

# Research Grants Council to present public lecture on Theme-based Research Scheme on December 14

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

The Research Grants Council (RGC) will present its fourth public lecture this year on December 14 (Saturday) at the Hong Kong Science Museum. The theme of the public lecture is "Theme-based Research Scheme".

The RGC has invited Professor Ronald Ma of the Department of Medicine and Therapeutics of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Professor Leo Poon of the School of Public Health of the University of Hong Kong to share the research findings of their Theme-based Research Scheme projects with the public. Details are as follows:

Time: 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Science Museum

Language: Cantonese

Admission is free and on a first-come, first-served basis.

Modern lifestyles and obesity have made diabetes one of the most serious public health problems in the 21st century. Diabetes now affects more than 10 per cent of the population in China. This disease increases the risk of damage to different organs in the body, including the heart, kidneys, eyes and blood vessels. The scale of the diabetes epidemic and the severity of complications pose a huge challenge to the healthcare system. Professor Ma, in his talk "Theme-based Research Scheme – Diabetes: a global epidemic in need of novel solutions", will share with participants the latest research findings to combat this healthcare crisis and the novel ways to enhance the effectiveness of treatment.

Seasonal influenza viruses and animal influenza viruses (e.g. H7N9) affect Hong Kong people's daily lives. Other than being at risk of catching seasonal influenza every year, people also have to be on constant alert for avian influenza and even pandemics. The secondary attack rates of seasonal and pandemic influenza viruses can reach 15 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. Professor Poon, in his talk "Theme-based Research Scheme – The most unwanted influence: influenza", will share with the audience the origins and ways of transmission of these viruses, as well as effective control measures and new possibilities for preventing infection.

The public lectures of the RGC aim at arousing public interest in local research developments. Since 2009, the RGC has invited numerous leading scholars to speak at these lectures. For enquiries, please call 2524 3987 or visit the University Grants Committee webpage ([www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/lectures/lectures.html](http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/lectures/lectures.html)).

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## Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after attending the meeting of the Legislative Council Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways today (December 6):

Reporter: Can you tell us the latest surrounding the situation regarding the airline and looking forward, is it necessary for the Government to possibly step up to help the airline or help passengers that may be affected?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: As I have mentioned earlier that the Hong Kong Airlines has responsibility to take care of its passengers in its best endeavour. Therefore, should any passenger feel aggrieved or feel it necessary, they should contact the Hong Kong Airlines for follow up.

Reporter: And the latest situation regarding the licence?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: The Air Transport Licensing Authority (ATLA) has received the response from the Hong Kong Airlines and is now reviewing the submitted information. The ATLA will look into it or is in the process of looking into it and will announce its decision on December 7 or earlier.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## Tung Chung Swimming Pool to reopen

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 6) that Tung Chung Swimming Pool in Islands District, closed earlier due to urgent maintenance works for the filtration plant, will be reopened at 1pm today.

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## SDEV attends seminar on cultural heritage co-operation in Shenzhen (with photos)

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, attended a seminar on cultural heritage co-operation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) in Shenzhen today (December 6).

Jointly organised by the National Cultural Heritage Administration and the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the seminar aimed to provide a platform for experts, academics and enterprises within the Greater Bay Area to exchange views and share experiences in resources integration and revitalisation of cultural heritage.

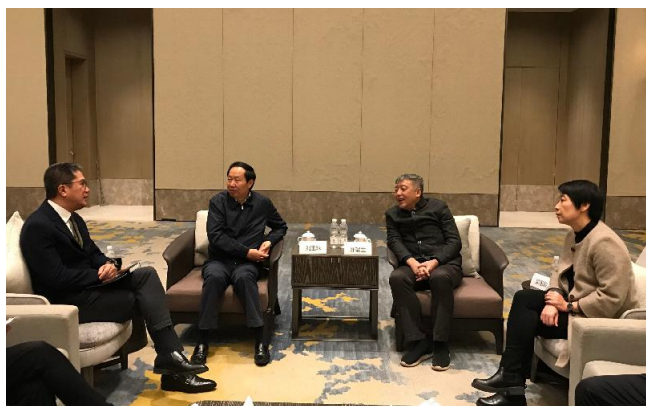
Speaking at the seminar, Mr Wong outlined how the Government promotes heritage conservation through collaboration with different sectors. Amongst others, the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme rolled out in 2008 promotes collaboration with non-profit-making organisations to revitalise government-owned historic buildings. The "Conserving Central" initiatives announced in 2009 seek to preserve eight important cultural, historical and architectural features in Central, while adding new life and vibrancy to the area.

Mr Wong said that the Government would actively explore different cross-sectoral collaborative models, hoping to tap community insights to help find new ways to conserve and revitalise historic buildings.

The Vice Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Xu Ruisheng, and the Director General of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, Mr Liu Yuzhu, gave keynote addresses at the seminar. A representative of Hong Kong's PMQ also shared with participants at the panel discussion session the successful experience of revitalising the Former Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road into a creative industries landmark.

The seminar was attended by representatives of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Development Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the nine major cities in Pearl River Delta, as well as relevant experts, academics and enterprises.

Mr Wong will return to Hong Kong this afternoon.



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## Judicial Officers (Extension of Retirement Age) (Amendment) Ordinance 2019 comes into effect

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judicial Officers (Extension of Retirement Age) (Amendment) Ordinance 2019 (the Amendment Ordinance) has come into effect today (December 6) upon gazettal.

The Amendment Ordinance, which was passed by the Legislative Council on November 27, generally extends the retirement ages of Judges at the High Court and above as well as Magistrates by five years. This is to enable the Judiciary to sustain its judicial manpower across different levels of court, which is crucial to the efficient and effective operation of the Judiciary.

"It is believed that an extension of statutory retirement ages for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) will encourage recruitment of the best legal talents to the Judiciary, as well as help retain for as long as practicable the benefit of the experience and skills of serving JJOs, particularly at the level of the Court of First Instance (CFI) of the High Court given the persistent recruitment difficulties," a Judiciary spokesman said.

More specifically, the following changes have been introduced after the Amendment Ordinance came into effect:

(a) the normal retirement ages for Judges of the Court of Final Appeal as well as the Court of Appeal and the CFI of the High Court have been extended from 65 to 70;

(b) the normal retirement ages for Members of the Lands Tribunal, Magistrates and other Judicial Officers at the magistrate level have been extended from 60 to 65; and

(c) other consequential changes have been introduced, e.g. the early retirement age for the relevant categories of JJOs has also been extended by five years as well.

For District Judges, their normal retirement age is maintained at 65.

The extension of the normal retirement ages for Judges at the CFI level and above from 65 to 70 is expected to enable the retention of experienced senior Judges and attract experienced and quality private practitioners to join the Bench.

Setting the retirement age for JJOs below the CFI level at 65 can facilitate the injection of new blood and avoid creating career blockages.

Generally, serving JJOs may exercise the option of joining the new retirement arrangements during an option period of two years, or until their existing normal retirement age/expiry of extension of service, whichever is the earliest.

The legal profession was consulted and supported the legislative amendments.