

Speech by CE at 3rd Asian Youth Athletics Championships opening ceremony (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the opening ceremony for the 3rd Asian Youth Athletics Championships today (March 15):

Mr Kondrat (Vice President of Asian Athletics Association, Mr Alexey Kondrat), Mr Moh (President of Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association (HKAAA), Mr Alex Moh), Mr Kwan (Chairman of HKAAA, Mr Kwan Kee), athletes, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to join you today for the opening ceremony of the third Asian Youth Athletics Championships. This year's event features over 400 young athletes – 16 and 17 years of age – from 29 Asian countries and regions competing in 40 events. I'm delighted to welcome you all to Hong Kong for this prestigious, three-day international Championships.

In terms of the number of athletes participating, this year's event is the biggest ever; but what excites me the most is the growing size of the Hong Kong team. At the first and the second Championships in 2015 and 2017, Hong Kong sent 13 and 26 young athletes to compete. This year, I am glad to note, we have a team of 62. It shows that we have many good young athletes in the city and our younger generations are passionate about sports, which can only be very good news.

The benefits of sports are well documented. Being involved in sports helps develop our physical and mental strengths as well as our character. It teaches us the importance of teamwork, leadership and discipline. It increases our confidence and reduces our stress. And, above all, it brings us a lot of joy. That's why my Government has worked hard to develop sports in Hong Kong. We have injected resources to boost support for our athletes and our national sports associations. We are also investing substantially in sports venues and sports grounds. That includes the 28-hectare Kai Tak Sports Park, the construction of which has just begun. It will include a 50 000-seat main stadium and an athletics stadium with a seating capacity of 5 000, allowing Hong Kong to host more regional and international athletics events in the future.

But for now, Hong Kong is proud to host this year's Asian Youth Athletics Championships. I'm grateful to the Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association for its vision in making this international tournament possible and successful. My thanks, as well, to the enormous support the Championships has received from its many supporting organisations and sponsors.

For the young athletes here, I wish each and every one of you good luck

and record results at the Championships. More importantly, as you are about to hit your physical peak in the coming years, I wish you all the best in your continued pursuit of athletic excellence and a very happy stay in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, March 15, 2019 is 103.4 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Appointments to Independent Commission on Remuneration for Members of the ExCo and the Legislature, and Officials under the Political Appointment System of the HKSAR

The Government announced today (March 15) that the Chief Executive appointed Mr Carlson Tong as Chairman, and Mr Philip Tsai Wing-chung and Ms Winnie Wong Tsz-shun as members, of the Independent Commission on Remuneration for Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature, and Officials under the Political Appointment System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for a period of three years with effect from April 1, 2019.

"We would like to thank the outgoing Chairman, Mr Nicky Lo Kar-chun, and

outgoing member Mr Andrew Fung Hau-chung for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Independent Commission over the years," a Government spokesman said.

The Independent Commission advises the Government on matters relating to the systems of remuneration for Members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, as well as those for officials under the Political Appointment System. Other members of the Independent Commission are Professor Leonard Cheng Kwok-hon, Ms Lau Ka-shi and Ms Elaine Lo Yuen-man.

[Hong Kong Flower Show opens \(with photos\)](#)

The annual spectacular Hong Kong Flower Show opened at Victoria Park today (March 15) with some 420 000 flowers on display, including about 40 000 Chinese hibiscus as the theme flower.

Officiating at the opening ceremony were the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam; the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan; the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Ms Michelle Li; the Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Dr Anthony Chow; and Miss Hong Kong 2018 Hera Chan.

A colourful tapestry of flowers flows from the Hing Fat Street entrance, from which visitors can pass a rainbow tunnel, a teddy bear and hot air balloons to enter a fairy-tale world. Thereafter, there are antelopes and zebras galloping across a splendid carpet of flowers in a jungle adventure, and a brilliant sea of bright Chinese hibiscus visited by bees and butterflies, showcasing a world of colours and joy.

The entrance at Sugar Street is equally attractive with the design of the parterre combining elements of rail tracks and station platforms. An old-style train from the showground's centre stage goes through a mountain and a tunnel amid undulating rainbow bands made of blossoms, presenting a journey back to the past while also embracing the future.

The student drawing competition held today attracted about 2,100 participants, who enjoyed drawing pictures of the scenes and displays. Members of the public were also delighted in taking photos of spectacular exhibits, including a colourful Hong Kong Flower Show floral wall, seas of tulips and Chinese hibiscus displays.

The Hong Kong Flower Show has launched public voting for "The most popular garden plot in 18-district competition" and "The garden plot with best local characteristics in 18-district competition", and members of the public can vote via QR codes on-site or vote online.

This year's flower show has enhanced environmental protection measures and encourages participating organisations, contractors, volunteers and members of the public to make concerted efforts under the slogan "Green Flower Show for All". At the showground, there are waste separation bins and recyclables collection points to collect cartoon boxes, plastic flower pots, glass bottles, wilted flowers, soil and more, with the event's green ambassadors on-site to guide the public. To help protect the environment, visitors are encouraged to bring their own bottles, cutlery and environmentally friendly bags. Free lending of reusable tableware has also been arranged to reduce the use of disposable tableware.

The flower show has also invited local artists, designers and horticulturists to utilise and recycle trees felled by Typhoon Mangkhut to create sculptures, furniture, art installations and landscape displays. These are showcased in the showground of the flower show to promote the spirit of "Junk! Woodworking" while enhancing environmental protection and upcycling wooden waste.

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The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will hold a Green Recycling Day after the completion of the flower show. Tertiary students, green volunteers and ambassadors, young ambassadors, and volunteers from the LCSD, the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the commercial sector will assist in sorting at the showground for the recovery and recycling of flower display materials. In addition, flowers and plants suitable for replanting will be distributed to schools, environmental groups, non-governmental organisations and the public.

The flower show will be held until March 24 from 9am to 9pm daily. Admission tickets are available for sale through the mobile application "Tap & Go" and at the entrances to the Victoria Park showground throughout the show period. Octopus can also be used to pay for admission. Tickets are also available for sale at the LCSD's District Leisure Services Offices until March 22.

For enquiries, please call 2601 8260 or visit the flower show webpage www.hkflowershow.hk/en/hkfs/2019/index.html.

The flower show is organised by the LCSD. The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust is supporting the flower show for the seventh consecutive year and has been the Major Sponsor of the flower show since 2014.



Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (March 15) released the latest grading of water quality for nine gazetted beaches that are open for swimming.

Seven beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1) and two as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Stanley Main Beach

Golden Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Silver Mine Bay Beach	Silverstrand Beach
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Compared with the grading released last week, Golden Beach has been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1, and Silver Mine Bay Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.