

## SCST visits Xi'an and Qingdao to promote Hong Kong tourism

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, today (March 14) finished a three-day visit to Xi'an and Qingdao. With the expansion of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) to Xi'an and Qingdao starting from March 6, Mr Yeung visited the two cities to call on provincial leaders and attend briefing sessions for the media and the tourism sector, where he promoted Hong Kong tourism as well as introducing travelling experiences and the latest tourism developments in Hong Kong.

Mr Yeung said, "We are very grateful for the Central Government's positive response to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's proposal of enhancing the IVS. With the number of eligible cities expanded to 51, this will be very conducive to the development of Hong Kong's tourism sector. We have at once launched publicity activities in the newly added cities, Xi'an and Qingdao, with a view to providing travellers from the two cities with quality services."

During the trip, Mr Yeung was accompanied by the Commissioner for Tourism, Ms Vivian Sum, and the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Mr Dane Cheng. On March 12, Mr Yeung arrived in Xi'an in Shaanxi Province, where he met with Vice Governor of the Shaanxi Provincial Government Mr Xu Mingfei, and the Director of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Shaanxi, Mr Gao Yang, to discuss ways to strengthen and develop tourism activities between Hong Kong and Xi'an. Mr Yeung then continued his visit to Qingdao in Shandong Province on March 13 to meet with the Mayor of the Qingdao Municipal People's Government, Mr Zhao Haozhi, and Deputy Secretary of the CPC Qingdao Municipal Committee Ms Zhang Hui separately to exchange views on driving tourism developments.

In 2022, there were 12.9959 million usual residents in Xi'an, and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was RMB1.148651 trillion. Between 2014 and 2023, 1.17 million travellers from Xi'an visited Hong Kong. In comparison, there were 10.3421 million usual residents in Qingdao in 2022 and its GDP was RMB1.492075 trillion, while 0.7 million travellers from Qingdao visited Hong Kong between 2014 and 2023.

Mr Yeung will return to Hong Kong tonight.