

London ETO celebrates timeless works of Jin Yong in Cambridge (with photo)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London (London ETO) supported the Ming-Ai (London) Institute's "The Literary Legend and Legacy of Jin Yong" seminar held at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the United Kingdom (UK), on May 21 (London time). The event was also supported by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Hong Kong Heritage Museum by the provision of expert advice.

The seminar commenced with a networking lunch reception attended by around 30 esteemed guests from the cultural and academic sectors, followed by thematic discussions led by renowned experts who delved into various aspects of Jin Yong's literary legacy.

Delivering a virtual speech at the event, the Director-General of the London ETO, Mr Gilford Law, said, "This year marks the centenary of the birth of Dr Louis Cha (Jin Yong). It is our pleasure to support the Ming-Ai (London) Institute in celebrating the achievements of Dr Cha, one of the most influential writers of our time. Dr Cha's legacy is intricately linked with Hong Kong, a city that played a crucial role in his journey of career and creativity. Hong Kong's vibrant cultural and intellectual climate enabled him to craft novels deeply rooted in Chinese traditions while appealing to a global readership."

"Dr Cha's literary legacy contributed significantly to Hong Kong's reputation as a cultural hub. The adaptations of his works into films, television series, as well as comics further underscored Hong Kong's influential role in the creative industries, forming a solid foundation for Hong Kong's role as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, as supported by the National 14th Five-Year Plan," he added.

â€œFounded in 1993, the Ming-Ai (London) Institute is a registered charity in the UK. By organising a variety of classes in Chinese arts and classical literature, alongside an array of cultural promotion activities, the Institute aims at facilitating deeper understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture within the local community.



Excessive cadmium found in imported crab sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (May 22) announced that an imported crab sample from the Philippines was detected with cadmium, a metallic contaminant, at a level exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the incident.

"Subsequent to an earlier announcement that a crab sample collected at the import level under its routine Food Surveillance Programme was detected with excessive cadmium, when following up on the case, the CFS further collected the above-mentioned crab sample at the import level for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained cadmium at a level of 5 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 2 ppm," the spokesman said.

"Long-term excessive intake of cadmium may affect the kidney functions. The CFS has informed the importer concerned of the irregularity and is also tracing the source of the product concerned. The affected product has not entered the market. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be instituted," the spokesman added.

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap. 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination above the legal limit is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. The investigation is ongoing.

ICAC signs MoUs with UNODC and anti-graft authorities of four countries at 8th ICAC Symposium to exemplify international co-operation

The 8th ICAC Symposium kicked off today (May 22) with the Commission entering into Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) respectively with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and anti-corruption authorities of four countries to exemplify international co-operation and exchange.

The 8th ICAC Symposium was opened this morning by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, the ICAC Commissioner, Mr Woo Ying-ming and other officiating guests, namely the Deputy Secretary of Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and Vice Chairman of National Commission of Supervision, Mr Fu Kui; the Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mr Zheng Yanxiong; the Head of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, Mr Dong Jingwei; the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR, Mr Cui Jianchun; Deputy Political Commissar of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison Major General Wang Zhaobing; and the ICAC's Deputy Commissioner and Head of Operations, Mr Ricky Yau Shu-chun.

The three-day Symposium, entitled "Charting a New Path to Combat Corruption", is co-hosted by the ICAC and the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA) at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai. It is one of the flagship events to mark the ICAC's 50th Anniversary.

In his opening address, Mr Lee said, "Under the unique 'one country, two systems' principle, Hong Kong maintains a robust regulatory regime in line with international standards, and is renowned globally for its clean and efficient government, level-playing field for doing business, sound rule of law, a judiciary with independent judicial power, and zero tolerance for corruption. We are also at the forefront of the international fight against corruption."

Mr Lee remarked that the ICAC had championed the fight against corruption in Hong Kong for half a century and had also worked closely with its counterparts around the world to tackle corruption. The HKSAR Government is committed to supporting the ICAC in widening its international network and co-operating with overseas counterparts to sustain Hong Kong's pioneering role in combating corruption.

At the opening ceremony, Mr Lee also witnessed the ICAC signing MoUs with the UNODC and anti-corruption authorities of four countries, namely

Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Saudi Arabia and South Africa, to enhance international anti-graft co-operation.

Mr Lee said the presence of the UNODC, as guardian of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and the national anti-corruption authorities of various countries in Hong Kong to finalise bilateral agreements with the ICAC exemplified the international co-operation and exchange that could make a difference, regionally and globally.

In his welcoming address, the ICAC Commissioner and the President of the IAACA, Mr Woo Ying-ming, said following the inauguration of the Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption (HKIAAC) in early 2024 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Commission, a robust tripartite partnership was formed among the ICAC, the HKIAAC and the IAACA.

