

# Cultural heritage preservation centre run by Palace Museum inaugurated in Macau

Tony Wong

The Macau Palace Museum Cultural Heritage Preservation and Inheritance Centre was jointly inaugurated by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and Palace Museum Director Wang Xudong yesterday afternoon, with the new facility aiming to further enhance Macau's ability to ensure the protection of its cultural heritage sites, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) said in a statement last night.

Jointly established by the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) government and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Beijing, the new centre is located on the ground floor of the Macau Museum of Art (MAM) in Nape, covering 900 square metres, where professionals from the Palace Museum in the nation's capital will provide technical support for the protection and restoration of Macau's cultural heritage sites and other historic buildings.

The centre's inaugural plaque was jointly unveiled by Ho and Wang during yesterday's ceremony, which was also attended by Central People's Government Liaison Office in the MSAR Director Zheng Xincong, Foreign Ministry Commissioner Liu Xianfa, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong U, and Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Deland Leong Wai Man.



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (right), Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau Director Zheng Xincong (second from right), Foreign Ministry Commissioner Liu Xianfa (third from right), and Palace Museum Director Wang Xudong (left) look at an exhibit in the exhibition spaces of the newly inaugurated Macau Palace Museum Cultural Heritage Preservation and Inheritance Centre, located on the ground floor of the Macau Museum of Art (MAM) in Nape, yesterday. — Photo: IC

In addition to laboratories for the restoration of cultural heritage sites, the centre is also equipped with exhibition spaces, the statement said.

The centre's exhibition spaces are open to members of the public free of charge, with the same opening hours as the Macau Museum of Art, namely between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily except Mondays, but visitors cannot enter the facilities after 6:30 p.m.

Last night's statement underlined that the centre aims to strengthen the preservation, restoration, education and promotion of Macau's cultural heritage and to contribute to Macau developing itself into an exchange and cooperation base with Chinese culture as its mainstream and co-existence of different cultures.

The statement noted that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Macau government signed a deal

in 2019 for their joint establishment of the Macau Palace Museum Cultural Heritage Preservation and Inheritance Centre, which was inaugurated yesterday.

The statement said that professionals from the Palace Museum will provide advice on and technical support for the restoration of Macau's cultural heritage.

The new centre will help the local government enhance its ability



to carry out the preservation and restoration of sites in the UNESCO World Heritage-protected Historic Centre of Macau and all other statutorily protected cultural heritage sites across the city as well as other historic buildings, by making good use of advanced technology.

In addition, the statement said, the centre will also strengthen the training of local professionals for the restoration of cultural heritage and help Macau further improve its system for protecting its cultural heritage.

The statement said that as the first cultural facility jointly run by the Macau government and the Palace Museum, the establishment and operation of the centre highlights the central government's strong support for Macau's cultural development. ■

## Brazil's real falls to record low 6 to US dollar

RIO DE JANEIRO – Brazil's real fell yesterday to a record low 6.0 to the US dollar, a day after the government announced a near-US\$12 billion cut in public spending for 2025 and 2026.

The drop suggested continued market jitters over the fiscal discipline of Latin America's largest economy that Wednesday's spending adjustment had sought to calm.

According to the IPEA state agency, the real had never fallen

to this level since entering into circulation in 1994.

Finance Minister Fernando Haddad on Wednesday announced spending cuts to "consolidate the government's commitment to fiscal sustainability."

The savings would affect minimum wage levels, benefits for civil servants and military pensions.

Haddad also announced a tax reduction for middle-income Brazilians as a cushioning measure, to be funded from a tax rise on the rich.

The goal of the adjustments was to ensure compliance with Brazil's so-called "fiscal framework," which seeks to cap government spending growth until 2026, when leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's term expires.

Investor doubts about Brazil's ability to meet its fiscal commitments have weighed on the economy this year, even as the labour market, consumption and industrial production performed well.

