

RECENT ACTIVITIES

HKETO supports Cantonese opera in Canada

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (HKETO) supported the Toronto Chinese Opera Contest and Seminar, which were organised and supported by the Canadian Cantonese Culture Association and the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong respectively. These two events aim to showcase Hong Kong's cultural heritage and promote Cantonese opera to Canadian audience, thereby enhancing cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Canada.

Speaking at the finals of the Toronto Chinese Opera Contest on July 26, Director of HKETO Ms Emily Mo said that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is committed to promoting the continued development of Cantonese opera. Commissioned early this year, the Xiqu Centre provides a platform for Xiqu communities to interact and develop the finest examples of Cantonese and other Chinese opera performances, and to nurture new artists and build new audiences for this remarkable art form.

Renowned Cantonese opera actress Ms Tang Mi-ling from Hong Kong was one of the judges of the contest finals and a keynote speaker of the seminar entitled "Continuation of the Pear Garden" held at the Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library of the University of Toronto on July 25.

[Click here to read the details.](#)

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

East Meets West Charity Concert

The Sing Fai Sports Club will host a concert entitled "East Meets West" at the P.C. Ho Theatre of the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto on August 4. HKETO is a sponsor of the concert. 39 youth from the Hong Kong Juvenile & Youth Chinese Classical Orchestra of La Salle College in Hong Kong will perform together with Toronto Chinese Orchestra and Toronto Yip's Chamber Orchestra and Children Choir. The concert emphasizes on harmony in Chinese and Western music, and enhances cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Canada. Please visit the official website for details: <http://singfaisports.ca/home>

Mulan International Film Festival

The 2nd Mulan International Film Festival will be held from August 9 to 17 in Toronto. HKETO is the presenting sponsor of its closing Hong Kong film "First Night Nerves" directed by Stanley Kwan at the Scotiabank Theatre on August 17. Please visit the official website for details: <https://mulanfestival.com/>

HONG KONG NEWS

HKSAR Government strongly condemns protesters' storming of CPG's office in HK

In response to some radical protesters' deviation from the procession route, storming of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government (CPGLO) in the HKSAR and defacing the national emblem after the public procession on July 21, a Government spokesperson said that the CPGLO is one of the offices set up by the Central People's Government (CPG) in Hong Kong and has constitutional functions.

The HKSAR Government strongly condemns the protesters who blatantly challenged the national sovereignty by maliciously besieging and storming the CPGLO building as well as defacing the national emblem. The HKSAR Government will deal with these acts in a serious manner in accordance with the law.

The HKSAR Government has always respected the public's expression of their aspirations peacefully. However, a series of incidents and violent acts occurred recently, including the recurrence of illegal protests after peaceful processions, charging police cordon lines, besieging the Police Headquarters and police stations, and blocking roads with violence. The police also found illegal storage of dangerous goods and a large number of offensive weapons.

The HKSAR Government is concerned that a small number of radicals incited the masses in an organised manner, challenged the rule of law, and even stormed the CPG's office in Hong Kong. Such acts threaten the law and order in the SAR and "one country, two systems". It is totally unacceptable to the society. The HKSAR Government strongly condemns the violent acts and will seriously take enforcement and regards this as absolutely unacceptable to Hong Kong as a society that observes the rule of law.

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CE hosts lunch for chamber representatives to gauge views

The Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mrs Carrie Lam, hosted a lunch for more than 40 leaders or senior representatives of international and local chambers of commerce at Government House on July 30 to exchange views with them on Hong Kong's challenges and opportunities with a view to formulating policy measures that would better meet the needs of the community in the upcoming Policy Address.

Mrs Lam said that due to the China-US trade friction and uncertainties in the external environment, Hong Kong's economic momentum has weakened in recent months. She said that the HKSAR Government has been closely monitoring the global and local economic situations and maintaining close contact with the business sector, including numerous local small and medium enterprises, to understand their needs. She added that the government will introduce measures in a timely manner to help companies cope with the economic downside risks.

Mrs Lam also said that the disputes in society in recent months are not conducive to Hong Kong's continued development and that she would spare no efforts to deal with them. Emphasising that the rule of law is the cornerstone of the city's success and violence is not a solution to any problem, she expressed the hope that various sectors would jointly uphold the rule of law in Hong Kong. She pointed out that everyone should continue to have confidence in the city and she firmly believes that with the concerted efforts of various sectors, Hong Kong would find opportunities amid difficulties.

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SCED visits Beijing

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development of the HKSAR Government, Mr Edward Yau, started his visit programme in Beijing on July 18, meeting with the Vice Minister of Commerce, Mr Wang Bingnan, to exchange views on trade-related matters in both places.

At the meeting, Mr Yau introduced the progress of Hong Kong's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative, and said that Hong Kong will actively participate in the China International Import Expo to be held in Shanghai in November this year. The latest implementation of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) was also discussed.

Mr Yau also attended on July 19 the second Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative convened by the HKSAR Government with the National Development and Reform Commission, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and other relevant Mainland ministries in Beijing.

