

For Immediate Release

**BEA Celebrates the Fifth Anniversary of Xi'an Branch and
Opening of Xi'an South Gate Sub-branch**

Hong Kong, 19th July, 2006 - The Bank of East Asia ("BEA") celebrates the fifth anniversary of Xi'an Branch and the opening of Xi'an South Gate Sub-branch today, marking a milestone in the Bank's business development in northwestern China. BEA's Executive Director & Deputy Chief Executive, Mr. Chan Kay-cheung officiated at the ceremony held at the ANA Grand Castle Hotel.

"We at BEA take great pride in our achievement as the first foreign bank to open a branch in China's northwest," stated Mr. Chan. "With today's event, our Xi'an South Gate Sub-branch enjoys the distinction of being the first sub-branch of a foreign bank in China's northwest. We fully recognise the importance and tremendous potential of Xi'an, and we're extremely pleased to contribute to the development of the region."

During the past five years, Xi'an Branch has achieved significant business growth and has extended service beyond Xi'an to Lanzhou (Gansu), Yinchuan (Ningxia), Zhengzhou (Henan). With the establishment of Xi'an South Gate Sub-branch, BEA will effectively cater to the needs of its growing customer base in and around Xi'an.

Xi'an Branch and Xi'an South Gate Sub-branch provide foreign currency services to all types of customers and Renminbi services to foreigners and Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan residents, as well as to foreign-invested and local enterprises. The services provided include deposits, loans and advances, bill acceptance and discounts, issuance of documentary credit and bank guarantees, remittance and international settlement, foreign exchange, derivative products, agency services for general and life insurance products, and overseas wealth management services.

For further details on BEA's Xi'an Branch, please contact Mr. Sun Minjie, General Manager of Xi'an Branch at 1/F., Block B, K.I. Tower, No. 1 Xihuamen Street, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China [tel.: (86 29) 8720 1158, fax: (86 29) 8720 1212]; or Ms. Xu Yihong, General Manager of Xi'an South Gate Sub-branch at 1/F., Block C, Chang'an Metropolis Center, No.88, Nanguan Zheng Road, Beilin District, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China [tel.: (86 29) 8765 1188, fax: (86 29) 8765 1266]. Enquiries may also be directed to BEA's China Division in Hong Kong on tel.: (852) 3608 3007 or fax: (852) 3608 6213. To learn more about BEA's China services, please visit the Bank's China website at www.hkbea.com.cn.

About BEA's China Services

As one of the foreign banks with the most extensive branch coverage on the Mainland, BEA has a branch network in China that now consists of 27 outlets, including 11

The Bank of East Asia, Limited 東亞銀行有限公司
10 Des Voeux Road Central, Hong Kong 香港中環德輔道中10號
Telephone 電話 (852) 3608 3608 Facsimile 傳真 (852) 3608 6000 Telex 電傳 HX 73017
www.hkbea.com

branches (Shanghai, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Dalian, Xi'an, Beijing, Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Chongqing), 10 sub-branches (4 in Shanghai, 2 each in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, and 1 in both Dalian and Xi'an), and 6 representative offices (Fuzhou, Qingdao, Wuhan, Tianjin, Suzhou, and Dongguan). Following earlier approval that the Bank received to upgrade its Qingdao Representative Office to a full-fledged branch, BEA expects to open its Qingdao Branch later this year.

BEA provides a wide range of banking services to a growing customer base in China. In addition to foreign currency services extended to all types of customers, the Bank offers Renminbi services to customers (except local residents) through its eight branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Dalian, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Xi'an, and Xiamen.

BEA expects its China business will continue to grow, having recently been granted Qualified Domestic Institutional Investor ("QDII") status by the China Banking Regulatory Commission. As one of the first foreign banks to receive this status, BEA can offer overseas investment services to local residents and enterprises at its branches in China. Now that investors can purchase investment products in foreign currencies as well as Renminbi, the Bank anticipates significant growth in its wealth management services business on the Mainland.

About The Bank of East Asia

Incorporated in Hong Kong in 1918, BEA is dedicated to providing comprehensive retail and commercial banking services to its customers in Hong Kong, Greater China, and overseas. BEA is the largest independent local bank in Hong Kong, with total consolidated assets of HKD238.8 billion (USD30.79 billion) as of 31st December, 2005. The Bank is listed on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong and is one of the constituent stocks of the Hang Seng Index.

With more than 170 outlets worldwide, BEA operates an extensive international network covering Hong Kong and Greater China, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the British Virgin Islands, and Southeast Asia. For more information on BEA, please visit any BEA branch or the Bank's homepage at www.hkbea.com.

- End -

For press enquiries, please contact:

Mr. Yu Hok-keung
General Manager and Head of China Division, BEA
Tel.: (852) 3608 3188

BEA – Serving customers through one of Hong Kong's largest banking networks, with over 110 branches and SupremeGold Centres around town