

“Genesis and Spirit – Enchanting Shandong • An Exhibition on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Shandong” to showcase Qilu culture (with photos)

The large-scale cultural programme "Genesis and Spirit – Enchanting Shandong • An Exhibition on the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Shandong" is currently being held at the Hong Kong Central Library to promote 37 representative ICH items from Shandong. Using photographs, video screenings and traditional handicrafts, together with demonstrations and performances by ICH bearers, the programme allows visitors to understand more about the unique charm of Qilu culture.

An opening ceremony was held today (June 12). Speaking at the ceremony, the Under Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, said that as an important cradle of Chinese civilisation, Shandong is a place of rich and vivacious culture, and that the exhibition not only allows visitors to appreciate Qilu culture, but also encourages attendees to understand in depth the long history and cultural traditions of China.

He added that the Government strives to preserve and promote local ICH, and said there are 10 Hong Kong ICH items inscribed onto the national list of ICH. The \$300 million ICH Funding Scheme has been launched and ICH bearers and organisations have been invited to submit applications.

Highlight exhibits include the Weifang kite "Phoenix"; "Harvesting Fruit", which displays the techniques of Dongming foodstuff art; "Jade Seals Featuring the Twelve Beauties of Jinling", with miniature carvings from Jinan; "Exquisite Brush Set with Cloisonné Tube and Wolf's Hairs", showcasing the techniques of the making the Qi writing brush of Guangrao; "Babies' Bibs with Tiger Design", showing Feixian hand embroidery; "Jimo Lace Tablecloth – Gorgeous Blooms", displaying the traditional handicraft style of Jimo lace; and "Boy with Fish", a Nie clay figurine.

To tie in with the theme of the programme, ICH bearers from Shandong will specially perform and demonstrate various items, including Lü opera, Shandong Qinshu, Wuyin opera, Laixi puppetry, mantis boxing, Liuzi opera, Shandong Kuaishu and Shandong folk songs tomorrow (June 13), as well as on June 14, 22 and 23.

Other officiating guests included the Advisor (Director-General Level) of the Department of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Affairs of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Mr Man Hongwei; the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Ms Michelle Li; the First-Grade Advisor of the Shandong Provincial

Department of Culture and Tourism, Ms Li Guolin; the Deputy Curator of the Shandong Provincial Cultural Center, Ms Zhao Xintian; and the Head of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Intangible Cultural Heritage Office, Ms Esa Leung.

The programme runs until June 23. It is jointly presented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Home Affairs Bureau, jointly organised by the Shandong Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and curated by the Shandong Provincial Cultural Center and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Office.

The Hong Kong Central Library is located at 66 Causeway Road, Causeway Bay. For details of the programme, please visit the website www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/ICH0/en_US/web/icho/exhibitions_activities_53.html, or call 2784 5200 for enquiries.

Manager of unlicensed guesthouse fined

A woman was fined \$10,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (June 12) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in November last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Argyle Street in Mong Kok. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on an hourly basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Record of discussion of meeting of Exchange Fund Advisory Committee Currency Board Sub-Committee held on April 29

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

(Approved for Issue by the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee by Circulation)

Report on Currency Board Operations (January 1 – April 16, 2019)

The Sub-Committee noted that the Hong Kong dollar (HKD) exchange rate traded within a range of 7.8331 – 7.8500 against the US dollar (USD) during the review period. The interest rate gaps between the HKD and USD widened after the year-end mainly because of a drop in banks' funding demand. The widening of interest rate gaps attracted carry trade activities to sell HKD for USD, pushing the HKD towards the weak-side Convertibility Undertaking (CU). The weak-side CU was eventually triggered eight times in March. Reflecting the decrease in liquidity demand after the year-end, the HKD interbank interest rates generally declined, with short-dated interbank rates picking up after the triggering of the weak-side CU. The HKD strengthened in April due to the unwinding of carry trades as short-dated rates tightened. Overall, the HKD exchange and interbank markets continued to trade in a smooth and orderly manner.

The Sub-Committee noted that as a result of the triggering of the weak-side CU, the Aggregate Balance and the Monetary Base declined to HK\$54.3 billion and HK\$1,623.6 billion at the end of the review period respectively.

The Sub-Committee further noted that, in accordance with the Currency Board principles, all changes in the Monetary Base had been fully matched by changes in foreign reserves.

The Report on Currency Board Operations for the period under review is at Annex.

