

HONG KONG REVIEW



Hong Kong Chief Executive visits Britain



Above top: Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang (left), meets British Prime Minister, Mr David Cameron (middle), and Foreign Secretary, Mr William Hague (right) at 10 Downing Street.

Above bottom: Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang meets HRH Prince Andrew, the Duke of York.

Hong Kong Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, met British Prime Minister, Mr David Cameron, Scotland's First Minister, Mr Alex Salmond, and other political and business leaders during a four-day visit to London and Edinburgh in September.

Mr Tsang held talks with senior British Government figures including the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr William Hague, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr George Osborne.

He also attended a working breakfast hosted by the All Party Parliamentary China Group and a luncheon hosted by His Royal Highness Prince Andrew, The Duke of York.

While in London, Mr Tsang also addressed the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) Annual Dinner, first held in 1983 and now the longest running event of its kind for Hong Kong anywhere in the world.

"We cannot deny the British influence in Hong Kong – just as we cannot deny our

Chinese heritage," said Mr Tsang. "We are the embodiment of East and West. This is what makes Hong Kong such a beguiling and unique city."

'Think Asia, Think Hong Kong'

Hong Kong is the perfect entry point to the huge Asian market, said Mr Tsang during an address to the 'Think Asia, Think Hong Kong' Symposium in London, organised by the HKTDC.

"Our city has long been the premier international gateway for trade with the Mainland," he said, urging delegates to think of Hong Kong as a "corridor of opportunity for goods and services as well as ideas and new innovations to reach Mainland markets."

Mr Tsang pointed, in particular, to the internationalisation of the Renminbi (RMB), China's official currency, and the launch of RMB banking in Hong Kong in 2004. "Today, almost 130 authorised institutions [in Hong Kong] are engaged in RMB business," said Mr Tsang, noting that total RMB deposits in Hong Kong at the end of July 2011 amounted to 570 billion.



Above: Hong Kong Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, gives an opening speech at the "Think Asia, Think Hong Kong" Symposium.

'Hong Kong – Live in London!'

While in London, Mr Tsang opened 'Hong Kong – Live in London!', a festival to celebrate the best of Hong Kong, which included the Hong Kong Tourism Board Street Carnival.

Attractions on offer included sample menus created by Hong Kong's Michelin-starred chef, Tsang Chiu King, and a programme of cultural performances.

"Through this promotion we will share the unique cultural flavour and excitement of Hong Kong with the people of London, with whom we have so many links," said Mr Tsang.

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Financial

Policy Address outlines way forward for Hong Kong

Strategies for tackling some of Hong Kong's most pressing challenges have been outlined by the Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, in the 2011-12 Policy Address.

In his final annual Policy Address before the end of his term of office in June 2012, Mr Tsang set out Hong Kong's plans for enhancing competitiveness, improving living standards, supporting an ageing population and providing affordable housing.

Mr Tsang said Hong Kong needed to seize opportunities both in Mainland China and globally to maintain its competitiveness.

China's National 12th Five-Year Plan, published this year, included a chapter devoted to Hong Kong and would further enhance Hong Kong's status as an international centre for financial services, trading and shipping, he said.

He added that Hong Kong would strengthen investment co-operation with emerging markets overseas, especially Russia, with which Hong Kong hopes soon to negotiate an agreement on investment promotion and protection.

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Above: Mr Tsang, together with the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Ms Susie Burbridge, and Board Member of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Mr Peter Lam, officiate at the opening ceremony of 'Hong Kong – Live in London!'

A flying dragon – symbol both of Hong Kong's dynamism and its deep-rooted Chinese heritage – could be seen over London's South Molton Street during the week-long carnival. In Edinburgh, Mr Tsang met Mr Salmond for a bi-lateral meeting and addressed a

Hong Kong Chief Executive visits Britain (continued from page 1)

reception held in his honour at Edinburgh Castle. "Scotland, with its rich heritage and proven track record for bright ideas, is an ideal partner for Hong Kong," said Mr Tsang.

Speaking to key members of the Scottish business community at a luncheon co-hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO), London, and Scottish Development International (SDI), Mr Tsang said Hong Kong could provide overseas firms with their best chance of success in China and the wider Asian region.

