



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, July 13, 1973

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LEGISLATION ON COMMODITY EXCHANGES

New legislation will be introduced next week in support of the temporary ban imposed last month on the establishment of commodity exchanges dealing with certain specified commodities such as sugar, coffee, wool and tin, among others.

The bill the Commodity Exchange (Prohibition) Bill 1973, does not apply to public markets, nor to commodity exchanges that were in operation on June 20 this year, such as the daily rice auction and the Gold and Silver exchange.

But from the date the bill takes effect no new commodity exchanges dealing or trading, whether in spot or futures contracts, in any of the 20 commodities specified in the schedule, will be permitted.

The specified commodities are: barley, cocoa, coffee, copper, cotton, gold, lead, maize, oats, platinum, rice, rubber, silver, oil seeds and vegetable oils, sugar, timber, tin, wheat, wool and zinc.

The bill makes it an offence to set up an exchange dealing with these commodities. Offenders will be liable on conviction to a fine of \$500,000 and an additional fine of \$50,000 may be imposed for each day the offence continues.

In announcing the temporary ban in the Legislative Council on June 20, the Financial Secretary, Mr. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said at the time that it was not the government's intention to frustrate the development of a properly regulated commodity exchange, or possibly more than one exchange, at a later stage.

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"The intention rather is to ensure that, if and when an exchange is established, it will operate in a well regulated and orderly manner, and in accordance with internationally accepted practices and standards," he said.

The bill empowers senior police officers to enter and search any premises in which an illegal commodity exchange is suspected to be in operation and to seize records and documents.

Under the bill, the district court will be empowered to make an interim closure order in respect of such premises, pending the completion of proceedings against the operator of the exchange.

A court may also make a closure order in respect of such premises following the conviction of the operator.

The bill is published in today's gazette for general information and will be introduced in the Legislative Council next week.

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BUILDING RESTRICTIONS FOR MID-LEVELS AND POK FU LAM

Temporary restrictions on new buildings in certain parts of the Mid-Levels and Pok Fu Lam areas are imposed under new legislation to be introduced in the Legislative Council on Wednesday.

If approved, the Temporary Restriction of Building Development (Pok Fu Lam and Mid-Levels) Bill 1973, will empower the Building Authority to refuse to approve plans for new buildings in these two areas for a period of six months from July 4 this year.

Modifications of leases where they are required to permit redevelopment will also not be granted.

The restrictions apply to the area of Pok Fu Lam from Mount Davis to Wah Fu Estate and in the Mid Levels between Caine Road-Bonham Road and the 700-foot contour bounded on the east by Glenealy and extending to the west as far as Kotewall Road and the University of Hong Kong.

In the Legislative Council last week (July 4), the Director of Public Works, Mr. A.S. Robertson, said that the measures were necessary "in view of the serious traffic problems which would result if building continues to be unrestricted in these areas."

He said during the six-month standstill, traffic engineers would carry out a thorough study of all aspects of the traffic problems to permit the government to make a decision as to the proper extent and duration of the restrictions.

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NEW LAWS TO CLEAN BUILDINGS

Tougher laws concerning the cleanliness of buildings are to be introduced in support of the "Let's Clean Our Buildings" campaign which is due to start next month as a continuing government effort to improve environmental cleanliness in Hong Kong.

Among others, the new measures will enable notices to be served on owners or tenants of buildings to limewash their premises, subject to certain conditions, and for unsightly posters and bills to be removed.

The measures are contained in the Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 1973 which is published in today's gazette.

At present, the Director of Urban Services may only serve a notice on an owner or occupier to limewash his premises if the condition of the premises is injurious to the health of residents.

The bill widens the scope under which such a notice may be served and empowers the Director to order premises to be limewashed if they constitute a health hazard or sanitary nuisance or disfigure the amenities of any locality.

It also provides for regulations to be made so that a person, convicted for failing to comply with a notice under the regulations, will be required to pay the expenses for the necessary work carried out by the U.S.D.

Provisions are also made for the removal of posters which, by nature of their condition, are unsightly.

The bill empowers the Director to abate a nuisance on premises where the person causing it or the owner or occupier cannot be found. Provision is made for the costs to be recovered if the person is later found.

