



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

Saturday, July 6, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Retirement of Director of Immigration confirmed	1
Sewage charges are fair for the benefits of Hong Kong	1
Change of 1997 meetings venue not being considered: IMF	4
New taxi service guide now available	4
Serious study on industrial safety and health booklet urged	6
Summer Youth Programme starts today	7
Basic Law booklets available to public	8
Small & Medium Enterprises Committee appointments announced	9
Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations	10

Sunday, July 7, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Guidance service information obtainable on Internet	11
Slope maintenance exhibition to begin in Tai Po	11
EMSD services meet pledged standards	12

Retirement of Director of Immigration confirmed

* * * * *

A Civil Service Branch spokesman confirmed today (Saturday) that approval has been given to the Director of Immigration, Mr Laurence Leung Ming-yin, to retire from the civil service for personal reason. Mr Leung will begin his pre-retirement leave today.

Mr Leung joined the Government in 1965 and was appointed Director of Immigration in 1989. He was born on March 2, 1941, and is now 55 years old.

The spokesman said a successor had been identified to fill the post.

Pending the completion of appointment procedures, an announcement will be made. Meanwhile, the Deputy Director of Immigration, Mr Christopher Lee Ka-keung, will act as Director.

End

Sewage charges are fair for the benefits of Hong Kong

* * * * *

The higher the quantity and the heavier the pollution level of the wastewater discharged, the higher will be the sewage charges, the Director of Drainage Services, Mr Ng Yee-yum, said today (Saturday).

"This is the universally accepted 'polluter pays principle'," said Mr Ng when addressing the Drainage Services Department's (DSD) open-day reception at Cheung Sha Wan Sewage Pumping Station.

Mr Ng said every day individual households, trades and industries discharged tens of millions of litres of wastewater into territorial waters, causing pollution to the natural environment.

"Since the introduction of the Sewage Charging Scheme on April 1, 1995, all those who pollute the water in Hong Kong have to pay for the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater.

"The sewage charges are fair. The revenue from these charges is used directly for the operation and maintenance of the sewerage systems while the capital cost of constructing capital infrastructures continues to be funded by the Government from the Capital Works Reserve Fund," he said.

Mr Ng pointed out that in the past financial year, \$420 million of sewage charges and \$265 million of trade effluent surcharges had been collected from the public whereas \$2 billion had been paid by the Government in that financial year for new sewerage capital projects.

"According to the department's statistics, it appears that no domestic customers is unable to pay the sewage charges," he stressed.

Mr Ng reiterated that DSD had made significant achievements in the provision of drainage services last year funded by the sewage charges.

"The DSD is maintaining over 1,180 kilometres of public sewers together with some 38,000 connections to them and is handling and resolving about 45,000 complaints on blocked drains each year," said Mr Ng.

He said in Sha Tin, Tai Po, Shek Wui Hui and Yuen Long new towns, major secondary sewage treatment plants were now in operation and there were over 60 smaller plants and preliminary treatment facilities around the shores and on the islands.

DSD also operates and maintains over 90 sewage pumping stations throughout the territory. The volume of sewage treated has increased to 715 million cubic metres in 1995, of which 144 million cubic metres receive full biological treatment.

Twenty-six submarine outfalls are operated and maintained to safely dispose of this sewage into the sea.

Furthermore, said Mr Ng, new capital infrastructure projects estimated at about \$20 billion were being implemented by the department in various stages of planning, design and construction.

"These projects include the High Priority Programme (HPP) which is being carried out with \$6.8 billion funds injected in 1994 by the Government," he said.

HPP comprises the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme, Stage I and six related Sewerage Master Plans for Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi, Northwest Kowloon, North and South Kowloon, East Kowloon, Chai Wan and Shau Kei Wan, and Tseung Kwan O.

On completion of the HPP Projects, sewage from these catchment areas around Victoria Harbour at a volume of about 1.1 million cubic metres per day will be collected and screened at screening plants and then conveyed through a network of deep sewage tunnels to the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works.

The sewage collected will undergo chemically enhanced primary treatment before being discharged through a long submarine outfall into the Western Harbour.

"Over 1,000 tonnes of sludge currently discharged into Victoria harbour will be removed every day. This will improve the water quality of the Victoria Harbour significantly," he added.