"Given the enormous opportunities brought about by the global financial shift from West to East, the rapid opening up and growth of China, and the ongoing economic rise of Asia, I am confident that

relations between Hong Kong and Scotland will scale new heights," he said.

Mr Tsang also spoke at a seminar organised by Invest Hong Kong, SDI and Scottish Financial Enterprise. In the seminar, titled 'Hong Kong: China's Global Financial Centre,' Mr Tsang highlighted Hong Kong's strengths as both a global financial centre and as China's most important city for international finance. He said that the city will be the main testing ground for the wider international use of the RMB and would use its special status as China's offshore RMB centre to play a greater role in the international financial community.

During his visit Mr Tsang also attended events hosted by the City of London Corporation,

the Hong Kong Association, FIRST Magazine and HSBC. He also attended a breakfast meeting with the Scottish education sector hosted by Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning of Scotland, and visited the Biofuel Research Centre of Edinburgh Napier University and the Roslin Institute of the University of Edinburgh.



Above: Mr Tsang is presented with a rugby jersey by the former Scotland Rugby Team Coach, Mr Frank Hadden, in the presence of Mr Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland.

●●● Environment

GREEN LINKS TO SCANDINAVIA

A tour of Scandinavia by Secretary for the Environment, Mr Edward Yau, has enhanced co-operation on environmental issues between Hong Kong and Sweden and Denmark.

In Malmö, Mr Yau visited a renovated housing estate to learn more about the application of green technology before signing a Sustainability Charter on closer co-operation with the city's Mayor, Mr Ilmar Reepalu. "The Sustainability Charter will form a strong basis for closer partnership between the two cities that would strengthen our efforts and collaboration for the cause of the environment," said Mr Yau.

Mr Yau then met senior members of the Danish Government in Copenhagen, exchanging views on environmental issues and introducing Danish green industries to business opportunities in Hong Kong.

Finally, Mr Yau attended the 10th European Geoparks Conference in Langesund, Norway – an annual conference to discuss geoconservation, geotourism and local development. In an address to delegates he spoke about the geological heritage of Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong Geopark, which at the conference was awarded global status by the Global Geoparks Network.



Above: Secretary for the Environment, Mr Edward Yau (right), and Mayor of Malmö, Mr Ilmar Reepalu, sign a Sustainability Charter for further co-operation in promoting sustainable development and environmental protection.

●●● Legal

Rule of Law

The rule of law in Hong Kong was the topic of two speeches by Hong Kong's Chief Justice, the Hon. Geoffrey Ma, during his recent visit to London. The engagements were organised by Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London, in association with the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), and the Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society of the London School of Economics respectively.



Above: Hong Kong's Chief Justice, the Hon. Geoffrey Ma, speaking at Chatham House in November.

ICT collaboration with Finland
Hong Kong and Finland have renewed a memorandum of understanding on co-operation in information and communications technology (ICT) in October, following a similar memorandum signed in 2000 and renewed in 2005. "This signifies continuation of close collaboration between the two governments, particularly in areas such as e-government, cloud computing, wireless technologies and creative industries," said Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology), Miss Elizabeth Tse.

●●● Financial

London and Hong Kong work together as international financial centres

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, spoke about the "very close friendship" between the UK and Hong Kong during his visit to London in June.

Professor Chan met senior Government financial officials and representatives of financial regulators and the banking sector.

Addressing over 500 guests at the Hong Kong Society Gala Dinner, he said: "We have for many decades acted as a gateway to businesses, including British businesses, into and out of Mainland China."

He highlighted the opportunities brought about by the gradual internationalisation of the Renminbi, China's official currency.

"For the past two decades, Hong Kong has brokered many marriages between Mainland companies and international investors," he said. "More recently, we have had the pleasure of adding international companies from outside China to our stock exchange listings."

Professor Chan also visited St Petersburg to take part in the International Economic Forum in June.

●●● Financial (continued from page 1)

Policy Address outlines way forward for Hong Kong

In financial services, Mr Tsang outlined strategies to reinforce Hong Kong's role as an offshore Renminbi (RMB) centre, establishing strong and extensive links with the Mainland's onshore RMB market.



Above: Hong Kong Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, holds a press conference at Central Government Offices, Tamar, after delivering the 2011-12 Policy Address at the Legislative Council.

