

China's Yuanwang-6 space tracking ship arrives

China's Yuanwang-6 space tracking ship arrived in Hong Kong this morning (April 29) for a six-day visit.

Yuanwang-6 arrived at Ocean Terminal in Tsim Sha Tsui at around 10am under the escort of police launches and fireboats. A welcome ceremony was held by the Hong Kong SAR Government at the terminal. Officiating guests included the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Henry Tang; the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing; the Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, Mr Li Gang; Commodore Xu Jingcai from the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison, the Director of the Department of General Affairs of the Commissioner's Office of China's Foreign Ministry in the HKSAR, Ms Sun Hongxia; and the leader of the Yuanwang-6 delegation from the China Satellite Maritime Tracking and Control Department, Mr Ding Xingnong.

In addition to lion dance, about 150 schoolchildren waved flags to welcome the crew of Yuanwang-6, led by Captain Ling Yuan. The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Henry Tang, and the leader of the Yuanwang-6 delegation, Mr Ding Xingnong, each gave a speech and exchanged souvenirs at the welcome ceremony.

The Hong Kong SAR Government also held a welcome reception at the Main Concourse at Level 2 of Ocean Terminal. About 200 guests attended the welcome ceremony and reception, including senior government officials, representatives of Central Government organisations in Hong Kong, consular corps and members of various sectors in the community.

Yuanwang-6 will be open to the public from tomorrow (April 30) to May 3. Group visits by schools and social welfare organisations will be conducted tomorrow; whereas visits by individuals with admission tickets collected in advance would be received from May 1 to 3. Visitors will be able to see the deck, steering room, control room and cabins.

A total of 14,520 admission tickets had been distributed earlier. As it is a rare opportunity for the tracking ship to visit Hong Kong, those who have obtained admission tickets are advised to attend the visit as scheduled. Those who are unable to turn up on the day due to unforeseen circumstances may pass the tickets to relatives and friends so as to avoid wasting them.

To ensure that the visits to proceed smoothly, visitors shall go through security check before boarding. Ticket holders are therefore advised to arrive at the boarding reception on Level 2 of Ocean Terminal 15 minutes before the specified date and time on the ticket. They should follow the instructions of the admission and ship personnel and follow the designated path for the visit.

In view of the steep stairs and narrow passageways, visitors should pay extra attention and wear suitable clothes and shoes. For a safe and pleasant visit, slippers or high-heeled shoes are not advised. Bringing carrier bags or other bulky belongings is also not advised. No items exceeding the size of 56cm x 36cm x 23cm (or 22 inches x 14 inches x 9 inches) can be brought on the ship. Visitors are not allowed to bring onboard food, drinks, glassware or articles which may pose danger.

The opening hours of the visit may be affected by weather. In case of inclement weather including heavy rain, the visit will be cancelled without replacement.

Visitors to the Yuanwang-6 can participate in a lucky draw with their tickets. Fifty winners will be drawn for a model of Shenzhou-7 (scale 1:60) while another 50 winners will get a souvenir stamp album published by the China Satellite Maritime Tracking and Control Department in commemoration of Yuanwang-6's first visit to Hong Kong. The lucky draw will be conducted at the Main Lobby of the Science Museum on May 5. The results as well as arrangements for collecting the prize will be announced in the South China Morning Post and Ming Pao newspapers and uploaded onto the website of the Science Museum on May 7.

To enhance the public's understanding of Yuanwang-6, an exhibition about the ship will be held from today to May 4 on Level 2, Ocean Terminal, from 8am to 10pm. The exhibition comprises panels on the background, missions and technologies of the fleet, 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.

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

Ends/Wednesday, April 29, 2009

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