the villagers of Ha Tsuen as far as was possible. But the spokesman stressed that the range firing facilities are essential to the British Services in Hong Kong if their proper efficiency is to be maintained.

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"The Ha Tsuen Range has been in use as a properly gazetted range for more than 20 years. There is no suitable alternative. Without it, the professional standards of the Services would suffer."

Today's Government announcement outlined the measures to be introduced.

In addition to the new road and firing positions there is to be a clear demarcation of range boundaries. Offers will be made as soon as possible to all owners of private land within the new boundaries to lease their land at a considerably increased rent. Existing arrangements for compensating cultivators for loss of crops due to firing practice will continue until the new range boundaries are brought into use, which will be done as soon as the new access road and gun positions are completed.

Compensation will also be paid to clear all cultivation and structures within the new range boundaries. As a result of these measures and the renting of all the private land within the range, there will be no reason for members of the public to be within the range boundaries while firing is taking place. No cultivation or structures within the range will be permitted in future.

The new range boundaries will also exclude some illegal structures which have been built within the range area during the past few years. These structures were tolerated because they were sufficiently close to the maximum limits of the theoretical danger zone to be subject to minimal hazard.

Recent experience, however, demonstrates that even this very low risk is unsatisfactory and the Government, in the future, cannot allow the building of any further illegal structures anywhere within the range.

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With immediate effect -- and until the new gun positions are brought into use -- the Army authorities have decided to discontinue training with high-velocity, flat-trajectory weapons other than small arms, except under occasional and specially-controlled circumstances.

The likelihood of ricochets while firing heavy-calibre, flat-trajectory guns is technically higher than for other types of weapon. It was this characteristic which led to the freak accident on October 9 when a building, situated within the gazetted boundary, near the village of Pak Nai, was struck by a ricocheting practice-shell fired from the 76mm high-velocity main armament of a Saladin armoured car.

Army experts are satisfied that existing safety arrangements are completely adequate for the continued use of, on the one hand, small arms and, on the other, angled-trajectory weapons such as artillery and mortars.

At the same time, night firing exercises are to be limited to the minimum essential to maintain night operational efficiency.

A review is being carried out of authorised gun positions and certain firing points will not be used again.

These restrictions on night firing and discontinuing the use of some firing points should go a long way towards meeting current local objections until the new gun positions are ready for use next year, commented the Government spokesman.

Army Engineers have already begun preparatory work for the new range facilities, he disclosed.

The new range boundaries will be clearly marked, and notices and flags erected to warn members of the public against entering the range while firing is in progress.

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COMMUNICATING WITH THE YOUNG

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The Information Secretary, Mr. Jack Cater, believes his most exacting task will be to communicate with "Young Hong Kong in whose hands the future of our great city belongs".

Mr. Cater, who was speaking at a Lions Club of Hong Kong luncheon today, said another major task would be to ensure, as far as is practicable and reasonable, that there is improved confidence between the Government and the media, and that "any gaps which may exist are narrowed, if not completely eliminated".

He said a great deal was heard these days about the gap between the generation, "but in Hong Kong this is especially important, for the great majority of us, those under 25, were either born here or came here at a very early age".

"These young people look upon Hong Kong as their home, and quite naturally have different views and attitudes from those other and older generations," Mr. Cater said.

Communicating with the young was part of his job of "collecting, collating and assessing" community information - the promotion of a two-way flow of information between the government and the people.

Mr. Cater said that many government departments had extensive day-to-day contacts with the public and he believed that this was a source of valuable but raw material "which if properly and painstakingly assessed, will be of inestimable help, and an important factor in the decision-taking processes of the Government".

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### THE OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

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The new Director of Social Welfare, Mr. F.K. Li, today reminded young people graduating from school of their duty, as citizens, to make "a personal contribution to welfare work in our community."

He told pupils of Wah Yan College, Hong Kong, on the occasion of their Speech Day : "It is your obligation, as members of our society, to involve yourselves in welfare work, and I urge you to honour that obligation."

It was Mr. Li's first public address as Director of Social Welfare. He said it gave him great joy to return to the school from where he had graduated 31 years ago.

The Hong Kong of that time was a very different place from the Hong Kong of today, and he was proud of the achievements that had transformed it into a modern industrial city with a standard of living second to none in Asia -- with the exception perhaps of the major cities in Japan.

He described the success of Hong Kong as the result of "a mixture of the East and the West, not only in commerce and industry but also in government administration and education."

In his view, this mixture was no less evident in the welfare field, where traditional institutions such as the Tung Wah group of hospitals and the Po Leung Kuk, after responding to the growing needs and challenges of the community, were working alongside new welfare agencies for the common good.

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"Social welfare work in Hong Kong cannot advance without adequate financial support," Mr. Li told the gathering. "But financial support cannot fulfil our needs. Success cannot be measured in terms of the amount of money that has been expended alone.