To increase Hong Kong's attractiveness to international businesses he also outlined policies to build further high quality offices and create new international schools and higher education campuses.

In response to the increasing global demand for data services, Mr Tsang announced several measures to encourage the development of data centres in Hong Kong. The Government is reserving about two hectares of land in Tseung Kwan O for data centre use, with the first such site expected to be put up for open auction in

2013; the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park will look into the revitalisation of industrial estates to support data centre development; and the Government will consider the feasibility of developing data centres in revitalised industrial buildings.

Mr Tsang also announced plans to establish an International Cuisine College to train people aspiring to become professional chefs proficient in international cuisines. Next year would be designated 'Hong Kong Design Year', he said, to consolidate Hong Kong's position as Asia's creative hub.

Mr Tsang also announced plans to establish a Bruce Lee Gallery in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, to celebrate the life and work of the Hong Kong raised Chinese American martial arts actor who turned Kung Fu into mainstream entertainment.

The complete text of the 2011-12 Policy Address can be found at www.policyaddress.gov.hk.

●●● Spotlight on arts and culture

The Orangery at Kensington Palace, London, was transformed into a Hong Kong art gallery for an evening in September, to host the Artistic Hong Kong Reception and Exhibition.

Enjoyed by over 200 guests in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses Prince and Princess Michael of Kent and Hong Kong Chief Executive Mr Donald Tsang, the event showcased Hong Kong's considerable achievements in the visual and performing arts.

Artworks by outstanding Hong Kong artists Mr Stanley Wong, Mr Kwok Mang-ho and Mr Tozer Pak, were on display alongside ink paintings by artist Ms KuKu Chai.

Performances by leading modern dance troupe City Contemporary Dance Company represented Hong Kong's thriving performing arts scene, while displays showcased popular films by Hong Kong's dynamic film industry.

Opening the event, Mr Donald Tsang, Chief Executive, said: "Hong Kong owes much of its creative flair to its unique blend of Eastern and Western influences, not least from the UK."

The Artistic Hong Kong Reception and Exhibition was organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London, with the support of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.



Left: The Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, speaking at the Artistic Hong Kong Reception and Exhibition.

●●● Culture

2011 LORD MAYOR'S SHOW: Hong Kong traditions come to life in London

The famous Hong Kong tradition of the Wishing Tree featured prominently in the 2011 Lord Mayor's Show in November, watched by a crowd of over half a million people on the streets of London and broadcast live on BBC television in the UK and around the world.

The tree was the centrepiece of the Hong Kong float, inspired by the theme 'Hong Kong: Ancient and Modern', which enchanted the crowds as it travelled along the two mile parade route accompanied by colourful dancing lions.

Traditionally, wishes are tied to oranges and thrown at the Wishing Tree in the hope they will be caught in the branches and make wishes come true. The crowds along the route threw lucky bean bags at the replica Wishing Tree in honour of this ancient tradition.

"I hope that people's wishes will come true and especially that they will visit Hong Kong to enjoy the sights and sounds of this great city," said Agnes Allcock, Director-General of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London, which devised and organised the display.



Pageantmaster Dominic Reid, organiser of the Lord Mayor's Show, dots the eyes of a Hong Kong lion at the start of the Hong Kong display.



VIPs at the Mansion House throw lucky wishing beanbags into the Wishing Tree.



The Hong Kong float passes the Royal Courts of Justice.



The Hong Kong float passes along Victoria Embankment.



A contemporary dance troupe performs an updated version of Hong Kong's dragon boat dance.



●●● Culture

Milestone in cultural links with Russia

Cultural and artistic links between Hong Kong and Russia are set to strengthen following the signing of a memorandum of understanding on cultural co-operation in September.



Left: Mr Tsang Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs, appreciates a masterpiece during his visit to the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg.

Below: Mr Tsang Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs, with Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, Mrs Ekaterina Chukovskaya, after signing a memorandum of understanding on cultural co-operation.



The memorandum of understanding marks a milestone in cultural relations between Russia and Hong Kong and could lead to collaboration between museums as well as visual and performing arts programmes.

"I look forward to having more frequent and wide-ranging collaborative initiatives and exchanges in culture and art," said Mr Tsang Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs, during a lecture at the St Petersburg University of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Commenting on the influence of Russian music, art and literature on China and Hong Kong, he said: "Lovers of Russian culture are never short in Hong Kong."

