

Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival dazzles New York (with photos)

This morning (August 3, New York time), the rhythmic drumbeats and splashing paddles signified the start of the annual Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York at Meadow Lake, in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, promising a weekend filled with excitement and festivities.

Founded and sponsored by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in New York (HKETONY) since 1990, the festival is the largest multicultural event in New York and among the largest dragon boat festivals in the United States.

The festival has been well acclaimed in New York for promoting not only athletic spirit but also cultural exchanges. On August 2, one day prior to the festival, the festival's organising committee was invited to ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange. Earlier, a dragon boat "awakening ceremony" was held at the world-famous Times Square on July 11, drawing major media and public attention.

At today's opening ceremony, the Director of HKETONY, Ms Maisie Ho, introduced the origins of modern dragon boat racing in Hong Kong, and expressed pride in being part of the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York.

"The festival has truly become recognised and cherished by New Yorkers. It embodies strength, speed, endurance, and teamwork while promoting inclusivity and cultural exchanges," she said.

Ms Ho also highlighted this year's special addition, "Hong Kong Food Street," offering New Yorkers a taste of Hong Kong's culinary delights, including curry fishballs, steamed rice rolls, egg tarts, bubble waffles and Hong Kong-style milk tea.

The opening ceremony was attended by, among others, the Consul General of the People's Republic of China in New York, Mr Huang Ping; the Commissioner of New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, Ms Sue Donoghue and the Borough President of Queens, Mr Donovan Richards and other dignitaries.

With close to 200 teams from corporations, non-profit organisations and New York City government departments, and over 1 500 paddlers competing for top honours, the festival is set to draw over 30 000 spectators over the two days. In addition to the thrilling races, the festival features a diverse land programme, including dragon dance performances, martial arts demonstrations, music acts, and arts and crafts workshops.