"What is equally important is personal involvement and a genuine feeling of compassion in the plight of the less fortunate members of our society -- such as the old, the orphans, the blind, the deaf and the mentally and physically handicapped."

He put it to his listeners that without this personal involvement, social welfare work could not be satisfactory. Without this compassion and personal concern, social welfare work could not be complete.

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DEADLINE FOR SHOP TENANT APPLICATIONS EXTENDED

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The 44 shop tenants involved in the first phase of the Shek Kip Mei rehousing scheme will be given more time to apply for shops or shop stores at Pak Tin Estate.

The Resettlement Department has decided to extend the date for applications and a new date will be announced later.

Originally, the affected shop tenants were to have lodged their applications by the end of this month.

A spokesman for the department said the decision was made after individual interviews with the 44 shop tenants by staff of the Rehousing Unit. The extension was to give the shop keepers more time to think of their own arrangements and to give his department more time to study a letter from some of them seeking permission to remain 'in situ' after the re-development of the Shek Kip Mei estate.

He added that he would look into the reprovisioning scheme again in the light of the points raised by the shop tenants to see if there were any way of making the arrangements more convenient to them.

An interim reply to the letter has already been given.

So far, five applications for reprovisioning have been received from the shop tenants.

Seven out of 11 workshop operators have balloted for and have been provided with temporary workshop space at Pak Tin Resettlement Estate.

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The Shek Kip Mei rehousing scheme, which is aimed at giving the 62,000 tenants of the old estate a radical improvement in their living condition has been warmly received.

Only 11 application forms out of a total of 1,856 the Resettlement Department sent out to domestic tenants have not been returned.

The Housing Authority has already offered tenancy to nearly 900 families and interviewed another 300.

Many families have already moved into their new homes in Pak Tin and others are having theirs decorated.

An experienced Social Welfare Officer from the Social Welfare Department is on full-time attachment to the operation and is continuing his contact with tenants claiming to have problems arising from the transfer.

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SHIPS MUST BE MANNED BY SUFFICIENT CREW

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The Marine Department is stepping up its efforts to crack down on ships which do not have on board sufficient number of crew to ensure its safety while in port.

A spokesman said that vessels, depending on their size, were expected to have on board a specified number of crew, including competent officers, in case of emergencies such as fire or the vessel dragging her anchor onto other vessels or port facilities.

He pointed out that in a recent court case, the master of a ship was fined \$800 for failing to have on board enough members of the crew capable of carrying out duties to ensure the ship's safety.

In fact, the spokesman continued, on an inspection by the Marine Department Harbour Service patrol officers, it was found that no officer or crew were on board at all.

"The only people on board were four fitters employed from a shore contractor to carry out minor repairs."

The magistrate hearing the case, commented that the maximum fine of \$1,000 under the Merchant Shipping Ordinance appeared "insufficient for offences of this nature".

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GRANT FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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New machinery to facilitate vocational training courses will be installed in the Tang King Po School in Kowloon through a grant from the Lotteries Fund.

Additional printing equipment has been purchased to enable the school to offer courses in modern printing techniques.

The school had previously been granted a sum of \$165,000 from the Lotteries Fund in March last year to buy an offset printing machine. But to fully implement the project the additional equipment is now required.

The expansion will also necessitate certain alterations to the existing accommodation to provide a photographic room, storage space and a lecture room.

A number of new sewing machines will be installed in the tailoring section to help students acquire knowledge in the handling of sophisticated machinery used by commercial garment manufacturers.

A total sum of over \$60,000 has been granted to meet the cost of the machinery and renovations.

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MODERN MARKET COMPLEX FOR SAU MAU PING

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A modern-design modular market complex with hawker stalls and a restaurant will soon be built in the Sau Mau Ping Resettlement Estate.

The complex will consist of a two-storey building to be constructed near Blocks One and Two of the estate. At the same time a series of 24 vegetable stalls and five cooked food stalls will be built nearby.

A total of 83 stalls for the sale of vegetables, fish and meat are gathered on the ground floor of the two-storey building.

The first floor will be taken over by the restaurant which will have an area of 3,800 square feet.

Construction work is expected to begin in mid-January next year, and will take about six months to complete.

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE FOR KOWLOON BUILDING

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The Building Authority today declared the ground floor, single storey, back addition at No. 1 Fuk Wah Street, Kowloon to be in a dangerous condition.

The Principal Government Building Surveyor said that the building is already under statutory notice to repair and the works required to the rear addition necessitate the closure of this portion to avoid risk of injury to the occupiers during the works.

The closure order will be raised on completion of the works.

Notice of intention to apply for the closure order in Kowloon District Court at 9.30 a.m. on November 27 was posted today.

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Release Time: 6.30p.m.  
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