The memorandum was signed during a five-day visit to Moscow and St Petersburg in September, where Mr Tsang met with Russian Government officials to discuss areas of co-operation on culture and sport.

●●● Sport

Russian football team



Above: The Hong Kong Youth Representative Team (left) and the Russian National Youth Team pose for a group photo before their match.

The Russian National Youth Football Team flew to Hong Kong in November to play two friendly matches against Hong Kong youth teams, including one held at the Mong Kok stadium to mark its re-opening following extensive renovation.

The visit of the Russian National Youth Football Team stems from the visit of the President of the Russian Federation, Mr Dmitry Medvedev, to Hong Kong in April, and was designed to strengthen sporting ties between Russia and Hong Kong.

During his visit earlier in the year, Mr Medvedev responded positively to an invitation from Hong Kong Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, to send a Russian football team to play in Hong Kong. It is hoped the tour will pave the way for future sporting exchanges between the two places.

●●● Creative industries

Estonia link



The Head of CreateHK, Mr Jerry Liu, visited Estonia in October to attend the 'Creative Entrepreneurship for a Competitive Economy' Conference, where he was a keynote speaker. He also met with senior Government officials to exchange views on the development of creative industries in Hong Kong and Estonia.

●●● International

Russian businesses welcomed

Russian companies were urged to make full use of Hong Kong as the gateway to China and Asia, during a speech in Moscow by Mrs Agnes Allcock, Director-General of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London.

"Bilateral relations between Russia and Hong Kong have reached new heights after the visit to Hong Kong by President Medvedev in April this year," said Mrs Allcock at the VTB Capital Investment Forum on 6 October, noting that Russians no longer needed tourist visas to visit Hong Kong and could choose from 13 direct flights from Moscow each week.

VTB Capital opened a new office in Hong Kong in November, an example of the growing ties between the two places, said Mrs Allcock.

Alexey Yakovitsky, Global CEO and Chairman of the Management Board of VTB Capital holding companies said: "We are sure that the opening of the VTB Capital office in Hong Kong will help us to strengthen our position in Asia, one of our top strategic markets."

Right: Mrs Agnes Allcock, Director-General of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London, speaking at the VTB Capital Investment Forum in Moscow.



●●● Finance
Renminbi business boost

Hong Kong's status as an off-shore centre for Renminbi (RMB) business will be enhanced by measures announced in August by the Central People's Government of China.



Left: Vice-Premier of the State Council, Mr Li Keqiang, delivers a keynote speech at the Forum on the National 12th Five-Year Plan and Economic, Trade and Financial Co-operation during his visit to Hong Kong in August.

During a visit to Hong Kong, the Vice-Premier of the State Council, Mr Li Keqiang, launched the third issue of the People's Republic of China RMB sovereign bonds, demonstrating the Mainland government's support for Hong Kong as an offshore RMB business centre.

He also announced new policies designed to strengthen Hong Kong's role as an international financial centre. Hong Kong enterprises will be allowed to use RMB for direct

investments in the Mainland, for example, and also invest in the Mainland equity market. As well as expanding the number of domestic enterprises issuing RMB-denominated bonds in Hong Kong, the Central Government will also allow non-finance-related domestic enterprises to issue RMB-denominated bonds in Hong Kong.

Mr Li was in Hong Kong to attend a forum on co-operation and development between the Mainland and Hong Kong.

●●● Economic development
GOVERNMENT COMPLEX OPENS

The new Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Central Government Complex at Tamar is now open for business, with the first Government departments already relocated there.

Situated in the heart of the central business district, the Complex includes the Chief Executive's office, the Central Government Offices and the new LegCo Complex, the home of Hong Kong's Legislative Council (pictured).

The new Tamar Park has also been created as part of the complex, to provide workers in the district with a welcome oasis of calm in the busy city.



Above: The new chamber in the LegCo Complex.



Left: Tamar Park's spacious lawn areas provide precious green open space next to the Central Government Offices, in the heart of the bustling central business district.

●●● Government
Chief Executive election

The election for the next Chief Executive of Hong Kong will take place on 25 March 2012, to replace Mr Donald Tsang, whose term of office ends on 30 June 2012.

