



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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JLG expert talks on air service agreements

Talks between experts of the British and Chinese sides of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group on Air Service Agreements will take place in Hong Kong on January 5. The British side will be led by British Representative, Mr Alan Paul. The Chinese side will be led by Chinese Representative, Mr Wang Weiyang. They will be assisted by experts from the two sides.

End

Govt committed to protecting intellectual property rights

The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang said the Government is committed to developing a modern, independent and internationally accepted framework to protect intellectual property rights in Hong Kong.

Mr Tsang said this when he was visiting the Intellectual Property Department and the Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau of the Customs and Excise Department this (Thursday) afternoon.

He was satisfied that the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in Hong Kong generally complied with international standards.

Mr Tsang said work in this respect would help Hong Kong promote trade, investment and technological innovation and exchanges.

The Intellectual Property Department is working on new localised legislation for the protection of intellectual property rights.

The department is preparing new comprehensive legislation and administrative systems to localise laws in respect of patents, copyright and registered designs. Agreement has already been reached with Chinese side of the Joint Liaison Group,

The trade marks law will also be modernised to reflect the prevailing international standards.

In addition to the Intellectual Property (World Trade Organisation Amendment) Bill which was already before the Legislative Council, four major bills on intellectual property would also be introduced into the council this year.

On enforcement, Mr Tsang said the Customs and Excise Department was determined to combat property piracy and therefore emphasis would be placed on tackling the problem at the importation and distribution levels.

The Financial Secretary said adequate resources would be allocated to Customs in the next financial year to further strengthen its capability in enforcement and prosecution, intelligence gatherings, border surveillance and interceptions, and liaison with the Chinese Customs.

In particular, intelligence gathering and investigation work relating to organised syndicates in piracy activities in Hong Kong would be stepped up, Mr Tsang said.

End

Vitasoy products monitored

In response to an announcement by the Vitasoy International Holdings Limited today (Thursday) of the temporary suspension of production of its paper-packed products by its Shenzhen plant, a spokesman for the Department of Health said:

"The department considers that it is an appropriate step for the company to take to facilitate thorough investigation of any problem it may have with its Shenzhen plant.

"Retailers are asked to stop selling the recalled batch of paper-packed Vitasoy/Vita products bearing a bar code beginning with the digit '6' and the address of the group's Shenzhen plant. These products should be returned to the manufacturer.

"Members of the public who may have purchased the products in question are advised to exchange for fresh stocks according to arrangements made by the company.

"Those who may have already opened the product and found a sour taste in it should hand it over to the Urban Services Department and Regional Services Department for further investigation (Tel hotlines - 2868 0000 and 2414 5555).

"Meanwhile, the Department of Health and the two municipal services departments will closely monitor the recall and investigation processes conducted by the Vitasoy International Holdings Limited.

"The Department of Health has also intensified its sampling of the products and is conducting separate laboratory tests."

End

Alteration of sewage charges is unfair

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Commenting on proposals to reduce or cancel sewage charges, a government spokesman said today (Thursday): "It would not be right or fair to alter the present charging scheme which was introduced in April last year after extensive consultation and passage of the enabling legislation by the Legislative Council."

The spokesman said: "The charging scheme was worked out on an equitable principle that polluters should pay for the services of cleaning up the sewage they produce without cross-subsidisation."

To reduce or exempt domestic households from paying sewage charges is unfair because domestic sewage makes up 60 per cent of the waste water being treated at present. Domestic sewage is a cause of water pollution and it needs to be treated before discharge.

A change in the charging scheme in favour of a particular group of users will result in one of the two following consequences:

- (1) If the cost is passed onto other users not benefiting from the change, it is against the Polluter Pays Principle and result in cross subsidisation, which is unfair.
- (2) If the cost of the change is borne by the Government, it is again unfair and contravenes the Polluter Pays Principle. It will defeat an important objective of the present scheme to encourage people to conserve water, which will lead to reduction in sewage charge and improvement to our serious water pollution problem.

The spokesman said: "The scheme was worked out having regard to views expressed in the community and by LegCo. For domestic users, 15.5 per cent will pay nothing, 55.5 per cent will pay less than \$9.3 a month and 77 per cent less than \$15 a month."

For most industrial and commercial users, the sewage charge only represents a increase in the range of 0.1 - 0.7 per cent of their total operating cost. For the intensive water users, the increase is between 1-2 per cent.

End

Passenger service at Jordan Road Ferry Pier to be relocated

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The passenger service being provided at the existing Jordan Road Ferry Pier in Yau Ma Tei will be relocated to a temporary passenger ferry pier at the old Canton Road Government Dockyard shortly.

After the relocation, the existing ferry pier will be demolished to make way for Jordan Road Reclamation Phase II which forms part of the West Kowloon Reclamation project of the Airport Core Programme.

Work on the project has been under way since January last year, involving reclamation of the seabed between Jordan Road in the north and Canton Road Government Offices Building in the south to provide 4.1 hectares of land to build distributor roads to link the new Kowloon Station of the Airport Railway with the Kowloon hinterland.

The temporary pier will have a covered waiting area and purpose-built ramps and platforms.

To better serve ferry passengers, covered walkways will be provided within the old Canton Road Government Dockyard to link the covered area in the temporary ferry pier with Canton Road near the Jordan Road Bus Terminus in the north and Austin Road in the south.

