**BILL WATCH 29/2020**

**[17th May 2020]**

**National Lockdown Extended – but with Further Relaxations**

**and Subject to Fortnightly Reviews**

**Indefinite Extension of COVID-19 National Lockdown**

Following the President’s address to the nation on Saturday afternoon, 16th May, a Government Gazette Extraordinary was published on Sunday evening, 17th May.  The only Statutory Instrument [SI] published with the Gazette was SI 110/2020, which is a further amendment – No. 8 – to the COVID-19 National Lockdown Order made by the Minister of Health and Child Care.  SI 110 is available for downloading on the Veritas website here *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/4166)*]*.  A brief outline of its content is given below.

We shall soon be posting another consolidation of the principal National Lockdown Order incorporating all amendments to date, including Amendment No. 8.

**Extension of National Lockdown**

The result of section 4 of SI 110/2020 was that, instead of ending at midnight last night, the National Lockdown will now continue “to an indefinite date” but will be subject to “fortnightly review from the 31st May onwards”.

**Other effects of SI 110 – the relaxations**

Public examinations at educational institutions

Schools, colleges, universities or other tertiary education institutions will be allowed to conduct public examinations, but must comply with circulars issued by the responsible Ministries.  Conducting public examinations becomes an “essential service”.

Outdoor exercise

Outdoor exercise – walking or jogging or cycling along public thoroughfares, in public parks or open spaces, or at sporting or recreational establishments.  One’s dog or dogs are allowed to accompany anyone taking outdoor exercise.

Low-risk sports

Part IIIB of the principal National Lockdown Order is extended to cover allow exemptions for athletes competing in low-risk sports and their associated sport staff – and up to 50 spectators.  There are two pages of strict rules to be observed, including that no liquor shall be served or offered for sale.  Venues must not open earlier than 8 am and shut no later than 4.30 pm.

There is a definition of ”low-risk sport” – it means archery, swimming, athletics, rowing, cycling, equestrian events, fencing, golf, gymnastics, motors sports/BMX, shooting, tennis, chess, darts, draughts and pool.

Business hours in formal commercial and industrial sectors

Businesses will now be able to open from 8 am to 4.30 pm, instead of having to close at 3 pm.

**Parliament?**

Parliament’s Business of the House Committee is due to meet this morning to decide on the way ahead for carrying on the business of Parliament.  Both Houses are due to re-assemble tomorrow, Tuesday 19th May.  What they will do will depend on decisions reached at this morning’s meeting.

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