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AIRPORT APRON SERVICES COMPLEX

A combined new office and workshop complex is to be built at Hong Kong international airport to meet the increasing demand for such facilities by ground servicing companies.

The complex will consist of a three-storey building occupying an area of about 110,000 square feet near the airport's maintenance area on the eastern bank of the nullah.

The ground floor will be taken up by workshops and storage areas for heavy items of aircraft spares, and by open and covered parking spaces for equipment and airport servicing vehicles.

Piling work is already in progress and construction of the building is expected to start in September this year for completion in early 1975.

A spokesman for the Public Works Department said the complex would provide better accommodation for the various services which had to be performed on aircraft parked on the terminal apron.

These services included the provision of vehicles, equipment and manpower for the handling of passengers, baggage, freight and mail, as well as for cleaning, refurbishing, inspecting and repairing of aircraft.

When completed, the workshops and offices will be let to ground servicing companies.

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Note to Editors: Photographs of a sketch of the building are boxed today.

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LONGER TIME TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS FOR BRITISH PASSPORTS

The Immigration Department announced today that due to the very heavy increase in the number of applications for British passports, the minimum period required for processing is now 14 working days -- about three weeks.

The normal period is usually 10 working days (around two weeks).

The Director of Immigration, Mr. W.E. Collard, said that since the beginning of this financial year up until now more than 15,300 passports had been issued.

This is about 4,500 more than in the same period in 1972.

In June alone, almost 5,500 passports were issued, compared with about 3,700 in June last year; and for the first two weeks of this month the figure was over 2,000.

Mr. Collard said that people intending to travel should take into account the longer time needed to process the applications when planning their arrangements.

He explained that the big increase in applications was mainly due to a substantial rise in the number of people travelling abroad since the introduction of package tours.

The Director also reminded people that they need not go to Immigration Department headquarters to apply for passports -- the applications could be lodged at any of the department's branch offices.

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POLLUTING THE HARBOUR CAN BE COSTLY

The Marine Department today warned floating restaurant and other boat operators not to pollute the waters of Hong Kong.

A spokesman pointed out that many vessel owners had the habit of depositing rubbish or waste material into the harbour.

Irrespective of the amount of substance dumped into the harbour, they are liable to be prosecuted, he said.

A recent example was a case before Mr. P.M. Corfe in Central Court yesterday (July 12) when a floating restaurant in Aberdeen was fined \$200 for polluting Aberdeen harbour.

While imposing the fine, Mr. Corfe warned the representatives of the owners that a similar offence could incur a fine of about \$2,000 to \$3,000, even though the substance deposited might be, as it was in this instance, relatively small.

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OFFENSIVE TRADES AREA BEING EXPANDED

The Special Industry Zone near the Tsuen Wan Reclamation is to be enlarged to provide more room for the operation of offensive trades.

The area, covering about 12 acres, will be formed by excavation.

When completed late next year, about 20 undertakings, depending on their size, will be accommodated on the new site.

Offensive trades, such as tanneries, need to be separated for operation in specially allocated areas.

This helps reduce the inconvenience and annoyance to the rest of the community.

The project will also involve the construction of four new service roads and other necessary drainage facilities.

Works will begin in September, and will take about 16 months to complete.

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MINI-BUS ARRANGEMENTS

New traffic arrangements involving public light buses will come into operation in a section of north west Kowloon on Monday (July 16).

With effect from 10 a.m. on that day public light buses will not be permitted to pick up or set down passengers in the section of Pei Ho Street between Tai Po Road and Berwick Street from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

The arrangements are intended to reduce obstruction to through traffic at the junction of Pei Ho Street with Tai Po Road.

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected to indicate the restriction.

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GRANTHAM COLLEGE SPEECH DAY

Note to Editors: The Grantham College of Education will hold its annual speech day on Monday (July 16), in the Concert Hall, City Hall.

Dr. Yung Chi-tung, President of Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, will address the gathering and Mrs. Yung will distribute the certificates and prizes. The ceremony begins at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Director of Education, Mr. N.M. Ho, will take the chair.

You are invited to send a reporter and photographer to cover the event.

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Release time: 7.00 p.m.