The Conference discussed work priorities and suggestions related to promoting Hong Kong's participation in and contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative, which include the setting up of a Belt and Road-related dispute avoidance and resolution mechanism and fostering collaboration on policy exchanges and capacity building between the HKSAR Government and relevant Mainland authorities.

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SJ explores legal collaboration with Mainland

The Secretary for Justice of the HKSAR Government, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, visited Beijing on July 18 and met with representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Supreme People's Court to promote Hong Kong's legal as well as dispute avoidance and resolution services. She said she was pleased to learn that the Central Government supports Hong Kong as a centre for arbitration and mediation in the Asia-Pacific region.

In the morning, Ms Cheng met with the Vice Minister of Justice, Mr Xiong Xuanguo, to explore opportunities for further bilateral collaboration in respect of legal services under the Mainland and Hong Kong CEPA and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area). She then met with the Director-General of the Department of Treaty and Law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Jia Guide. They exchanged views on the dispute avoidance and resolution services under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Ms Cheng called on the Vice-president of the Supreme People's Court, Mr Yang Wanming, followed by a visit to the Beijing Internet Court and the Beijing Intellectual

Property Court in the afternoon, to have a better understanding of the use of modern technology to resolve disputes. Both sides exchanged views on the development of dispute avoidance and resolution services in the Greater Bay Area.

Ms Cheng also attended the second Belt and Road Joint Conference with other government officials and representatives on July 19, to discuss matters relating to Hong Kong's participation in and contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative.

Besides, Ms Cheng visited the High People's Court of Guangdong Province and the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province on July 25 to exchange views on matters relating to legal and dispute resolution services in the Greater Bay Area and to look into opportunities for strengthening collaboration in the area.

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Mainland and HKSAR sign Fifth Protocol to Arrangement for Avoidance of Double Taxation

The Financial Secretary of the HKSAR Government, Mr Paul Chan, signed the Fifth Protocol to the Arrangement between the Mainland of China and the HKSAR for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income with the Commissioner of the State Taxation Administration, Mr Wang Jun, in Beijing on July 19.

Mr Chan said that the Fifth Protocol to the Arrangement will provide tax relief to qualified Hong Kong and Mainland teachers and researchers working on the other side. This would promote training, exchanges of talents and co-operation between the two places, and further drive the development of the Greater Bay Area.

In addition, the Fifth Protocol incorporates into the Arrangement measures to prevent tax treaty abuse, which form part of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting package promulgated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in October 2015, to ensure that the Arrangement follows the latest international standard.

The Fifth Protocol will come into force after the completion of ratification procedures and notification by both sides.

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Hong Kong signs MOU with Singapore on expertise and experience exchange in infrastructure project management and delivery

The Development Bureau of the HKSAR Government and the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Singapore signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Singapore on July 30 to enhance collaboration in exchanging expertise and experience in infrastructure project management and delivery.

Under the MOU, both places agree to strengthen the co-operation in uplifting the productivity and performance of the construction industry in respective markets and transform project delivery through the adoption of digitisation and innovative construction methods, as well as enhancing the leadership competency and project delivery capability of project leaders.

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Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cannabis buds

Hong Kong Customs on July 19 seized about 10 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about HK\$1.7 million at Hong Kong International Airport. Customs officers inspected an air consignment from Canada and found the batch of suspected cannabis buds mixed inside boxes of cherries. Customs officers arrested a 38-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of HK\$5 million and life imprisonment.

Customs also reminds that cannabis and tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC) are classified as dangerous drugs under the Ordinance. Importation of products (including food and drinks) containing cannabis or THC into Hong Kong is prohibited unless the relevant provisions in the Ordinance are complied with. In order to avoid breaching the law inadvertently, special attention should be paid to the packaging labels of food and drinks.

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Candidates interested in applying for AO, EOII, ALOII, ATOII and TOII posts reminded to apply for Common Recruitment Examination and Basic Law Test

The HKSAR Government announced on July 31 that the next round of recruitment exercises for the posts of Administrative Officer (AO), Executive Officer II (EOII), Assistant Labour Officer II (ALOII), Assistant Trade Officer II (ATOII) and Transport Officer II (TOII) will begin in September 2019.

As part of the entry requirements, applicants for these posts will need to have obtained:

- (a) Level 2 in the two language papers (Use of Chinese and Use of English) in the Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) or equivalent results; and
- (b) a Pass in the Aptitude Test (AT) paper in the CRE.

In addition, candidates' performance in the Basic Law Test (Degree / Professional Grades) (BLT) will be one of the considerations to assess their suitability.

For the convenience of those studying or residing outside Hong Kong, the CRE and BLT are also scheduled to be held on December 7, 2019, in seven other cities, including Toronto and Vancouver. Applications for taking the examination outside Hong Kong will be open from September 21 to October 4, 2019. Persons applying to sit the examination in Hong Kong will not be allowed to apply again for sitting the examination outside Hong Kong.

Details relating to the CRE and BLT and an on-line application system will be made available on the website of Civil Service Bureau (www.csb.gov.hk/eng/cre.html) during the said application periods, while details of the 2019-20 AO, EOII, ALOII, ATOII and TOII recruitment exercises will be separately announced in September.

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