



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, October 13, 1972

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING FOR DESALINATION PLANT

Work will begin towards the end of this year on the construction of the administration building for the sea-water desalting plant at Castle Peak.

The plant, situated at Lok On Pai near the 17 milestone Castle Peak Road, will have a daily output of 40 million gallons of fresh water.

The administration building will contain the main control room for the desalting plant as well as the offices, laboratory, storage of records and canteen. In addition, the building will house the main workshops and workshop stores for maintenance of the plant.

A start is expected to be made on the building in December and it should be completed towards the end of 1973.

The sea-water desalting plant, when completed, will be the largest of its kind in the world. It consists of six units each complete with its steam boiler, evaporator and associated ancillaries.

The first of these units is expected to be operational by mid-1974 with each of the remaining units coming into operation thereafter at three-monthly intervals.

The Government has been recruiting a number of engineers for the supervision of the construction work and the operation and maintenance of the plant when it is completed.

When the desalting plant becomes fully operational, it will require about 200 engineers and technicians to carry out processing and maintenance work.

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SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION IN LEGCO ON WEDNESDAY

Simultaneous interpretation will be introduced into the Legislative Council on Wednesday (October 18) at the opening of the council's 1972-73 session.

As from that date, members of the council may use either English or Chinese in council proceedings.

In a notice published in today's Gazette, the Governor has appointed October 18 as the date on which the provisions of Standing Order No. 2 of the Legislative Council shall come into effect.

Standing Order No. 2 provides that a member may address the council in either English or Cantonese.

Arrangements are being made for members of the public who wish to attend the opening meeting.

Due to the limited number of seats available in the Council Chamber, any member of the public wishing to be certain of a seat on that date should reserve one by telephoning the Councils Office (Tel. H-95260) during office hours before next Wednesday.

Simultaneous interpretation receivers will be issued, on a "first come, first served" basis, to those who wish to use them in the council meeting.

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS SHOW DEFICIT FOR FIRST FIVE MONTHS

The Hong Kong Government accounts for the month of August 1972 show a deficit of \$15.5 million compared with a deficit of \$10.4 million in August last year.

This has resulted in a total deficit of \$17.8 million for the first five months of this financial year. In the past three years, the accounts have been in surplus at the end of the first five months.

Total revenue for the month at \$252.4 million was \$66.4 million more than in August 1971. The total revenue for the first five months of the financial year at \$1,363 million was \$258 million more than the same period last year.

Expenditure amounted to \$268 million, an increase of \$71.6 million over the same months last year. This brings the total expenditure for the first five months of the financial year to \$1,381 million, which was \$326 million more than the same period last year.

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POWER TO DECLARE POLL VOID

A bill, seeking to empower the presiding officer of a polling station to declare the poll at his station void in certain circumstances, was published in the Government Gazette today.

The bill, entitled the Urban Council (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1972, will be introduced into the Legislative Council shortly.

If enacted, it will confer authority on the Governor in Council to make regulations giving the presiding officer this power.

This is considered necessary following an incident in the Urban Council Election last year when one of the polling stations in Kowloon was burgled on the night before the election.

During that incident, the store in which the ballot papers were kept was ransacked. However, the ballot papers and other election documents were left intact and in their original seals.

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CONFUSION ON PAYMENT OF BILLS OF EXCHANGE TO BE ELIMINATED

Amending legislation to bring into accord with current international practice the method of calculating the due date of payment on bills of exchange not payable on demand, will be introduced into the Legislative Council shortly.

The Bills of Exchange (Amendment) Bill 1972 seeks to abolish the three "days of grace" presently allowed to be added to the date of payment of a bill of exchange not payable on demand.

It also provides for all bills of exchange due payable on a date which is a general holiday to be payable on the succeeding business day.

A Government spokesman said the practice of calculating the due date of payment on bills of exchange, drawn other than on demand, varies from bank to bank.

The bill aims at eliminating this confusion as well as clearing up the anomaly whereby a bill falling due on a general holiday is in some cases payable on the preceding business day and in others on the succeeding business day.

The bill is published in today's Government Gazette for general information.