The new Chief Executive will be elected by an Election Committee of 1,200 people, and appointed by the Central People's Government in accordance with the Basic Law, for a five-year term of office beginning on 1 July 2012.

Guidelines for the election, taking into account views collected during a two-week public consultation exercise in October, were published in November by the Electoral Affairs Commission, which will supervise the election.

●●● Government
Principal officials appointed

Four senior appointments have been made in the past few months.



Above: The Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, at a press conference with the newly-appointed Chief Secretary for Administration (2nd left), the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (1st right) and the Director of the Chief Executive's Office (1st left).



Above: The Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, with Mr Gregory So (left), following his appointment as the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development.

Mr Stephen Lam, formerly Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, becomes Chief Secretary for Administration following the resignation of Mr Henry Tang. Mr Lam will chair major boards and committees including those for the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and the Community Care Fund. "He will support me in preparing for a smooth handover between the current term and next term of government," said Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang.

Mr Raymond Tam, formerly Director of the Chief Executive's Office, is appointed as Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs in place of Mr Lam. "Raymond will oversee the several elections, which are just around the corner," said Mr Tsang. Professor Gabriel Leung, formerly Under Secretary for Food and Health, replaces Mr Tam as Director of the Chief Executive's Office.

Earlier in the year, Mr Gregory So was appointed as the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in place of Mrs Rita Lau, who resigned for health reasons.

●●● Economic development
East Kowloon poised for growth

East Kowloon is poised to become a premier business district of Hong Kong, under plans announced in the 2011-12 Policy Address (see front cover).

Four million square metres of extra office space will be created to meet the growing demand for high quality business premises. The aim is

to make East Kowloon, which includes the Kai Tak Development Area, Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay, a pleasant business district with attractive design, green features and pedestrian promenades.

New transport links, cultural, leisure and water sports facilities will also be created as part of the development.

●●● Business
OVERSEAS COMPANIES CHOOSE HONG KONG

More companies from overseas and Mainland China are operating in Hong Kong than ever before, according to the results of a survey carried out by Invest Hong Kong and the Census and Statistics Department.

Responses were received from 6,948 parent companies running business operations in Hong Kong, an increase of 5.9 per cent on 2010.

Half of the parent companies come from four countries: the United States (1,328); Japan (1,150); Mainland China (805); and the United Kingdom (562). Twenty four per cent of companies said they planned to expand their business in Hong Kong in the next three years.

"We are seeing an increasing number of smaller, high-growth companies from all over the world choosing Hong Kong as the base for their regional operations," said Director-General of Investment Promotion, Mr Simon Galpin.



"Hong Kong is the perfect base from which to access Mainland China. At the same time, Mainland companies are also using Hong Kong as a springboard from which to go global."

Hong Kong was also the world's third largest recipient of foreign direct investment in 2010, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's World Investment Report 2011. This is the highest position ever occupied by Hong Kong in the world rankings.

●●● Business
World's freest economy

Hong Kong has again been named the 'world's freest economy' by the Fraser Institute, Canada's leading public policy think-tank, in its Economic Freedom of the World 2011 Annual Report.

The report, compiled by independent institutes in 85 nations and territories, uses 42 separate measures of economic freedom.

Hong Kong, which has held the number one slot for over three decades, scored 9.01 out of 10 and was ranked first ahead of Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland and Australia.

"This recognition from the Fraser Institute highlights our long-standing commitment to free and open markets," said Mr Donald Tsang, Hong Kong Chief Executive, at a gala dinner co-hosted by the Fraser Institute and the Lion Rock Institute in celebration of Hong Kong's achievement.

"Economic freedom is part of Hong Kong's DNA. We value the Fraser Institute's recognition of Hong Kong's endeavours," he added.

●●● Economic development
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

Work is starting on the new Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge following funding approval by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in November.

Due for completion in 2016, the major engineering project is expected to create 14,000 jobs.



●●● Finance
Renminbi investment

New rules announced by the Mainland Government will make it easier for businesses in Hong Kong to invest in the Mainland.

The rules, announced by the Ministry of Commerce and the People's Bank of China, will lower the risk of currency exchange for Hong Kong enterprises investing in the Mainland, for example, and also provide more investment channels for the growing pool of Renminbi (RMB) funds in Hong Kong.

Welcoming the move, Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, said, "It provides transparency and certainty for the related procedures in making foreign direct investments in RMB."

