



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Saturday, December 15, 1973

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Release time: 2.30 p.m.

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HONG KONG AND U.K. REACH UNDERSTANDING ON STERLING BALANCES

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A Government spokesman announced today that the British and Hong Kong governments have now reached an understanding under which Hong Kong will participate in arrangements for the guarantee of its sterling balances during the six months ending March 31, 1974.

Commenting on this announcement the Financial Secretary, Mr. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said that the agreement was in respect of official sterling holdings and was satisfactory to both sides.

It was the result of detailed discussions extending over some months. These discussions were concerned with the application to Hong Kong of the unilateral offer made by the British Government in September last to guarantee eligible sterling balances at a rate of United States Dollars 2.4213 to one pound sterling for a period from September 25, 1973 to March 31, 1974.

The present guarantee, Mr. Haddon-Cave added, will be confined to official, i.e. Government's holdings of sterling. The coverage of the previous Five-Year Sterling Guarantee Agreement was exceptional in that the Hong Kong Government brought the sterling holdings of local banks under the umbrella of the agreement.

The exclusion of the banks from the new arrangement brings the position of Hong Kong into line with that of other sterling holders and reflects the fact that the sterling holdings of local banks are no longer judged to be sufficient to warrant their inclusion.

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P.W.D. INSTITUTES FURTHER MEASURES TO SAVE FUEL

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The giant incinerators at Lai Chi Kok and Kennedy Town have been mobilised to play their part in Hong Kong's fuel saving drive by making the maximum use of their own "body heat" as a source of power.

A spokesman for the Public Works Department explained today that fuel economy is a built-in concept in the design and functioning of the incinerators.

"In a recycling process, the steam produced from incineration is fed into a turbine to produce electricity. But if a turbine has to be closed down, such as for overhaul, then the plants have to use electricity supplied by the power companies."

However, the Electrical and Mechanical Office, which runs the incinerators, is now intensifying its efforts to reduce to an absolute minimum the number of occasions when "outside" electricity is used.

At Lai Chi Kok, in particular, the water cooling system is to be improved to obviate the need to close down the turbine at certain times.

Another fuel-saving measure taken by the office is to reduce the standby boiler capacity at some public institutions, including hospitals.

"However, for obvious reasons," the spokesman said, "this sort of economy must be finely calculated, particularly at hospitals, because the welfare of patients cannot be jeopardised. But where we are satisfied that the standby resources allow some safe extra leeway for economy, we are shutting off part of the plant."

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Instructions have also gone out to all P.W.D. units which use powered machinery that all machines must be switched off when not in use. This applies, for example to the lathes used in the Electrical and Mechanical Office and to the marine engines and other equipment in the vessels of the Port Works Division of the Civil Engineering Office.

In addition, all contractors on P.W.D. lists have been urged to make similar fuel economies on their work sites.

Throughout the Public Works Department there has been a widespread positive response to a personal appeal by the Director, Mr. A.S. Robertson, that all staff should take every possible common-sense measure to save power and eliminate waste.

Many corridor lights have been permanently switched off, office lights have been cut to the bare essential and vehicles are being shared wherever possible.

In fact, figures in the first week of December indicated that there had been a saving in electricity consumption of about 40 per cent over the previous week in Murray Building alone.

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REFLECTIVE MIRROR WINDOWS ON CARS MAY BE BANNED

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Proposals are in hand to ban the use of "mirror window" reflective material on vehicles, the Commissioner for Transport revealed today.

The proposed ban, which is to be made under an amendment to the Road Traffic (Construction and Use) Regulations, will not however affect tinted glass installed by some manufacturers.

The Commissioner warned motorists that reflective material of the one-way ~~mirror~~ window type should not be used on windscreens and windows of motor cars.

"This material has a dazzling effect that can cause accidents if the sun is reflected into the eyes of another driver," he said.

"It also has the effect of preventing anybody outside from seeing the interior of the vehicle and, although there is nothing wrong in having privacy, vehicles treated in this way could be used by criminals to avoid detection."

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SQUATTERS TO BE TAUGHT HOW TO PREVENT FIRES

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The Housing Department is to mount a four-day Fire Prevention Campaign jointly with the Fire Services to educate the 31,000 people living in licensed areas throughout Hong Kong and Kowloon.

Starting next Tuesday (December 18), a van equipped with loud-hailers will tour the 18 domestic licensed areas and three licensed areas for industrial undertakings.

Fire officers will broadcast simple fire prevention rules to the squatters over the public address system, and distribute illustrated leaflets containing similar messages.

Mr. Brian Coak, Administrative Officer, Squatter Control, said the campaign was launched in view of the dry and windy weather.

"It is essential to let the people know that negligence could be the cause of a disaster. Many squatter fires could have been avoided if the people had been careful with fire and paid some attention to the simple fire prevention rules," he said.

The Fire Prevention programme will begin on Hong Kong Island. On Tuesday, the van will tour the licensed areas at Chai Wan, Fu Tau Wat, Pak Fuk Road, Tin Wan, and Wong Chuk Hang.

