

## **Hong Kong Monetary Authority and Qatar Central Bank strengthen financial co-operation (with photo)**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the Qatar Central Bank (QCB) held a bilateral meeting in Doha on October 3 (Doha time) to enhance collaboration between the financial services sectors of the two jurisdictions.

During the meeting, the HKMA and QCB discussed a range of collaborative initiatives aimed at strengthening co-operation in financial infrastructure, and exchanged experience on capital markets connectivity, sustainable finance, bond market development, digital assets and talent development.

The HKMA looks forward to working closely with the QCB to foster connectivity and facilitate further exchanges between the two financial markets.



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## **Hong Kong Science Museum to launch programmes aligned with theme of French Science Festival enabling public to understand importance of marine conservation (with photos)**

To align with the theme of this year's French Science Festival, "Oceans

of Knowledge", the Science Promotion Unit of the Hong Kong Science Museum (HKScM) is collaborating with the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macau to roll out a series of free feature programmes from tomorrow (October 4) to October 14 at the museum. They include the "Oceans: A New Mining Treasure Trove?" exhibition, an inaugural conference, a virtual reality experience, and a film screening, enabling members of the public to understand the importance of marine ecosystem conservation.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the exhibition today (October 3), the Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Culture), Miss Eve Tam, said that Hong Kong, embraced by the sea on three sides, has transformed from a modest fishing village into an international metropolis. Over the years, this transformation has been a testament to the vital role the ocean has played in Hong Kong's development. While the sea offers a wealth of resources and opportunities, it also poses many challenges that call for the protection of the marine environment. Other officiating guests included the Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, Mrs Christile Drulhe, and the Museum Director of the HKScM, Mr Lawrence Lee.

Amid growing concerns among the international community about deep-sea mining exploration projects, the "Oceans: A New Mining Treasure Trove?" exhibition will explore what people know about the deep sea, and the potential risks of seabed mining. The exhibition specially features a virtual reality experience titled "Dolphin Man", allowing audiences to be immersed in three 360° virtual reality spaces that follow divers and share their sensory perceptions of the underwater world.

To complement the exhibition, the HKScM will also hold the Inaugural Conference on the Preservation of Oceans and Marine Resources at the Lecture Hall on the first floor of the HKScM on October 4. Two ambassadors for the French Science Festival 2024, the Founder of the Bling Bling Ocean Foundation, Ms Hidy Yu, and the Executive Director of the Tara Ocean Foundation, Mr Romain Troublé, will join Professor Joost Schokkenbroek from the University of Hong Kong to discuss the importance of marine conservation and explore ways to raise public awareness. There will be a film screening of "The Odyssey" on October 13 at the same venue. The film follows the life and adventures of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, a French ocean-going adventurer, biologist, and filmmaker, and documents his aquatic adventures over 30 years.

Online registration for the programmes mentioned above has started. There will be limited quotas available on a first-come, first-served basis. For programme details and registration methods, please visit [www.spu.hk/en/cards/french-science-festival-2024/](http://www.spu.hk/en/cards/french-science-festival-2024/), or call 2732 3232 for enquiries.

The exhibition and programmes are presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, and are organised by the Science Promotion Unit of the HKScM and the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macau.



## Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (October 3) closely monitoring an additional case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by Saudi Arabia. The CHP again urged the public to pay special attention to safety and take due consideration of the health risks when visiting other places.

According to the WHO, the additional case involves a male aged between

50 and 55 with underlying illnesses. The patient was admitted to the hospital on August 31, and his nasopharyngeal swab tested positive for MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) on September 4. He is fully recovered now.

According to the latest information, 2 614 MERS cases (with 943 deaths) have been reported to the WHO since 2012, among which 2 205 cases were reported by Saudi Arabia (including the patient reported above).

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"As countries in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, continue to report MERS cases from time to time, travellers should refrain from going to farms, barns or markets with camels and avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry. Most of the cases reported in the Middle East had a history of exposure to camels, consumption of camel milk or contact with other MERS patients," the spokesman said.

"Scientific evidence shows that camels are reservoirs for MERS-CoV. Camels infected with MERS-CoV may not show any signs of infection. Infected animals may shed MERS-CoV through nasal and eye discharge and faeces, and potentially in their milk and urine. The virus may also be found in the raw organs and meat of infected animals. Therefore, the best protection is to practise good hygiene and avoid direct contact with all of these," the spokesman added.

From time to time, suspected MERS cases reported to the CHP for investigation involve patients with a history of contact with camels in the Middle East. The CHP strongly advises travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS-CoV. Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene.