And weeks-long suspense over

the expected spending adjustment had placed pressure on the real.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Brazil's economy should grow 3.0 percent in 2024, above the 2.1 percent forecast for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Brazilian authorities have recognised the necessity to tackle the deficit in order to stabilize the long-term fiscal situation and public debt of over 78 percent of GDP.

Lula, 79, had set a primary

deficit target of zero for 2024, with a tolerance margin of 0.25 percentage points of GDP.

Haddad said last week he was confident of meeting the target, but it would require a freeze on US\$860 million in public spending for the rest of the year.

Inflation accelerated in October to an annualised 4.76 percent – well above the central bank target of 3.0 percent, adding to pressure on Lula's government to balance the budget. (More on p.12) – AFP

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### China opposes any visit by leader of Taiwan authorities to US: FM spokesperson

China opposes any visit by the leader of the Taiwan authorities to the United States in any name or under whatever pretext, foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said yesterday.

– Story on p. 7

### Australia passes landmark social media ban for under 16s

Australian lawmakers passed landmark rules to ban under 16s from social media yesterday, approving one of the world's toughest crackdowns on popular sites like Facebook, Instagram and X.

– Story on p. 11

### Mozambican president calls opposition leader to vote talks

Mozambique's President Filipe Nyusi urged the main opposition leader to join talks on a deadly post-vote standoff as he met briefly on Tuesday with three other candidates in the disputed early October election.

– Story on p. 12

# Jan-Sep crime situation 'generally stable', but fraud up 31.5 pct: Wong

**Ginnie Liang**

Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said yesterday that the crime situation from January to September was "generally stable", adding, however, that the increase in fraud cases accounted for 43.9 percent of the increase in the overall crime volume.

According to official data cited by Wong, the number of fraud cases rose by 31.5 percent year on year to 2,160 in the first nine months of the year.

## No. of crimes rises to 10,831

Releasing the first three quarters' crime statistics during a press conference at the S. Francisco Barracks, Wong noted that the overall number of reported crimes amounted to 10,831 cases, a year-on-year increase of 1,178 cases, or 12.2 percent, and an increase of 233 cases, or 2.2 percent, compared with the same period in pre-pandemic 2019, underlining that serious violent crimes in Macau continued to maintain a "low crime trend", with homicide or kidnapping cases reported from January to September significantly lower than those of the same period in pre-pandemic 2019.

In the first nine months of the year, according to Wong, there were 210 violent crime cases, including 40 rape and 34 robbery cases, representing year-on-year increases of 30 cases, or 16.7 percent; 13 cases, or 48.1 percent; four cases, or 13.3 percent; 89 cases, or 6.3 percent, respectively, while the number of cases involving arson, child sexual abuse and drug trafficking were down by three cases, or 9.7 percent; nine cases, or 37.5 percent; and two cases, or 5.4 percent from January to September last year to, respectively, 28 cases, 15 cases, and 35 cases this year.

Wong pointed out that with the resumption of air travel, the police received a total of 48 cases of theft on board aircraft from January to September, an increase of 21 cases and four cases over the same period in 2023 and 2019 respectively.

According to the statistics released yesterday, the number of suspected domestic violence notifications in the first half of this year was 104, of which six cases were confirmed as domestic violence offences, 63 were offences of causing bodily harm, and 32 are still under investigation.

Wong pointed out that the situation of juvenile delinquency in Macau has worsened, with a total of 89 cases reported from January to September, representing an increase of 14 and 42 cases compared with the same period last year and in 2019.

Moreover, in the nine-month period a total of 1,502 theft cases were recorded, a year-on-year growth of 6.3 percent.

## Telecom, network & computer fraud

Meanwhile, in the first quarters of this year, there were a total of 2,160 cases involving telecom, network and computer fraud, of which 240 were phone fraud cases, a decrease of 33 cases and an increase of 157 cases respectively over the same period in 2023 and 2019, with over 70 percent of the cases involving the modus operandi of "impersonating government officials and officers", Wong quoted the report as saying, noting that the number of online scam cases amounted to 721, an increase of 122 and 493 cases respectively over the same period in 2023 and 2019, with the main modus operandi including online investment, ticket sales and online shopping, while computer fraud stood at 581 cases in the first three quarters, of which 509 involved credit card online purchases and 54 related to sexual blackmail.