The Symposium, co-hosted by the ICAC and the IAACA, fully demonstrated the tripartite partnership in promoting international anti-corruption co-operation by connecting anti-graft counterparts worldwide to enhance their effectiveness in fighting corruption within the framework of the UNCAC. It also showcased the ICAC's commitment to fully aligning with the country's initiative to develop a Clean Silk Road with the concerted efforts of international counterparts.

"The battle against corruption calls for our solidarity in confronting the challenges, now and in the future. This Symposium is meant to serve as a platform for us to reach such unity," said Mr Woo.

The Symposium also serves as the 11th Annual Conference of the IAACA. Mr Woo noted that on the last day of the event, the IAACA would, for the first time, adopt a declaration named after Hong Kong – the "Hong Kong Declaration on Strengthening International Cooperation in Preventing and Fighting Corruption" (Hong Kong Declaration).

The Hong Kong [Declaration](#), which demonstrates the IAACA's ongoing commitment to strengthening international anti-corruption co-operation, emphasises the importance of global co-operation and the roles of anti-corruption authorities in effectively implementing the UNCAC and mitigating corruption. It also highlights the significance of the use of advanced technologies in fighting corruption, the participation and continued involvement of the public and private sectors, the engagement of the whole society in preventing and combating corruption, and the raising of public awareness of corruption and its adverse impact on societies.

The Symposium has attracted over 500 representatives of about 180 anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies from nearly 60 jurisdictions. About one-third of the participating organisations are members of the IAACA.

The Symposium was kicked off with keynote speeches on various topics: Mr Fu Kui spoke on entrenching global anti-corruption; Chief Justice Andrew Cheung Kui-nung, Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, illustrated the role of the rule of law in combating corruption; the Director-General of the

United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the UNODC, Ms Ghada Fathi Waly, expounded on the threats and opportunities on the path to ending corruption; the Acting Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, made an in-depth sharing on the work of the Department of Justice in upholding the rule of law and backing the anti-corruption cause; and Deputy European Chief Prosecutor of the European Public Prosecutor's Office Mr Petr Klement, elaborated on his office's role in fighting corruption as a supranational actor.

Over 30 prominent speakers, including representatives from anti-corruption agencies, regulatory bodies, justice departments, leading research institutions and international organisations from various jurisdictions, as well as those who have made remarkable contributions to the cause of corruption eradication, will share their insights and expertise on global challenges and strategies in anti-graft work on four main discussion topics at the Symposium, namely "Sustainable International Co-operation for a Shared Future", "Contemporary Challenges in Fighting Corruption", "Synergising Public-Private Partnership to Combat Corruption" and "The Power of Youth in Creating a World of Integrity".

On the second day of the Symposium, Mr Ricky Yau will share with global anti-graft fighters at the plenary session on "Contemporary Challenges in Fighting Corruption" the ICAC's proven strategy in combating corruption developed in the past 50 years and the challenges ahead. Meanwhile, the Chairman of the ICAC's Corruption Prevention Advisory Committee and the Chairman of the Accounting and Financial Reporting Council, Dr Kelvin Wong, will chair the plenary session on "Synergising Public-Private Partnership to Combat Corruption".

For the first time, young speakers from various jurisdictions will host the final plenary session, themed "The Power of Youth in Creating a World of Integrity". They will be joined by university and secondary school students, including non-local students studying in Hong Kong, at the discussion.

Upon conclusion of the Symposium, the ICAC and the IAACA will jointly organise an anti-corruption training programme between May 24 and 28. About 300 Symposium participants and other representatives will attend training workshops on law enforcement, probity education and corruption-preventive mechanisms, and visit facilities of the ICAC Building. Over 50 of the participants will also participate in a study tour to the city of Changsha in Mainland China.

Since 2000, the ICAC has hosted eight Symposia, which aim to provide a forum for corruption fighters and experts from different parts of the world to share their knowledge and experience.

The IAACA, the co-organiser of the 8th ICAC Symposium, was founded in 2006 as the first global institution for anti-corruption agencies worldwide, aiming to promote the effective implementation of the UNCAC and foster international anti-corruption collaboration. Over 170 anti-corruption agencies around the world have participated as IAACA members or engaged in

various IAACA initiatives. The ICAC Commissioner, Mr Woo Ying-ming, took up the IAACA presidency since September 2023.

[15 persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operation \(with photo\)](#)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted an anti-illegal worker operation in Yau Ma Tei District today (May 22). During the operation, ImmD Task Force officers raided a residential flat. A total of 11 overstayers and four illegal immigrants were arrested. Seventeen forged Hong Kong identity cards were unearthed inside the target location. The arrested overstayers comprised three men and eight women, aged 30 to 57. The arrested illegal immigrants comprised one man and three women, aged 28 to 61. Among them, two men and seven women were also suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards. Upon preliminary investigation, the suspected forged Hong Kong identity cards were used for job seeking and taking up unapproved employment by some of the arrestees. Furthermore, the investigation on the keeper of the premises is still ongoing and more arrests may be made.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned, "As stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land is prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. Under the prevailing laws, it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment."

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. Under the Immigration Ordinance, the maximum penalty for an employer employing a person who is not lawfully employable, i.e. an illegal immigrant, an overstayer, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order or a person who was refused permission to land, has been significantly increased from a fine of \$350,000 and three

years' imprisonment to a fine of \$500,000 and 10 years' imprisonment to reflect the gravity of such offences. The director, manager, secretary, partner, etc, of the company concerned may also bear criminal liability. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for one year. In that connection, the spokesman would like to remind all employers not to defy the law by employing illegal workers. The ImmD will continue to take resolute enforcement action to combat such offences.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments immediately.



LCQ2: Potential fire safety hazards of old buildings

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kwok and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Security, Mr Michael Cheuk, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the fire broke out in an old composite building in Kowloon last month which resulted in multiple casualties has once again sounded an alarm for the potential fire safety hazards of old buildings. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will immediately conduct large-scale fire safety risk assessments on the same type of buildings across the territory and allocate additional resources to step up routine inspections and improve the monitoring system, so as to plug the fire safety loopholes in such buildings; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as the authorities indicated in the reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the 24th of last month that the Fire Safety (Buildings) (Amendment) Bill would be submitted to this Council for scrutiny as soon as possible, and that the proposed legislative amendments include increasing the penalties for non-compliance with the relevant directions or orders, whether the authorities will, in response to the aspirations of society, undertake that the Bill will be submitted to this Council expeditiously within the current legislative session, and further increase the relevant penalties; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as it is learnt that the number of old buildings in Hong Kong has been on the rise, with some of them even being plagued with problems, whether the authorities will advocate public-private partnership to step up efforts in redeveloping old districts, so as to eradicate the potential fire safety hazards of old buildings in the urban areas at root; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Fire safety of buildings is a matter of great concern to the Government. A multi-pronged approach has been taken to improve the fire safety standards of buildings.

With regard to law enforcement, the Fire Services Department (FSD) handles fire hazards in buildings in accordance with the Fire Services Ordinance. It includes conducting inspections of buildings in respect of fire safety, on a regular basis or upon receiving complaints. If fire hazards are

identified, including means of escape being obstructed or locked, smoke stop doors being left open or defective, or fire service installations or equipment (FSIs) are not in efficient working order or have not undergone annual inspection, etc, the FSD will follow up and take appropriate enforcement actions in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Moreover, in respect of legislation, to enhance the fire safety standard of old buildings, the Government enacted the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Ordinance) which stipulates that composite and domestic buildings constructed in or before 1987 must be enhanced to meet modern fire safety standards. Being the enforcement authorities, the FSD and the Buildings Department (BD) have been conducting joint inspections of relevant buildings across the territory in a systematic manner, and in light of the actual condition of the buildings and in accordance with the requirements of the Ordinance, issue Fire Safety Directions (Directions) to the owners or occupiers, specifying the required fire safety improvement works. There are about 14 000 relevant buildings regulated under the Ordinance. To date, about 10 940 buildings have been inspected and over 370 000 Directions have been issued. About 40 per cent of them have been complied with or discharged, with the remaining some 60 per cent being followed-up on. I would like to stress that while the objective of the Ordinance is to enhance the fire safety standards of relevant buildings, it does not mean that these buildings are subject to imminent fire risks. In fact, these buildings were constructed in accordance with applicable fire safety and construction standards prevailing at the time when they were built.

With regard to the enforcement of the Ordinance, a relevant owner or occupier who fails to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance without a reasonable excuse is guilty of an offence, the FSD and the BD will take enforcement actions accordingly. Since the Ordinance has come into force, about 3 600 cases that failed to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance without reasonable excuse have been successfully prosecuted.

As for raising public awareness of fire safety, the FSD has been promoting fire safety to members of the public through public education and community engagement programmes. The FSD also co-ordinates with other government departments and District Fire Safety Committees, and organises various fire safety promotional activities, fire drills and fire safety talks, etc, to enhance the public's knowledge of fire safety in a holistic manner.

With regard to the part on inspection and other aspects of the question raised by the Member, having consulted the Development Bureau (DEVB), my consolidated reply is as follows:

(1) With regard to fire safety inspections, apart from carrying out inspections and enforcement actions in response to public complaints against fire hazards, in order to reduce potential fire hazards in old buildings in a more effective and comprehensive manner, the FSD has implemented the Risk-based Building Fire Safety Visit Programme with priority given to buildings with relatively higher fire risk, such as those of a higher building age, lack of FSIs, with single-staircase design, as well as "three-nil" buildings,

etc. Buildings with higher risk are subject to inspection once or twice a year. The purposes of the inspections are to identify potential fire hazards in the public areas inside buildings and to enable frontline FSD personnel to become more familiar with the features of these buildings so as to better prepare for firefighting and rescue work in future.

In response to the fire that broke out in New Lucky House earlier, the FSD has further strengthened its efforts and redeployed manpower to proactively conduct inspections and take appropriate enforcement actions against irregularities, such as means of escape being obstructed and defective FSIs, in accordance with relevant legislations. We will review the effectiveness of the relevant enforcement actions in a timely manner and, having regard to actual needs and circumstances as well as manpower arrangements, consider regularising relevant inspection work.

Over 9 000 enforcement actions were taken by the FSD in 2023, among which over 3 600 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices were issued and more than 300 prosecutions were instigated.

(2) To improve the existing legislative framework, the Government is expediting the work on amending the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance to empower the FSD and the BD to carry out fire safety improvement works for the buildings for owners who have failed to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance (defaulted works), and to recover the relevant fees upon completion of the defaulted works. I would like to reiterate that timely and proper maintenance of private buildings is the responsibility of owners. We propose to amend the Ordinance and to arrange for defaulted works because we understand that some owners are facing genuine difficulties, and that empowering the Government to carry out defaulted works by way of amending the Ordinance can assist those owners with genuine difficulties in enhancing the fire safety standards of those relevant buildings, providing better protection to them.

There are views in the community that the deterrent effect of penalty should be kept abreast with the times. With reference to penalties for offences of a similar nature or gravity, we incline to raise the penalties for non-compliance with the Directions and Fire Safety Compliance Orders for four times, to \$100,000 and \$200,000 as maximum respectively, and to raise the corresponding fine for each day during which the offence continues, in the hope of increasing the deterrent effect.

The amendments to the Ordinance also include other different elements, such as introducing provisions against un-co-operative owners to prevent any person from intentionally obstructing an owners' corporation in complying with the requirements of the Ordinance, empowering the Government to register relevant instructions of the Ordinance issued against the involved buildings or their relevant parts (which are yet to be complied with) in the Land Registry. It is envisaged that the aforementioned measures will effectively strengthen the deterrent effect and encourage owners to comply with the requirement of the Ordinance, with a view to enhancing the compliance rate.

The Government is stepping up its efforts in taking forward the relevant

legislative amendment work and will strive to submit the proposed amendment bill to the Legislative Council for scrutiny in July.

(3) According to the DEVB, a sustainable urban renewal strategy is to adopt a dual-track approach of redevelopment and rehabilitation. On building rehabilitation, the Government adopts a multi-pronged approach. Apart from providing subsidies and technical assistance for owners to carry out building inspection and maintenance, the Government will also proactively intervene by carrying out emergency works on behalf of owners where necessary and step up its enforcement efforts.

For some old and dilapidated buildings, rehabilitation may not be cost-effective, and redevelopment is relatively practical and effective. The Government is facilitating and expediting redevelopment projects by the public and private sectors on various fronts. On the one hand, the Government supports the URA (Urban Renewal Authority) in taking forward redevelopment projects that will bring greater benefits to the residents. On the other hand, in order to encourage private developers to participate in redevelopment, the Government has introduced a number of policies and measures in recent years to enhance the financial viability of redevelopment projects, including the pilot scheme on transfer of plot ratio and the gradual permission of interchangeability between domestic and non-domestic plot ratios, etc, in Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok. The URA is also conducting planning studies in Tsuen Wan and Sham Shui Po, and is expected to put forward urban renewal master plans and restructuring proposals for these two districts by phases from the second half of this year. In addition, the DEVB has introduced the Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) (Amendment) Bill 2023 into the Legislative Council to step up efforts to encourage larger-scale private redevelopment projects by lowering the compulsory sale thresholds and facilitating the redevelopment of adjoining lots, and will endeavour to co-operate with the scrutiny work of the relevant Bills Committee. The DEVB also commenced a study at the end of last year to explore specific measures to make use of new development land to help promote large-scale redevelopment projects in old districts by the public and private sectors, with the aim of making proposals in the first half of 2025.

It is the responsibility of owners to timely repair, properly maintain and effectively manage private buildings, including carrying out fire safety improvement works. Eliminating fire hazards, for example, by ensuring that means of escape are free from obstruction and by keeping smoke stop doors closed, should be everyone's shared responsibility. While the Government adopts a multi-pronged approach to deal with fire safety of old buildings, we hope that all people will take an extra step and join hands to create a safe living environment.

Thank you, President.