The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#) to learn more about MERS statistics in [affected areas](#). The public should also refer to the CHP's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#) and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

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## [Coordination Group on Implementation of Fintech Initiatives convenes fourth](#)



# meeting

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, today (October 3) chaired the fourth meeting of the Coordination Group on Implementation of Fintech Initiatives (CGFin) and conducted exchanges with representatives from the financial regulators, the fintech sector, academia, and research institutions on the latest developments of Hong Kong's fintech sector.

Mr Hui said, "As an international financial centre with a robust regulatory environment, as well as rich business opportunities and capital support, Hong Kong is an ideal destination for the development of digital finance and fintech. The Government and the financial regulators have long been strongly supporting the development of fintech, including enhancing financial infrastructure, building a more active fintech ecosystem, nurturing fintech talent, and strengthening liaison and collaboration with the Mainland and overseas partners. The work of CGFin will continue to promote cross-sectoral co-ordination and co-operation. I greatly appreciate the valuable views expressed by the industry representatives."

The Government exchanged views with the participants on different fintech areas, including how virtual assets should be further integrated into the mainstream financial market, and the adoption of artificial intelligence in the financial market. In addition, at the meeting, Cyberport and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority reported the latest developments of the Green and Sustainable Fintech Proof-of-Concept Funding Support Scheme and the wholesale central bank digital currency Project Ensemble respectively.

The meeting also noted that Hong Kong FinTech Week 2024, themed "Illuminating New Pathways in Fintech", will be held from October 28 to November 1, with the main conference to be staged on October 28 and 29 at the AsiaWorld-Expo. The ninth edition of the event will attract attendees from all over the world, including renowned speakers across different sectors. The Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and Invest Hong Kong will collaborate with participating parties and the industry to showcase the vitality of Hong Kong's fintech ecosystem to global markets.

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury is the Chairman of CGFin. Its members include representatives from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission, the Insurance Authority, the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority, the Accounting and Financial Reporting Council, Invest Hong Kong, Cyberport, and the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation.

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# Land use rezoning matter related to University of Hong Kong's proposed construction of Global Innovation Centre in Pok Fu Lam

With regards to a press release issued by the University of Hong Kong (HKU) relating to its proposed Global Innovation Centre today (October 3), the Development Bureau (DEVB)'s remarks on the land use planning matters related to the proposed development are as follows:

The Government welcomes and agrees for the HKU, as the project proponent, to proceed as proposed in the press release to first review its proposed development to suitably revise its development scale and layout in order to specifically respond to stakeholders' views on environment, transport, visual, and other aspects. The HKU should also enhance its communication with the community and maintain positive interactions with stakeholders, in particular to explain the site selection of Pok Fu Lam as the site and how the proposed development would benefit the neighborhood. The Government would continue to provide appropriate support for the project.

The HKU has positioned the Centre to be an upstream deep technology and interdisciplinary research facility. To take forward the HKU's proposed development, the Town Planning Board (TPB) agreed in March this year to rezone a site of about four hectares in Pok Fu Lam from mainly "Green Belt" ("GB") to "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Global Innovation Centre" ("OU(Global Innovation Centre)"). During the two-month exhibition period of the relevant Outline Zoning Plan, the TPB received more than 3 500 representations expressing views on the location of the proposed development, its impacts on the environment, traffic, visual and other aspects, as well as the consultation arrangements etc. The TPB will conduct hearings to consider the representations in early November in accordance with statutory town planning procedures.

In its paper to be issued for the hearings scheduled for early November, the Planning Department (PlanD) will present the representations received earlier. Also, in view of the HKU's latest decision as announced today, the PlanD intends to recommend to the TPB to amend the zoning of the site from the original proposal of "OU(Global Innovation Centre)" to an interim zoning of "Undetermined". This is to enable the HKU to review and revise its development plan and to consult the community first, before the PlanD proposes to the TPB appropriate land use zoning and the development parameters based on a revised proposal as agreed by concerned government bureaux/departments. The TPB would, after hearing views from representers and responses from the Government in November, consider whether to accept the interim zoning of "Undetermined" for the site.

"Undetermined" is an interim land use zoning, which will allow the HKU to review its original plan and adjust it in response to views as expressed by stakeholders. The long-term use and development parameters of the site would be determined after the HKU's submission of a revised proposal, which would go through public consultation and the Government's examination, and be subject to another round of statutory town planning procedures for rezoning. Members of the public would then have the opportunity again to submit written representations and attend hearings to express their views to the TPB directly.

The 2021 Policy Address set out that in order to consolidate Hong Kong's leading position in basic research, the Government has accepted in principle the HKU's proposal to construct the facility for deep technology research in Pok Fu Lam, and hence to reserve a four-hectare site currently zoned "GB" at Pok Fu Lam.