Wong said that the police forces have continued to deepen their three-pronged prevention and control model, namely anti-fraud prevention, recovery and combating crime, in a bid to curb fraudulent crimes, in which in terms of recovery, the Judiciary Police (PJ), in conjunction with the banking sector, have stopped suspicious remittances totalling over 80 million patacas, while the Judiciary Police have also notified the banking sector of 317 suspicious bank accounts, taking early warning, freezing and other measures according to the actual circumstances.

Wong added that in the area of combating fraud, the Judiciary Police have continued to strengthen their investigative capabilities and deepen exchanges of intelligence with their counterparts elsewhere, making every effort to combat fraudulent criminal activities in



Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak addresses yesterday's press conference at the S. Francisco Barracks about Macau's 2024 first-three quarters crime statistics.

— Photo: Ginnie Liang

Macau, with a total of 203 suspected fraud gang members detained in the first three quarters of this year, while blocking, through a special mechanism with Macau's telecom operators, 807 phishing websites in the first three quarters of this year.

## Currency exchange fraud

Meanwhile, in the first three quarters of the year, the number of casino loansharking and false imprisonment cases amounted to 195 and 33 respectively, both higher than in the same period last year but significantly lower than in the same period in pre-pandemic 2019, with the suspects and victims predominantly non-local residents, and the vast majority of them being gaming-related offences, Wong

said, adding that the new law banning illegal currency exchange operations has been effectively improving security in Macau's casinos and their surrounding areas.

According to Wong, in the first nine months, a total of 2,835 illegal currency exchange dealers were intercepted by the Public Security Police (PSP) and the Judiciary Police in numerous operations, among whom 2,635 were non-local residents subject to deportation and travel ban measures, while 1,677 of them have meanwhile been banned by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) from entering local casinos.

Wong said that of the various types of offences arising from

currency exchange gangs in the first three quarters, the most significant type of offence was fraud, with a total of 254 cases, an increase of 99 and a decrease of 37 compared to the same period in 2023 and 2019 respectively.

## 'Officials of the next term to be officially announced': Wong

When asked by the media whether he would continue in his current post during the next term of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) government, Wong said: "Principal officials of the next MSAR government have to be nominated by the new chief executive and then appointed by the central government, and there is an established procedure for everything. I believe that the central government will announce the relevant news within a short period of time. At this stage, there is no information that can be disclosed to the public, pending official notification and announcement."

Macau's new chief executive Sam Hou Fai and other MSAR principal officials are scheduled to be sworn in on December 20.

Wong, 56, has been Macau's top public security official since 2014. He is a former public prosecutor and director of the Judiciary Police (PJ). Wong holds a doctorate in Law from Peking University. He also attended university courses in Law and the Portuguese language and culture in Portugal in the early 1990s. ■

## Mainland duo cheat casino & gambler out of HK\$150,000 with fake chips: police

**Ginnie Liang**

The Judiciary Police (PJ) arrested two mainlanders in their thirties on Wednesday for using fake gaming chips to cheat a casino in Cotai and a gambler out of at least HK\$150,000, a PJ spokesperson said during a special press conference yesterday.

According to the spokesperson, the duo are siblings surnamed Wang, with the man aged 34 and the woman aged 37. Both told the police that they are jobless.

The casino fraud, according to the spokesperson, was not discovered until Tuesday by an on-duty dealer, who told PJ officers arriving at the scene upon receiving his or her report, that when he or she collected chips from the gaming table, he or she found that one chip with a face value of HK\$50,000 was counterfeit, while other gaming tables' dealers in that casino also discovered two fake chips.

The dealer's gender was not revealed during yesterday's press conference.

The follow-up PJ investigation showed that one of the fake chips



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the two hooded fraud suspects to a PJ vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday.