Mr Ng said the Hong Kong Island South Sewerage Master Plan, the Tolo Harbour Sewerage Master Plan and the Port Shelter Sewerage Master Plan were nearing full implementation.

"Although the capital costs of these and other sewerage infrastructure projects are not financed by the sewage charges, their completion over the next few years will inevitably increase operating costs because much larger volumes of sewage and other wastewater will be diverted and treated to a higher standard.

"To make an allowance for inflation and to meet the rising operating costs as additional sewage treatment facilities come on stream to clean up and protect our environment, it is necessary to increase the general sewage charge and the trade effluent surcharge," Mr Ng said.

He maintained that the proposed increases in June was very modest.

"Even after the increases, about 16 per cent of domestic household will continue to pay nothing while 61 per cent will pay less than \$2.50 more per month," he said.

Noting that the Legislative Council did not support the proposed increases, Mr Ng said DSD still considered that cleaning up and protecting the environment was essential to the health and quality of everyone in Hong Kong.

"It is a major task in everyone's best interest and it has a cost which must be met in accordance with the Polluter Pays Principle," he stressed.

Three of DSD's sewage treatment facilities were open to the public today.

The open-day is the first of its kind organised by DSD to promote the community's awareness of environmental protection and to enable the community to have a more thorough understanding of wastewater collection and treatment process.

The function also serves to enable the community to have a better understanding of the services provided by DSD as well as the operation and the purposes of the charges for sewage services.

The three sewage treatment plants which opened today are: Cheung Sha Wan Sewage Pumping Station, North Point Sewage Screening Plant and Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works.

End

Change of 1997 meetings venue not being considered: IMF

* * * * *

Commenting on the press reports speculating on a possible change of venue for the 1997 World Bank/IMF annual meetings, a Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) spokesman today (Saturday) said HKMA had received confirmation from the IMF management that such a change was not being considered.

The spokesman said the suggestion of a change of venue came from certain IMF staff in protest at the imprisonment of an IMF staff member by the Chinese authorities.

The proposal did not come from the IMF management, the spokesman said, adding that the Government is confident that the 1997 meetings will go ahead in Hong Kong as planned.

End

New taxi service guide now available

* * * * *

Clear guidelines for charging luggage carried in a taxi are now included in the newly updated "Guide to Taxi Services in Hong Kong".

Announcing the publication of the updated guide, a Transport Department spokesman today (Saturday) said the guide set out the rights and obligations of taxi drivers and passengers with a hope to promote better mutual understanding between them.

"This guide may help taxi drivers to improve the quality of their services," said the spokesman.

The spokesman noted that one of the major disputes between drivers and passengers is when a baggage charge should be levied. In the guide, it suggests the charge can be levied on:

- * every piece of baggage to be carried inside the luggage compartment; or
- * every piece of baggage with a total dimension (length + width + height) exceeding 140 centimetres to be carried inside the passenger compartment.

The rule was agreed by various taxi operators' and drivers' associations during an earlier consultation.

"It can help remove disputes between taxi drivers and passengers on the definition of a baggage on which a surcharge can be levied according to the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) Regulation," the spokesman said.

Other topics in the guide include: permitted operating areas of taxis, taxi fares, obligations and conduct of taxi drivers and passengers, what to do when an "Out of Service" sign is displayed, cross-harbour taxi stands, offences and complaint hotlines.

First published in 1989, the guide which is in its third edition will be available for collection by the public from Tuesday (July 9) at the outlets below:

- * Public service enquiries centres of all district offices;
- * Licensing offices of the Transport Department;
- * Information and gift centres of the Hong Kong Tourist Association;
- * Customer services centres at Kowloon-Canton Railway Stations;
- * Travel services centres at Mass Transit Railway Stations;
- * Transport Complaints Unit

Taxi associations who wish to collect the guide in large quantities for their members may contact Mr M F Tsoi of the Transport Department on 2804 2578.

End

Serious study on industrial safety and health booklet urged

* * * * *

The Chief Factory Inspector (Operations), Mr Tse Ming-sing, today (Saturday) called on employers and employees in various industrial sectors to study seriously a booklet introducing the General Duties Provisions produced by the Labour Department.