The 4.5-metre wide walkways, which will be illuminated at night, will be constructed to Highways Department standards to provide easy access for passengers.

After the transfer of ferry services, all the existing transport interchange facilities at Jordan Road Ferry Point will remain. These include the bus terminus for KMB bus routes 2E, 3, 4A, 8, 11, 14X, 36B, 42A, 46, 60X, 68X, 70, 81, 95 and 203E, and setting down and picking up facilities for taxis, private and goods vehicles.

The existing bus stops and setting down and picking up facilities in front of the Canton Road Government Offices Building will also remain after the transfer. These include bus stops for KMB bus routes 3C, 12, 14, 215X and 238X, and bus stops for residential bus routes 30R, 41R, 79R, 85R, 86R, 700R, 702R, 704R, 707R, 714R, 715R, 720R and 904R.

Motorist and pedestrian directional signs will be erected to guide passengers to the new pier. Notices will be posted at the existing ferry pier and leaflets will be distributed to ferry passengers to keep them informed of the ferry service relocation arrangements.

The Yau Tsim Mong District Board was consulted on the reprovisioning arrangements today (Thursday). The temporary ferry pier will remain in operation until a final decision on a permanent pier has been made.

End

14,000 years' dedicated service to education recognised

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Dedicated services and contribution of 561 members of the Education Department will pay off at the department's long and meritorious service award presentation ceremony on Saturday (January 6).

The recipients, having contributed more than 14,000 years of service, are in the ranks ranging from Workman II to assistant director.

Some of them began their career in the Government as early as in 1950.

Among the recipients are one assistant director and three principal education officers.

At the ceremony, 186 staff will be awarded Long and Meritorious Service Certificates while 375 retirement souvenirs.

Of those receiving long service certificates, 93 have been in government service for 30 years and another 93 for 20 years.

The Director of Education, Mr W K Lam, will officiate at the presentation ceremony which will be held at Queen's College, 120 Causeway Bay Road, at 11 am on Saturday (January 6).

End

Open burning to be put under control

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The Air Pollution Control (Open Burning) Regulation to be gazetted tomorrow (Friday) will put opening burning activities under control with effect from February 26 this year.

Under the new regulation, open burning of construction wastes, rubber tyres and metal salvage will be prohibited.

"Regulatory controls are necessary as open burning emits smoke, dust and in some cases, toxic gases. It adds to the already high particulates levels in the atmosphere and often causes a nuisance to people living nearby," Principal Environmental Protection Officer of the Environmental Protection Department, Mr Tse Chin-wan, said.

"Instead of burning in open air, the wastes should be recycled or disposed of at proper landfills," he said.

Apart from a few exceptions listed in the regulation, all other forms of open burning will be put under control.

Open burning activities that will be exempted include the burning of incense and barbecues, which form part of the custom of the community or have significant amenity value. Essential open burning activities such as burning required for fire-fighting training will also be allowed under the regulation.

"All other open burnings will be an offence unless a permit is obtained from the Environmental Protection Department," Mr Tse said.

"However, permits will normally not be granted unless open burning is the only means to achieve the effect," he stressed.

Any person who conducts illegal open burning activities is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and a further fine of \$500 for every 15 minutes during which the offence has continued.

End

Contract signed for works in Tseung Kwan O

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Works will soon start in Tseung Kwan O for the construction of seawalls and reclamation as part of the Tseung Kwan O Port Development at Area 137 Stage I.

A \$700 million contract for the works was signed today (Thursday) by the Civil Engineering Department's Principal Government Civil Engineer, Dr Choi Yu-leuk and representatives of the contractor, Gammon Construction and Ballast Nedam Baggeren BV Joint Venture.

Speaking after the contract signing, Dr Choi said the project was designed to provide capacity for disposing of at least 1.7 million cubic metres of public dump materials.

"Works will involve the reclamation of 57 hectares of land at Tseung Kwan O Area 137, and the construction of 3,500 metre long of seawalls and drainage outfalls," he said.

Dr Choi pointed out that Tseung Kwan O Area 137 had been identified as suitable for the operation of a public dump because it was remote and would not cause significant environmental impacts to the neighbouring areas. "Furthermore, it will serve as an important outlet for the construction waste generated on Hong Kong Island.

"With the opening of the public dump at Tseung Kwan O Area 137, now scheduled in April this year, public dump materials on Hong Kong Island can be delivered to the barging point at Aldrich Bay for loading onto barges for transportation to Tseung Kwan O," Dr Choi said.

Works will commence tomorrow (Friday) and are scheduled for completion in about 27 months.

On completion, the project will provide land for the construction of roads, drains and other infrastructure to cater for future developments in the area.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,281	0930	-272
Closing balance in the account	1,274	1000	-272
Change attributable to :		1100	-272
Money market activity	-272	1200	-270
LAF today	-735	1500	-272
		1600	-272

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 123.2 *+0.4* 4.1.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.35	2 years	2711	5.60	100.49	5.39
1 month	5.35	3 years	3810	6.15	101.65	5.58
3 months	5.35	5 years	5012	6.38	101.79	6.05
6 months	5.35	7 years	7211	6.82	102.99	6.38
12 months	5.34	5 years	M502	7.30	103.98	6.43

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$25,773 million

Closed January 4, 1996

End