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HIGHER RATES FOR MAIL TO PAKISTAN

Mail sent from Hong Kong to Pakistan will be charged more as from next Monday (October 16) following the abolition of preferential Commonwealth postage rates to Pakistan.

Announcing this today, a spokesman for the Post Office said that surface mail to Pakistan will be charged at the non-Commonwealth rates of 50 cents for the first ounce for letters and 30 cents for postcards.

Under the existing preferential system, surface letters are charged 30 cents for the first ounce and postcards 25 cents.

The change has been made following Pakistan's recent withdrawal from the Commonwealth.

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GOOD START TO SHEK KIP MIE REHOUSING PROGRAMME

Hundreds of residents at the Shek Kip Mei resettlement estate today responded favourably to a scheme for re-housing them at the more comfortable Pak Tin Estate.

They queued up at the Pak Tin Estate administrative office this (Friday) morning, either to submit their applications for new flats or to seek assistance from the staff to fill in their forms.

A spokesman for the Resettlement Department described the launching of the Shek Kip Mei Rehousing Scheme as "an encouraging start."

The number of application forms received by mid-afternoon stood at over 300.

"We seem to be in business in a big way," said Mr. John Walden, Deputy Commissioner for Resettlement, who is overseeing the operation of the Shek Kip Mei Rehousing Scheme.

"We knew that tenants in the old Shek Kip Mei Resettlement Estate, who have been living in an over-crowded condition for years, are anxious to have their living condition improved, but we really didn't expect quite such a favourable reaction.

"Because of this, we are now going to keep the Shek Kip Mei Rehousing Operation Unit open throughout the coming weekend, including Monday, for the convenience of those who may not be able to come up to the office during weekdays."

The opening hours will be from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

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The two sample rooms located on the third floor of Block 7 of Pak Tin Estate will also remain open to tenants on these days.

The Shek Kip Mei Rehousing Scheme is a major task by the Government to bring about significant improvements in the living condition of the 62,000 people of the old and congested estate.

The first phase of the \$80 million rehousing operation involves the evacuation of some 11,000 tenants from Blocks 23 to 28 of the estate.

They are being offered larger and better accommodation at Pak Tin Estate which is only a "stone's throw" from their present living place.

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HISTORICAL ENGRAVINGS AND OIL PAINTINGS ON SHOW

A rare set of 18th century engravings on Emperor Chien Lung's military achievements are being exhibited at the City Museum and Art Gallery.

The 16 engravings were made from original drawings by Josef Castiglione and other Jesuit artist-priests. They describe battles and military scenes of Chien Lung's conquests of Sungaria, and are full of interesting minute detail.

The original drawings commissioned by the Emperor were engraved in Paris at the Academie des Beaux Arts. One hundred sets were sent back to Peking, and only a few remained in Paris.

The set on display is a rare recent addition to the museum collection.

At the same time, more than 60 historical paintings will be displayed in the Art Gallery. These represent a selection from the Ho Tung, Chater and Law, and Sayer collections on Sino-British contacts in the 18th and 19th centuries.

They are particularly interesting for their connections with Hong Kong, Macau and Canton and several other Chinese ports.

The exhibitions close on November 26.

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LABOUR DISPUTE SETTLED

About 400 workers of Artloon Enterprises Limited, a wig factory in Tsuen Wan, will be paid a total of \$300,000 in wages and severance pay.

The payments are being made from today (Friday) until next Thursday (October 19).

This follows the settlement of a labour dispute between the management and workers over the issue of wages and severance pay.

With the help of the Labour Department, an agreement was reached last Wednesday (October 11).

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PRE-WAR BUILDING DECLARED DANGEROUS

A three-storey pre-war building located at 30, Elgin Street in Central District on Hong Kong Island was declared dangerous today by the Building Authority.

The Principal Government Building Surveyor said today that recent demolition of the adjoining building had revealed several fractures in the brickwork of the load bearing party wall. At the same time there is evidence of extensive decay in the timber work of the floors and roof of the kitchen block.

As there is a possibility of collapse, he added, notice of intention to apply for a closure order in Victoria Court at 9.30 a.m. on November 29 was posted today.

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Release Time: 7.30 p.m.