"Risks at work can be eliminated at source and accidents be prevented if co-operation between employers and employees, and if proper safety measures recommended in the provisions are implemented," Mr Tse said.

He said the main theme of the provisions was to encourage employers in various industrial sectors to devise, implement and supervise a complete safety and health management system which would ensure the safety of workers under their employment.

"It is equally important for workers to co-operate with their employers by taking proper safety measures.

"This publication contains sound advice on general industrial safety practices as well as checklists on general duties of proprietors and workers," said Mr Tse.

The booklet also illustrates 17 cases on how employers and workers employed at industrial undertakings should have carried out their general duties so as to ensure workplaces are safe and without risks to health.

There are altogether 58 questions relating to the general duties of industrial undertaking proprietors which cover many important safety aspects in different type of workplaces.

Mr Tse urged all industrial proprietors to study the questions carefully and to implement the checklists thoroughly in their workplaces.

The safety booklet also contains 23 questions on general safety for workers.

"Although it is impossible to specify in great details in the booklet on all necessary steps to comply with the legislation, the General Duties Provisions are comprehensive and have wide application which will assist employers and employees to improve work safety," Mr Tse said.

Under the provisions provided in sections 6A and 6B of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (FIUO), an employer will be liable to a fine of \$200,000 and to imprisonment for six months if he or she fails to ensure workplace safety. The maximum fine for an offending worker is \$50,000 and six months in jail.

A total of 94 summonses have successfully secured a conviction under the General Duties Provisions of FIUO since its enactment at the end of 1990.

"Human lives are precious. Employers and employees should adopt fully all necessary safety practices as required by law to prevent accidents. Implementing a safety practice is not costly, but failing to do so may cause serious consequences," Mr Tse said.

Copies of the booklet are available at all offices of the Occupational Safety and Health Branch's Operations Division throughout the territory. Enquiries on provisions can be made through the Labour Department's industrial safety hotline 2815 0678.

End

Summer Youth Programme starts today

* * * * *

A wide range of summer programmes specially catered for youth has kicked off today (Saturday).

Speaking at the Souvenir Presentation Ceremony at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Wan Chai, the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau, said the territory-wide programme will benefit thousands of youngsters.

She said this year's budget - \$39.2 million - was the largest amount ever allocated with the Hong Kong Jockey Club being the largest sponsor.

The Summer Youth Programme (SYP), the 28th anniversary this year, has been extremely popular among youngsters aged between six and 25.

"The idea of the programme is to enable them to share the fun, develop their civic awareness and social service spirit through participating in different social and recreational activities," said Mrs Lau.

Under the theme "Share the Fun, Serve the Community", SYP has designed over 14,000 social and recreational activities, anticipating to attract the attendance of 1.15 million youngsters.

Apart from sports and recreational events organised for this summer, participants will also provide community service to those in need including the elderly and the disabled, the new China immigrants and the youth at risk.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club has donated \$17.6 million to this year's programme.

End

Basic Law booklets available to public

* * * * *

Copies of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region are now available to the public free of charge, a spokesman for the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE) said today (Saturday).

"These are provided to members of the public to facilitate better understanding of this important document in the community," the spokesman said.

"We have printed 50,000 booklets of the full text of the Basic Law in Chinese and 20,000 in English for this print-run to allow for its widest possible circulation."

The Basic Law booklets are now available at the Civic Education Resource Centre, second floor, Tung Sun Commercial Centre, 194-200 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, and the public enquiry service centres of all district offices.

Members of the public can also obtain the booklets at the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, or at the Information Services Department's Marketing Office, 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 176-192 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai.

"To promote broader understanding of the Basic Law, the CPCE will also release two publications on the Basic Law targeted at youngsters and children at a later stage," the spokesman said.

End

Small & Medium Enterprises Committee appointments announced

* * * * *

The Government today (Saturday) announced that the Secretary for Trade and Industry had appointed a Small and Medium Enterprises Committee to identify issues and trends affecting the development of small and medium enterprises in Hong Kong and suggest measures to support and facilitate their development.

The setting up of the committee is one of a package of measures proposed by the Financial Secretary in his 1996-97 Budget to promote the services sector.