It will visit the licensed areas at Cheung Sha Wan, Ha Kwai Chung, Tai Wor Hau, Yau Ma Hom, Lei Muk Shue and Tai Wor Ping on Wednesday; Sam Ka Tsuen, Kwun Tong, Hip Wo Street, Hong Ning Road and Kowloon Bay on Thursday; and Junction Road, Ma Chai Hang and the ex-rifle range on Friday.

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IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLACES

Close Workmanlike Partnership Essential

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A close and workmanlike partnership of school sponsors with the Education Department is essential in order to meet both expansion in the number and improvement in the quality of school places.

This was emphasised by Mr. J. Whiteley, Assistant Director of Education (Development), at the blessing ceremony of Caritas St. Paul Pre-vocational School in Cheung Chau this afternoon.

Since it is the government's policy to provide primary and secondary schools through the aided sector wherever possible, the demands upon the financial resources and educational expertise of experienced sponsors will become increasingly more heavy.

The Caritas St. Paul Pre-vocational School is an example of the co-operation mentioned by Mr. Whiteley. Caritas bought part of the site and the rest was granted free by the government.

The total cost for the school portion of the building is some \$4,235,000 of which the Education Department gave \$3,598,000 and Caritas \$637,000.

The recurrent costs for the school will be paid for by the Education Department under the Unified Code.

In addition, Caritas provided from its own funds a sewing room and a typing room. These two rooms will be used for evening classes for girls.

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There are six classrooms and six special rooms in the school building. The special rooms will be equipped for teaching technical drawing, woodwork, metalwork, electrical work, general science and for a library.

The school will accommodate some 360 boys and offer a three-year pre-vocational course.

Mr. Whiteley thanked Caritas for its concern for the education of Hong Kong children. He said Caritas was deeply involved in community development work in Hong Kong in general and in pre-vocational education in particular.

"Besides this school, it operates two government subsidized and one private pre-vocational schools and has plans together with the Marden Foundation to sponsor three more pre-vocational schools at Chai Wan, Sha Tin and Tuen Mun respectively," he added.

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TAI PO LAP SAP DUMP TO BE ENLARGED

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The Shuen Wan Refuse Dump in Tai Po will be enlarged and turned into a controlled tip to cope with the increasing amount of refuse generated by the growth and urbanisation of the New Territories.

At present, about 50 per cent of the refuse collected in the New Territories outside Tsuen Wan goes to the Shuen Wan dump which has almost reached its full capacity.

It is proposed to enlarge the dump by extending the rubble mound on its western side. Apart from increasing its capacity, the proposed extension will enable the site to be converted into a much larger recreational area or for other uses on the closure of the dump.

Sanitary conditions at the dump will also be further improved once it is converted into a controlled tip.

This disposal method involves the spreading and compacting of refuse, covering each layer with suitable material as tipping proceeds and scaling all working faces at the end of each day's work in order to contain noxious smells, control vermin and to eliminate fire hazard.

Anyone having objections to the proposed project or any claim of private right, should submit them in writing to the Director of Public Works within two months.

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#### NEW SITE FOR KOWLOON RECEPTION CENTRE

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The former Lai Chi Kok Women's Prison at Butterfly Valley Road in Kowloon is to be demolished to make way for the new Kowloon Reception Centre.

Demolition work is expected to begin in January next year, and will take about three months to complete. A portion of the adjacent hillside will be cut back and formed to provide additional building land. The total area of the site will be about 150,000 square feet.

Construction of the Kowloon Reception Centre is scheduled for the end of 1974, and is expected to take two years to complete.

The Centre will be a maximum security institution providing accommodation for 980 inmates. Quarters and barracks will be provided for residential staff.

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#### TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN TSIM SHA TSUI

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Motorists are advised that with effect from 10 a.m. on Monday (December 17) the section of Middle Road in Tsim Sha Tsui from Nathan Road to the multi-storey car park will be re-routed to permit two-way traffic.

At the same time, vehicles travelling along Middle Road will not be allowed to turn right into Salisbury Road. The new arrangements are to improve traffic flow in the area.

Traffic signs will be posted to guide motorists.

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NOVEMBER WEATHER ROUNDUP

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Last month's weather was more or less normal for November, according to the Royal Observatory's monthly weather review.

No measurable rainfall was recorded during the first 24 days of the month, but rain fell continuously during the next five days to bring the monthly total 9.3 mm -- 33.8 mm below normal.

Three tropical cyclones were reported near South Vietnam, the Philippines and over the South China Sea during the month, but did not affect Hong Kong. No thunderstorm or heavy rain warnings were issued.

Due to the dry weather, two red and four yellow fire warnings were issued.

The maximum temperature for the month of 28.0 degrees Celsius was recorded on November 15, and the minimum temperature of 15.5 degrees Celsius on November 25, 26 and 27.

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Note to Editors: A full report prepared by the Royal Observatory on November's weather is boxed for collection.

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