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COURSE:

EXTRA TIME GENTLEMEN

Pub hours shake-up revealed next week

By James Hardy Political Editor

PUBS and clubs will be allowed to stay open round-the-clock under a planned radical change of Britain's outdated licensing laws.

Prime Minister Tony Blair yesterday revealed a Bill to bring in the long-awaited improvement will be contained in the Queen's Speech next week.

Some public bars and clubs could be open all hours while others could choose to stagger closing times into the early hours.

Police forces around the country have said different closing times will mean the explosion in violence and vandalism after 11pm - when aggressive drunks are sent out at the same time.

The move will be opposed by some MPs who fear it will lead to increased alcoholism, drunken behaviour and crime. But ministers say there will be controls on which pubs and clubs are allowed to open 24 hours a day.

Venues which consistently attract violent drunks and troublemakers will be turned down.

Mr Blair said: "We believe there should be greater flexibility in licensing. In the end, the evidence that we have is that it may help in the fight against anti-social behaviour. At the moment the very fixed nature of the hours sometimes means that you get particular problems outside pubs and city centres at particular hours of the evening."

The shake-up will be accompanied by a crackdown on petty criminals who cause misery to urban and rural communities.

In a bid to head off criticism of the licensing improvement, the Government is to extend on-the-spot fines to a range of offences from graffiti and littering to fly tipping and vandalism.

The PM said yesterday petty crime was the single biggest cause of daily aggressive behaviour for millions.

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions using your own words. (2 points)

a. What is about to change in Great Britain?

b. What do some people complain about this new law?

2. Are the following statements true or false? (1 point)

a. In Great Britain violence begins after 11 pm.

b. Queen Elisabeth will present this law in a near future.

3. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to: (1 point)

a. Formal talk:

b. Old-fashioned:

