

## CS and Equestrian Committee tour equestrian facilities in Sha Tin

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President of the Equestrian Committee (Hong Kong) of the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Henry Tang, and members of the committee toured the Hong Kong Olympic and Paralympic Village and core equestrian venue in Sha Tin today (March 4). They inspected the progress of construction works in relation to the competition venue and supporting facilities for the equestrian events to be staged in Hong Kong.

The committee visited the Royal Park Hotel in Sha Tin, which will serve as the Olympic and Paralympic Village for athletes and officials of participating Games teams.

Members were briefed by representatives of the Equestrian Company on the services and facilities. These facilities include service centres, retail services and caf? lounges, customised cuisines to cater for the needs of different cultures, and specially designed rooms for wheelchair users.

Mr Tang said, "We are pleased to see that the preparation work of the Olympic Village is well on schedule. We are impressed by the detailed planning on the accommodation, catering and security aspects, as well as the specially designed rooms for Paralympic equestrian athletes using wheelchairs."

Committee members then visited the Olympic and Paralympic core equestrian venue at the Hong Kong Sports Institute. They were briefed by the Hong Kong Jockey Club's Head of Racing Operations and Equestrian, Mr John Ridley, on the latest progress of works.

Works are in full swing with the construction of the 18,000-seat spectator stands and increased stable capacity to handle up to 225 horses, to be completed in about three months.

Members were briefed on the cooling facilities in the stables, the veterinary service and the world's first ever air-conditioned equestrian indoor training arena introduced by the Equestrian Company and the Hong Kong Jockey Club to help horses adapt to the hot and humid weather of August.

"With five months to go before the Olympic equestrian events, the Equestrian Committee will conduct regular inspections on different aspects of our preparatory work such as transport, security, crowd control, quarantine and volunteer training to ensure that each and every aspect is geared up and ready for the Games," Mr Tang said after the visit.

Mr Tang said that representatives from a number of National Olympic Committees had come to Hong Kong to see for themselves the competition venues and related facilities. They were all very satisfied with Hong Kong's world-class facilities and supporting arrangements.

Around 160 representatives from 25 countries attended a workshop organised by the Federation Equestre International (FEI) last month in Lausanne, Switzerland. The FEI and experts from around the world had given a thumbs-up to the preparatory work done by Hong Kong and believed that the Olympic equestrian events to be held here would be outstanding.

"So far quite a number of leading overseas teams have qualified for the three equestrian events. We are confident that the equestrian events to be held here will be of the highest standard," Mr Tang said.

Equestrian Committee members joining the visit today included the committee's vice-presidents, BOCOG's Executive Vice-President, Mr Yang Shuan and Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Mr John Chan; and the committee's Executive Vice-President, Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing.

Ends/Tuesday, March 4, 2008