— Photo: MPDGC

came from a mainland gambler who then told the police that they had received that chip from the illegal currency exchange duo.

After scrutinising the casino's CCTV system, according to the spokesperson, the Judiciary Police picked up the duo and found HK\$150,000 in chips and HK\$7,000 in cash on one of the siblings.

PJ officers believe, according to the spokesperson, that the duo had worked as illegal currency dealers since August, and also discovered

that they had exchanged currency totalling HK\$800,000, resulting in a profit of HK\$8,000.

Under questioning, the duo refused to cooperate with the police.

The casino reported a loss of HK\$100,000, while the gambler reported a loss of HK\$50,000.

The duo were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing charges of illegal currency exchange activities and fraud involving a considerable amount of money. ■

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MACAU POST

### Macau Weather

**VERY DRY.  
FINE.  
FORCE 3 TO 4 NORTH TO  
NORTHEASTERLY WINDS,  
OCCASIONALLY FORCE 5 WITH  
GUSTS.  
RELATIVE HUMIDITY  
WILL RANGE BETWEEN  
30% AND 60%.**



14°C~20°C

Source: SMG

## Yonyou Software (Macao) hosts AI Conference, marks 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Rui Pastorin

Yonyou Software (Macao) Co. Ltd. held its “2024 Digital Intelligence Enterprise, Yonyou AI Conference” and 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary appreciation dinner at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macao yesterday, with the company introducing the intelligent application scenarios of its “AI+” in power and assets, among other fields.

The Beijing-headquartered Yonyou, according to their official website, is the number-one cloud services and ERP (enterprise resource planning) solutions provider in Hong Kong, the mainland, and Asia Pacific. The website adds that the Shanghai-listed company has over 230 branches around the world, with Yonyou Software (Macao) Co. Ltd being one of the subsidiaries in the Asia Pacific Region. It was incorporated in Macau in 2009.

With AI as the topic of this year’s conference, several presentations were held, with the conference featuring discussions from the five fields of artificial intelligence (AI) models, digital intelligence renewal, digital intelligence human resources, digital intelligence assets, and intelligent sales, said yesterday’s

English-speaking emcee, adding that it altogether explored how one can combine AI technology to explore the future of enterprises development.

Moreover, Yonyou Software (Macao) Co. Ltd General Manager Michael Zhang (張勇) reviewed the development history of the company over the past 15 years during his speech. He noted that in this era of surging digital intelligence, the economy of Macau, the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and even the rest of the world are in a period of unprecedented change.

Zhang added that in the past year, AI technology has continued to innovate and develop, with how to combine innovative technologies to promote the digital transformation of enterprises in Macau and the GBA to achieve more agile business, leaner management, and global development capabilities becoming of great concern to current enterprises.

The GBA comprises nine cities in Guangdong Province, including Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhuhai, and the nation’s two special administrative regions, Hong Kong and Macau.

“Yonyou” means “User Friend”. ■

## UIM Macao Grand Prix MotoSurf World Championship ends



“Melco Style Presents: 2024 UIM Macao Grand Prix MotoSurf World Championship Finale” women’s category champion Eliška Matoušková (centre) posing with MotoSurf World Championship Director Martin Jančálek (left) and UIM Secretary General Thomas Kurth during Sunday’s celebration dinner.

Rui Pastorin

The “Melco Style Presents: 2024 UIM Macao Grand Prix MotoSurf World Championship Finale” concluded on Sunday, with the women’s category champion Eliška Matoušková, 16, from the Czech Republic becoming the first official qualifier of the 2025 Chengdu World Games, according to a Melco Resorts & Entertainment statement last night.

A celebration dinner was held at City of Dreams (COD) in Cotai on Sunday.

The three-day MotoSurf\* event marked the Macau debut of the MotoSurf World Championship and brought together over 120 racers from 22 countries and regions to compete at Hac Sa Beach. It was presented by the integrated resort operator in conjunction with the Macau MotoSurf Association (MMSA) and co-presented by the Monaco-based Union Internationale Motonautique (UIM) and Wuling Technology Ltd.

