To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Hong Kong SAR Government will co-operate with various sectors of the community to launch a wide range of celebration activities for the participation and enjoyment of everyone in Hong Kong.

At a press conference today (April 23), the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, announced that a series of celebration events would be officially launched in April and extend to the end of this year.

Apart from celebrating the 60th National Anniversary, it is hoped that the public, through participating in the celebration activities, will gain a deeper understanding of China’s current situation, developments and achievements, so as to heighten their civic and national awareness, international horizons and global view.

To encourage participation from different sectors of the community, the SAR Government will launch a wide variety of events, including culture, sports, performance and conservation activities, as well as Mainland and international exchange programmes. The events will be held in various neighbourhoods to cater to the needs and interests of different people including the youth, the socially disadvantaged and the disabled.

There will be ceremonial and celebratory events such as a flag raising ceremony, National Day fireworks display, variety show by young people, cultural show and carnival. Large-scale exhibitions and conferences will also be held to introduce the nation's changes and achievements. Mainland exchange programmes for youth will also be organised to enhance their understanding of their motherland. A series of cultural, sports and district activities will also be held, including the Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games 100 Days Countdown cum Torch Relay on August 29.

To broaden participation, the Government is encouraging different sectors in the community to organise celebration events. It will also co-operate with the 18 District Councils to launch a wide variety of celebration activities at district level. The Home Affairs Bureau will closely co-operate with the Commission on Youth, the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, youth, cultural and sports associations as well as district and community organisations to organise different types of celebration events.

In order to publicise the celebration activities, the Government launched a dedicated website on the 60th National Anniversary today (www.gov.hk/nationalday60). An events calendar which lists details of the celebration activities organised by the Government, 18 District Councils and community organisations will be produced for public distribution in June. To give the public a preview of the highlights of the celebration programme in the coming months, the Government will distribute publicity leaflets in the 18 districts tomorrow.
One of the highlights is the first visit of China’s Yuanwang-6 space tracking ship to Hong Kong from April 29 to May 4. Yuanwang-6 is the third-generation maritime tracking ship of international standard developed and built by China. It was engaged in maritime tracking of the Shenzhou-7 manned space mission.

During its stay in Hong Kong, Yuanwang-6 will berth at Ocean Terminal in Tsim Sha Tsui and will be open to the public from April 30 to May 3. Group visits by schools and social welfare organisations are arranged on April 30 and visits for individuals with tickets distributed free in advance are scheduled from May 1 to 3. Visits will be in the form of guided tours which will be conducted in Putonghua by the ship’s crew to see the deck, steering room, control room and cabins.

Distribution of 14,000 free tickets for touring the ship will be arranged on a first-come-first-served basis from 9am to 9pm on Saturday (April 25) at 10 Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) venues. Each person is allowed a maximum of two tickets. Each visit will last about 30 minutes and visitors need to choose a visit session upon collection of tickets.

The 10 ticket distribution venues are:

*  Hong Kong City Hall (5 Edinburgh Place, Central, Hong Kong);
*  Queen Elizabeth Stadium (18 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong);
*  Hong Kong Cultural Centre (10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon);
*  Hong Kong Science Museum (2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East, Kowloon);
*  Sha Tin Town Hall (1 Yuen Wo Road, Sha Tin);
*  North District Town Hall (2 Lung Wan Street, Sheung Shui);
*  Kwai Tsing Theatre (12 Hing Ning Road, Kwai Chung);
*  Tsuen Wan Town Hall (72 Tai Ho Road, Tsuen Wan);
*  Tuen Mun Town Hall (3 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun); and
*  Yuen Long Theatre (9 Tai Yuk Road, Yuen Long).

Tickets not taken up on April 25 will be distributed at the Science Museum’s box office on Sunday (April 26) from 9am to 9pm.

About 4,700 tickets will be reserved for schools and social welfare organisations subvented by the Social Welfare Department or members of the Hong Kong Council of Social Services, and the distribution is on a first-come-first-served basis. Each school and social welfare organisation will be offered a maximum of 30 tickets. Application forms for group visits can be downloaded from the website of the Science Museum: http://hk.science.museum. Completed forms should be sent by fax to 2311 2248 or 2367 5459.

Visiting hours are as follows:

*  April 30 (Thursday) to May 2 (Saturday): 8am to 9pm;
May 3 (Sunday): 8am to 3pm.

Ticket holders should arrive at the boarding reception on Level 2 of Ocean Terminal 15 minutes before the specified date and time on the ticket. They will be divided into groups of 30 persons for a 30-minute guided tour. As Yuanwang-6 is a functional research vessel, there are limitations on the passageways on board and the facilities leading to the pier. The ship is unable to receive people with mobility disability.

Visitors to the Yuanwang-6 will have a chance to win a model of Shenzhou-7 (scale 1:60) by participating in a lucky draw with their tickets. Fifty winners will be drawn at the Main Lobby of the Science Museum on May 5. The results as well as arrangement for collecting the prize will be announced in the South China Morning Post and Ming Pao and uploaded onto the website of the Science Museum on May 7.

For details of the activities related to the visit of Yuanwang-6, please visit the websites of the LCSD (www.lcsd.gov.hk) and Science Museum (http://hk.science.museum). For enquiries, please call 1823.

To enhance the public’s understanding of Yuanwang-6, an exhibition on the ship will be held from April 29 to May 4 on 2/F, Ocean Terminal, from 8am to 10pm. The exhibition comprises panels on the background, missions and technologies of the vessel, a video narrated in Putonghua with Chinese and English subtitles, and a 1:100 scale model of Yuanwang-6.

A free public lecture will be held at 2.30pm on April 30 at the Lecture Hall of the Science Museum on a first-come-first-served basis. The lecture will be conducted in Putonghua by the captain and scientists, with a question-and-answer session.

At today’s press conference, another major programme, the Young Astronaut Training Camp, was also announced. The LCSD plans to jointly organise the programme with the China Astronaut Research and Training Centre during the summer holiday this year.

The objective of the programme is to allow Hong Kong students to understand and experience the training required of Chinese astronauts and to provide an opportunity for them to appreciate China’s achievements in space technology. Participants will have a chance to visit Beijing Space City and Xichang Satellite Launch Centre as well as undergo simulated astronaut training.

The proposal is being finalised by the LCSD with Mainland organisations and details will be announced upon approval. Subject to approval, the candidates will attend the training camp in Beijing and Xichang in August.

Ends/Thursday, April 23, 2009
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