Members of the Committee have been appointed for a period of two years with effect from July 1, 1996. They are:

Chairman

Mr Denis Lee
(Representing the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce)

Vice-chairman (Ex-Officio)

Mrs Regina Ip
Director-General of Industry

Members

Representatives of organisations

Mrs Anna Pao Sohmen
(Representing the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong)

One member to be nominated by the Federation of Hong Kong Industries)

Mr Lo Foo-cheung
(Representing the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce)

Mr Anthony Au
(Representing the Hong Kong Coalition of Service Industries)

Mr Henry Chiu (Representing the Hong Kong Productivity Council)

Mrs Anna Lai
(Representing the Hong Kong Trade Development Council)

Mr Mak Ping-Fun
(Representing the Vocational Training Council)

Ad Personam Members

Mrs Selina Chow
Mrs Agnes Mak
Mrs Rosa Hung
Mr Daniel Wan Yim-keung
Mr Kai Yau-ming
Mr Daniel Poon
Mr Lo Man-tuen

Ex-Officio Member

A representative of the Secretary for Trade and Industry

The first meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday (July 9).

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	1,955	09:30	NIL
Closing balance in the account	1,765	10:00	NIL
Change attributable to:		11:00	NIL
Money market activity	NIL	11:30	NIL
LAF today			-190

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.6 *+0.1* 6.7.96

End

Guidance service information obtainable on Internet

* * * * *

Teachers, students and members of the public can get access to information on the services provided by the Careers and Guidance Service Section of the Education Department through its newly set up homepage on the Internet.

Information obtainable included introduction on services rendered, latest news, overseas studies and catalogues of reference books, audio-visual resources and video tapes, said acting Senior Education Officer of the department, Miss Man Wai-ling.

The address of the homepage on the Internet is http://www.enmpc.org.hk/cgs_ed/. Members of Hong Kong School Net may also access to the information on the local net.

The Section operates the Guidance Teachers Resource Centre, which is frequently visited by teachers to make reference to the useful materials, and also the Careers Education Centre, which is visited by as many as 20,000 persons each year to seek advice on further studies and make use of the information.

Relevant posters had been sent to schools to inform them of the new service. Further enquiries should be directed to the Section on 2399 2184.

End

Slope maintenance exhibition to begin in Tai Po

* * * * *

An exhibition on slope maintenance will begin tomorrow (Monday) at Phase II of Tai Wo Estate Shopping Arcade in Tai Po.

Organised by the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) of the Civil Engineering Department, the display is part of the department's continuing efforts in promoting public awareness of the importance of slope maintenance.

A new educational video on slope maintenance, which aims at promulgating the message that property owners should maintain slopes within their lots to prevent the occurrence of landslide, will be shown at the exhibition.

There will be a new display board illustrating the nine typical steps of routine slope maintenance works by means of computer graphic actions used in the video.

It will also feature various aspects of proper slope maintenance by means of colourful illustrations, photographs, charts and graphs.

Visitors can take home leaflets on slope maintenance and GEO's hotline service, and the Layman's Guide to Slope Maintenance.

The exhibition will last for a week until July 14 and will be open daily between 10 am and 8 pm.

It will later move to other venues, including Hang Fa Chuen in Chai Wan, Luk Yeung Sun Chuen in Tsuen Wan and Cheung Fat Estate on Tsing Yi.

Information on slope maintenance can also be obtained by calling GEO's 24-hour automatic hotline 2762 5165.

End

EMSD services meet pledged standards

* * * * *

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has achieved 99 per cent of its performance targets last year for most of its services.

"This is very encouraging and we will continue to strive to maintain the high standard of services where we have been performing well and will improve those which we have not been doing sufficiently well," a spokesman for the department said today (Sunday).

The department launched its performance pledge on 24 types of service to the public in 1994.

The services include processing of applications for registration of electrical workers, gas installers and contractors; handling of reports of illegal equipment or installations; providing advice on safety matters and attending to general enquiries on gas, electricity, lifts and escalators.

The spokesman said through the department's interactive voice response system, members of the public can quickly obtain information and services from EMSD.

"Over 41,000 calls were received through this system last year, and the majority of the enquiries were related to issues on registration of electrical workers and electricity legislation," he said.

Copies of EMSD's leaflet on its performance in 1995 are now available free of charge from EMSD headquarters at 98 Caroline Hill Road, Hong Kong, and all district offices.

End