MotoSurf will represent the UIM for the first time at the

12<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Games in Chengdu in August 2025, marking powerboating’s debut in The World Games, according to the statement.

Apart from the main event, Melco and MMSA also co-hosted a workshop at Hac Sa Beach that introduced the sport to local youngsters, which was facilitated by YMCA Macau, according to the statement. Participants also had a chance to join a MotoSurf Trail. ■

\*MotoSurf, according to the MotoSurf Nation website, is a contraction of “Motorised Surfboard”.

宏物微觀 — 澳門當代傑出藝術家展

# 盛世回歸

慶祝中華人民共和國成立75週年  
暨澳門回歸祖國25週年

In Celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Macao's Return to the Motherland

## ECHOES OF A GOLDEN AGE

MACRO EVENTS THROUGH THE MICRO VISIONS OF MACAO'S LEGENDARY CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

澳門四季名薈六樓 金沙藝廊  
Sands Gallery, Level 6, The Grand Suites at Four Seasons

展覽日期: 2024年9月21日至2025年1月5日 | 11:00 - 19:00  
Exhibition Period: September 21, 2024 - January 5, 2025 | 11:00 - 19:00

主辦: Organizer:

支持單位: Supporting Entities:

協辦: Co-Organizer:

策展: Curator:



This undated handout photo provided by Sands China earlier this week shows members of its Sands Cares Ambassadors posing in front of their booth during the 55th Caritas Macau Charity Bazaar.

## Sands China makes 300,000 pataca donation to Caritas Macau

Rui Pastorin

Sands China has recently donated 300,000 patacas to Caritas Macau's 55th Charity Bazaar and 2024 Charity run, marking the integrated resort (IR) operator's 21st consecutive year of donations to the Catholic charity since 2004.

A Sands China statement earlier this week noted that on October 6, Sands China donated 100,000 patacas to Caritas Macau for its recent charity run, with Sands China Community Affairs Director Annie Lam (林好庭) presenting a ceremonial cheque to Caritas Macau Secretary-General Paul Pun Chi Meng at the University of Macau (UM).

Sands Cares Ambassadors also attended and took part in the run, the statement said.

Moreover, during the 55th Charity Bazaar's opening ceremony on November 2, Sands China Executive Vice President of Operations Sean McReery presented a 200,000 pataca ceremonial cheque to Pun at the Nam Van Nautical Centre.

The statement added that 100 Sands Cares Ambassadors also volunteered to run a fundraising game booth at the two-day bazaar, where participants were able to win prizes provided by the IR operator. The company, which was the first IR operator to take part in the bazaar in 2011, marked the 14th consecutive year of setting up game booths.

Both recent annual events raised funds for the charity's "AgEnrich Senior Service", which the statement added aimed to provide "in-home companionship and daily living support for the elderly".

Sands China Executive Vice Chairman Wilfred Wong Ying-wai was quoted by the statement as saying: "We hope that the funds raised from the events will help expand Caritas Macau's AgEnrich Senior Service to support local home-based elderly care, so that seniors can enjoy a fulfilling life".

Pun was also quoted as saying: "Thank you to Sands China for their ongoing support and donations towards the various activities of Caritas Macau. We are thrilled to have Sands Cares Ambassadors participate in the carnival, adding to the festive spirit."

## Responsible Gaming Campus Ambassador Programme ends

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort operator MGM said in a statement on Wednesday that its "Responsible Gaming Campus Ambassador" programme, which it co-organised with City University of Macau (CityU), has recently concluded with a certificate award ceremony for nearly 40 "ambassadors" from different majors such as Social Work and International Tourism and Management.



This undated handout photo provided by MGM on Wednesday shows ambassadors from the "Responsible Gaming Campus Ambassador" Programme promoting responsible gaming information in Coloane Village.