Monitoring of Risks and Vulnerabilities

The Sub-Committee noted that in the US, equity markets responded favourably to the Federal Reserve's shift to a more dovish tone. However, the US Treasury yield curve remained very flat and briefly inverted in late March, highlighting heightened uncertainty over the economic outlook.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Europe, political uncertainties (e.g. Brexit) and various external headwinds could prompt a more protracted deterioration in growth outlook.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Mainland China, while growth momentum remained lacklustre, signs of improvement had emerged.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Hong Kong, incoming data pointed to a slowdown in economic growth in early 2019, while the housing market saw increased transaction volume and accelerated price growth.

Understanding the Relationship between the Aggregate Balance and Interest Rates in Hong Kong

The Sub-Committee noted a study which provided qualitative and quantitative assessments on how the relationship between the Aggregate Balance and interest rates had evolved.

Cluster of Adenovirus cases in Caritas Medical Centre

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson of Caritas Medical Centre made the following announcement today (June 12):

Four patients (aged 6 to 9) with history of chronic illnesses residing in the Developmental Disabilities Unit of Caritas Medical Centre have presented with respiratory symptoms since June 3. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients and the test results of the four patients were positive for Adenovirus. The patients concerned are being treated under isolation, with stable condition.

The hospital has informed the relatives of the patients about the situation. Infection control measures of the ward have been enhanced. All other patients and staff in the ward are under close surveillance.

The hospital has reported the cases to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Quality Assurance Council releases Audit Report on sub-degree operations of Hong Kong Polytechnic University

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) today (June 12) released the Audit Report on the sub-degree operations of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU).

The Audit Report presents the findings on the quality of learning at the sub-degree providing units (SDPUs) of PolyU. The Chairman of the QAC, Mr Lincoln Leong, said, "The QAC is pleased that the Audit Panel concludes that the University's sub-degree provision reflects its strategic priorities and mission. Whether within the University proper or its College of Professional and Continuing Education, there is sound governance, management and quality assurance of sub-degree programmes. There is also consistency in the application of quality assurance policies and procedures."

The QAC is pleased with the quality of educational provision at the SDPUs of PolyU. The University's efforts in various areas are commended as positive features in the Audit Report. These include PolyU's provision of high-quality physical learning and e-learning environments, as well as the wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and services oriented to personal and career development.

The full report (with PolyU's Institutional Response attached) has been uploaded to the website of the University Grants Committee (UGC) (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/qac/about/term/publications/report.html).

PolyU has agreed to submit a progress report within 18 months on its follow-up actions.

Background of the quality audit on sub-degree operations of PolyU

The quality audit on the sub-degree operations of PolyU was undertaken by an Audit Panel appointed by the QAC. The Audit Panel was chaired by Professor Denis Wright, and members included Dr Ella Chan, Professor Mark Davies, Mr Ian Marshman and Professor Ricky Wong. The Panel reviewed the Institutional Submission, which was prepared by PolyU following a period of self-study, and visited PolyU from October 23 to 25, 2018, to meet with its staff and students. It also met with a number of external stakeholders, such as local employers and graduates of PolyU sub-degree programmes.

Background of the QAC and its auditing activities

The QAC was established in April 2007 as a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the UGC. The UGC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the quality of the UGC-funded universities and their activities. In view of the institutional expansion of university activities and a growing public interest in quality issues, the QAC was established to assist the UGC in providing third-party oversight of the quality of the universities' educational provision. The QAC assists the UGC in assuring the quality of all programmes at the levels of sub-degree, first degree and above (however funded) offered in UGC-funded universities. The QAC fulfils this task primarily by undertaking periodic quality audits of the universities.

Auditing is an external quality assurance process that involves independent peer review by senior academics in the higher education sector. Its principal aims are to confirm that existing arrangements for quality assurance are fit for purpose, that the quality of provision is comparable to international best practices, that universities are committed to continuously improving the quality of their academic programmes, and that students are well taught and well supported so that they are able to achieve the expected academic standards.

Prior to 2016, the QAC's audit activities covered only first degree programmes and above. The first and second QAC audit cycles were completed in 2011 and 2016 respectively. In 2016, the UGC assumed the role of the overseeing body of the quality audits on the sub-degree operations of UGC-funded universities, with the involvement of the QAC as the audit operator. The audit visits to universities in this cycle were conducted from late 2017 to early 2019.