●●● Business
BEST AIRPORT WORLDWIDE

Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) has received three awards in the past three months. This means the airport has won more than 40 'best airport' accolades since it opened in 1998.

The most recent award, the TTG Travel Awards 2011, was decided by 49,000 travel agents, hoteliers and other travel professionals who read TTG's specialist trade publications. Other recent awards come from renowned international publications Condé Nast Traveller and SmartTravelAsia.com.

Airports were judged on, for example, design, cleanliness, shopping, speed of processing, flight information, luggage handling, parking and safety.

Left: Hong Kong International Airport has received over 40 'best airport' awards since opening in 1998.

● ● ● Culture

2011 Dragon Boat Festival

Londoners of all ages and nationalities enjoyed the London Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival 2011, held at the London Regatta Centre in the Royal Albert Dock in June.

The races involved 26 teams of rowers from corporate and public sector organisations, with spectators treated to cultural performances including lion and dragon dancing, kite-flying and live music.

The festival, which raises money for five local Chinese community organisations,



Above: Racing at the London Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in June.

was sponsored by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London, and organised by the London Chinatown Lions Club, with the support of the Hong Kong Executives Club.

● ● ● Culture

Hong Kong at Stockholm Film Festival

Three high profile film industry figures from Hong Kong attended the 22nd Stockholm International Film Festival which took place in Sweden from 9-20 November.

Christopher Doyle, one of Hong Kong's leading cinematographers, spoke at two workshops on film-making. He has worked with many famous Hong Kong, Chinese and Taiwanese directors since 1983, including Zhang Yimou (*Hero*), Wong Kar-wai (almost every film from *Days of Being Wild* through to *2046*), and he also filmed one of the *McDull* sequels. He has won the Hong Kong Film Award six times, the Golden Horse awards four times, and the Cannes Technical Grand Prize, and the Golden Osella.

Up-and-coming independent director Jessey Tsang Tsui-Shan, whose latest film *Big Blue Lake* was given its European premiere at the festival, appeared alongside Amy Chum, a leading actress in the film, to talk about the making of the feature.

Their attendance at the film festival was sponsored by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London.

● ● ● Environment



Above: The Hong Kong Geopark has attracted over 1.5 million visitors since opening in 2009.

Geopark gains global status

The Hong Kong Geopark in north-eastern Hong Kong has been recognised as a global geopark by the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), which is supported by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).

Since opening in 2009, the Hong Kong Geopark has attracted over 1.5 million visitors. A visitor centre, four geo-heritage centres and land and sea geo-tour routes help people learn more about its geo-features and geo-conservation.

The Hong Kong National Geopark became a member of the GGN at the 10th European Geoparks Conference in Langesund, Norway, in September.

"The designation is a worldwide recognition of the significant geological heritage of the region, as well as its great potential for sustainable development," said the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Edward Yau.

Following its acceptance as a member of the GGN, the geopark was officially renamed the Hong Kong Global Geopark of China.

● ● ● Economic development

HISTORIC BUILDINGS BROUGHT TO LIFE

Non-profit-making organisations are being invited to submit regeneration proposals for four historic Hong Kong buildings: King Yin Lei (pictured), Haw Par Mansion, Bridges Street Market and the Former Fanling Magistracy.

Funding will come from the Hong Kong Government's Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, which is already supporting the regeneration of nine buildings.

Proposals should preserve the main building for public appreciation, with the public able to view the building free of charge. Part of a building could also be converted into, for example, a museum or exhibition gallery, to reflect the building's historical value.

King Yin Lei (pictured) is the first privately owned historic building preserved under the provision of economic incentives, and was declared a monument in 2008.

A guide for applicants and other useful information can be viewed at www.heritage.gov.hk. The deadline for submitting applications is noon on 6 February 2012.



Above: King Yin Lei, one of the historic Hong Kong buildings to be revitalised under plans announced by the Government in October.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 16 & Tuesday 17 January 2012

Asian Financial Forum, Hong Kong

Sunday, 29 January 2012

Hong Kong in London Chinatown – Chinese New Year Celebration

Tuesday, 31 January 2012

Chinese New Year reception, London

Sunday, 1 July 2012

The 15th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Sunday, 1 July 2012

London Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival



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