According to the statement, the programme featured thematic courses and promotional practice sessions that aimed to "enhance the participants' sense of social responsibility while improving their communication, organisational and teamwork skills".

Experts in the tourism and leisure industry as well as the social service sector were invited to deliver courses on areas such as the tourism and leisure industry's function and position in the development of civil society and responsible gaming policies, the statement said, with participants expected to put theory into practice through activities like organising on-campus responsible gaming (RG) promotional roadshows and joining MGM's RG promotional activities in the community.

MGM Executive Vice President of Gaming Operations & Strategic Marketing Han Tian was quoted as saying: "As the first integrated resort operator to collaborate with a local university on a sustainable RG promotion programme, we signed a memorandum of understanding with CityU earlier this year, and rolled out a series of initiatives including this programme for local youths as well as mainland students. We hope that these participants can extend what they have learnt to their friends and families, further disseminating RG-related information beyond Macau."

CityU Pro-Rector Robert Chan Chon Pat was quoted as saying: "The in-depth understanding of proper financial values and RG will not only broaden our students' horizons but also serve as the foundation for building a harmonious society".

## Hennessy presents collaboration with NBA legend LeBron James

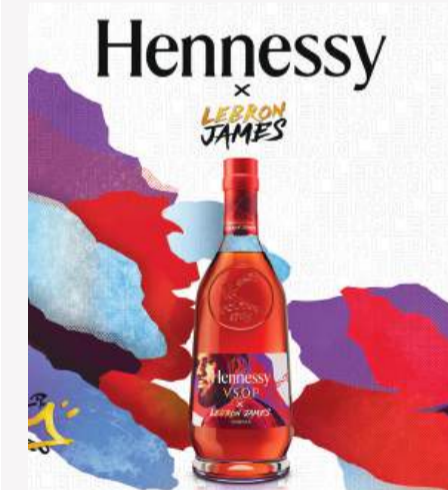
Rui Pastorin

French cognac producer Hennessy has recently unveiled its "Hennessy V.S.O.P Limited Edition by LeBron James", a collaboration with the US basketball legend.

Available at selected retail stores in Hong Kong and Macau since October, a statement by the company noted that the limited-edition features designs that pay homage to LeBron's impact on and off the court, with the bottle and gift box featuring a portrait of James in purple and orange. The Hennessy Bras Armé, meanwhile features a sleeve as a tribute to LeBron, intertwined with his trademark crown.

James was quoted by the statement as saying: "As an admirer of Hennessy and its iconic brand, I've always appreciated its commitment to basketball and how it celebrates the sport's influence on and off the court", adding that the collaboration represents a "shared sense of dedication and discovery coming to life for everyone to enjoy."

Moreover, Hennessy Maison CEO Laurent Boillot said that James is a living legend in basketball "who pushes boundaries in sports, style and culture", wanting to honour their deep and shared values. "This limited edition is a celebration of our friendship, mutual respect and drive for excellence. Together we have created a fresh and vibrant collection for a new generation of fans", Boillot added.



This image recently provided by Hennessy shows the "Hennessy V.S.O.P Limited Edition by LeBron James".

## SJM receives top honours at OSH awards

Rui Pastorin

SJM Resorts said in a Wednesday statement that it earned top honours at the "Award Ceremony for Catering Occupational Safety and Health Awarding Scheme 2024", with the integrated resort operator and six of its restaurants receiving 15 awards in its first year of participating.

The awards programme was organised by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) in partnership with other government entities, trade associations, labour unions, and occupational safety and health (OSH) organisations, according to the statement.

The statement said that Mesa by José Avillez at Grand Lisboa Palace (GLP) received the "Best OSH Restaurant" Grand Gold and Gold Awards, while its Head Chef Herlander Fernandes won the "Outstanding Safety Performance Management" Gold Award.

Moreover, the two other GLP restaurants that won awards are Palace Garden, which won "Best OSH Restaurant Gold Award" and "Outstanding Safety Performance Management Silver Award", and Chalou, which earned the "Best OSH Restaurant Silver Award" and "Outstanding Safety Performance Management Merit Award".

Meanwhile, at Grand Lisboa, Don Alfonso 1890 won both the "Best OSH Restaurant Silver Award" and "Outstanding Safety Performance Management Merit Award"; The Kitchen received the "Best OSH Restaurant Silver Award" and "Outstanding Safety Performance Management Merit Award"; while the Round-The-Clock Coffee Shop won the "Best OSH Restaurant Silver Award" and "Outstanding Safety Performance Management Merit Award".

Lastly, SJM Resorts earned two "OSH Improvement Items Silver Award".



This undated handout photo provided by SJM Resorts on Wednesday shows members of its team holding their awards during the recent "Award Ceremony for Catering Occupational Safety and Health Awarding Scheme 2024".

## HK's 3-runway system goes into operation

HONG KONG – A three-runway system at Hong Kong International Airport officially went into service yesterday, further enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub.

"The new system will greatly enhance the airport's passenger and cargo capacity, bringing substantial business opportunities to Hong Kong," said John Lee Ka-chiu, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

The three-runway system is expected to enable the airport to handle 120 million passenger trips and 10 million tons of cargo annually.

Noting that Hong Kong International Airport serves as a crucial gateway for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA) to the world and plays a strategic role in social and economic development, Lee urged the aviation industry in Hong Kong to rapidly restore air capacity, actively leverage the advantages of the area, and fully expand international connections.

Fred Lam Tin-fuk, chairman

of the Airport Authority Hong Kong, hailed the operation of the new system as a "milestone". "The three-runway system will create conditions to further expand the extensive air connectivity network, consolidating Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub," he said.

Attending the launching ceremony, Vice Minister of Transport Xu Chengguang and deputy head of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) Liang Nan both voiced the country's support for Hong Kong to better integrate into the national development.

The construction of the three-runway system, estimated to have cost around HK\$141.5 billion, began in August 2016.

One of Hong Kong's largest infrastructure projects in recent years, the three-runway system involved the 3,800-meter third runway, an expansion of the Terminal 2 passenger building, a new concourse, an automated people mover system, and a baggage handling system. The third runway was put into operation in July 2022. —Xinhua

## FM Commissioner's Office refutes US smears of HKSAR

HONG KONG – In response to the US Department of State's updated travel advisory for Hong Kong, which disparages the national security law in Hong Kong and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, and maligns the rule of law and human rights situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), a spokesperson for the Commissioner's Office of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the HKSAR expressed strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition yesterday.

The spokesperson emphasized that Hong Kong is one of the safest and most livable cities in the world. The formulation and implementation of the national security law in Hong Kong and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance comply with the spirit of the rule of law and international norms, fully respecting and safeguarding human rights, thus providing a more stable and secure environment for Hong Kong.

The spokesperson noted that in the first half of 2024, Hong Kong

welcomed approximately 21 million trips, an increase of 64 percent year on year. From mid-2023 to mid-2024, about 13,800 residents moved to the city, with capital, enterprises, and talents from various countries continuing to converge, demonstrating the international community's confidence in Hong Kong's development.

The spokesperson added that the US side disregarded facts and distorted the truth. By repeatedly using travel advisories to defame Hong Kong, the US side only reveals its malicious intent to see Hong Kong fail. This will further tarnish the already poor international reputation of the United States.

The spokesperson urged the United States to immediately revoke the false travel advisory, correct its erroneous ratings, and remove obstacles to exchanges and cooperation with Hong Kong.

As a free and open international city, Hong Kong continues to welcome people from all countries to experience the unique charm of the "Pearl of the Orient", the spokesperson said. —Xinhua

## Man steals palm payment device from hotel's reception 'just for fun': police



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows two PSP officers escorting the theft suspect to a police station in Taipa.



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) on Wednesday shows two PSP officers escorting the aggravated theft suspect to a police station in Taipa.

### Tony Wong

A local man was arrested earlier this week for stealing a palm payment device from the reception of a hotel in Cotai early last month, telling the police that he did it "just for fun", Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Lei Chan Hong said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The man surnamed Leong in his twenties told the police that he is jobless.

According to Lei, the hotel reported to the police early last month that its staff found that a palm payment device at its reception had been stolen. After scrutinising the hotel's CCTV footage, PSP officers discovered that a man, Leong, snatched the device and left there on October 6.

PSP officers intercepted Leong on Rua da Madeira (馬德拉街), a street running through the area of two adjacent villages of Cheok Ka Village (卓家村) and Sam Ka Village (三家村) to Lago (Lake) Building (湖畔大廈) in Taipa, a subsidised home-ownership scheme (HOS) estate, on Monday this week.

Under questioning, Lei said, Leong admitted to having stolen the palm payment device from the hotel's reception "just for fun". He told the police that after playing with the device for a while, he dumped it in a green area outside the hotel.

According to Lei, the police were still looking for the device at the time of yesterday's press conference.

Leong has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further questioning, facing a theft charge.

### Gambler steals from bags while uni students exercising

Meanwhile, Lei announced during Wednesday's regular press conference that a man from the mainland was arrested on Monday for stealing cash and valuables from bags that seven students put aside while they were exercising in a sports complex on the campus of a university in Taipa on Sunday.

The man surnamed Li in his forties told the police that he is unemployed.

According to Lei, the seven students reported to the police on Sunday afternoon that after exercising in the sports complex, they found that their personal possessions had disappeared from their bags.

The stolen possessions included cash, four smartphones, and two tablet computers worth 55,800 patacas in total.

After scrutinising the police forces' citywide CCTV camera system, Lei said, PSP officers identified Li as the thief. The police also confirmed that Li went to a green area near Cheok Kun Pavilion

(焯公亭) located at the junction of Estrada dos Parses (白頭馬路) and Estrada de Cacilhas (海邊馬路/割狗環), near the Macau Monetary Authority's (AMCM) headquarters, on Guia Hill in the peninsula later the same day after stealing the students' valuables.

According to Lei, PSP officers arrested Li the next day when he went to the same location again.

Under questioning, Lei said, Li admitted that he decided to steal valuables from bags of those exercising after gambling away all his money in local casinos on Friday last week.

According to Lei, Li told the police that as he worried that the Global Positioning Systems (GPS) of the stolen smartphones and tablet computers might enable the police to know his whereabouts, he decided to hide them in the bushes near the pavilion.

Li said that he went to the location the next day again with the objective of checking whether the ill-gotten items were still there, according to Lei. As the police had put the location under surveillance, Li was arrested when he returned to the area.

Li has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further questioning, facing an aggravated theft charge.

A thief faces an aggravated charge if the stolen possessions are worth over 30,000 patacas. ■

## HK govt condemns EU Parliament's HK resolution

HONG KONG – The Hong Kong government said yesterday that it rejects and strongly disapproves of the European Parliament's so-called resolution on Hong Kong.

The European legislature earlier passed a non-binding resolution, calling for the "immediate and unconditional" release of all opposition figures who had been sentenced on national security charges.

It called for sanctions to be

imposed on Hong Kong and mainland officials, and demanded that Hong Kong's favourable customs treatment be revoked.

In a statement, the HKSAR government said it strongly condemns the baseless claims made against its officials.

A spokesperson stressed that as an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong needs to put in place a complete and effective set of

national security legislation to safeguard national security.

He added that many other common law jurisdictions also have their own national security legislation, and that the European Parliament should not interfere in Hong Kong matters and China's internal affairs.

The spokesman stressed that all trials in Hong Kong are being conducted in an open, fair and independent manner. —RTHK, MPD

## STOCK MARKETS

### Hang Seng Index closes 1.2 pct lower

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 1.2 percent to close at 19,366.96 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index fell 1.46 percent to end at 6,924.51 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index lost 1.52 percent to close at 4,307.75 points. —Xinhua