



Hong Kong airport launches new third runway

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong’s airport has officially launched a new third runway which is expected to boost the city’s status as an aviation hub. Airport Authority Hong Kong said about 140 flights a day are already using the new runway, which has been in operation since early July. However, the airport is still using only two runways because its center runway was closed in July for reconfiguration. The airport is also expanding its Terminal 2 and is building a new concourse and baggage handling system. Work is expected to be completed by 2024, after which the airport will use all three runways, giving it more flight capacity. The entire project will cost 145 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$18.5 billion), according to Jack So, chairman of the airport authority. “The project was funded from the private market and it doesn’t involve any government money,” So said at the launch ceremony. “This proves that the international financial community, banking sector, and funds are confident of Hong Kong and its airport.” Brendan Sobie, an independent aviation analyst based in Singapore, said that when all three runways are operating, it will allow more planes to land during peak hours, thereby expanding the airport’s capacity. “You need that capacity, that infrastructure, because you’d start losing out if others have something you don’t have,” Sobie said. He noted that several other airports in Asia, including in Bangkok and Jakarta, are either working on a third runway or have already added one. Hong Kong’s additional runway will also facilitate cargo growth. The city eased pandemic travel restrictions in October, allowing inbound and outbound travel without mandatory quarantine. However, incoming travellers must have a regular COVID-19 test upon arrival.

WHO, CDC: Record 40 million kids missing measles vaccine

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say measles immunization has dropped significantly since the coronavirus pandemic began, resulting in a record high of nearly 40 million children missing a vaccine dose last year. In a recent report, WHO and the CDC said millions of children were now susceptible to measles, among the world’s most contagious diseases. In 2021, officials said there were about 9 million measles infections and 128,000 deaths worldwide. WHO and CDC said continued drops in vaccination, weak disease surveillance, and delayed response plans due to COVID-19, in addition to ongoing outbreaks in more than 20 countries, mean that “measles is an imminent threat in every region of the world.” Scientists estimate that at least 95% of a population needs to be immunized to protect against epidemics; WHO and the CDC reported that only about 81% of children receive their first dose of measles vaccine while 71% get their second dose, marking the lowest global coverage rates of the first measles dose since 2008. “The record number of children under-immunized and susceptible to measles shows the profound damage immunization systems have sustained during the COVID-19 pandemic,” CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said in a statement. Measles is mostly spread through direct contact or in the air and causes symptoms including fever, muscle pain, and a skin rash on the face and upper neck. Most measles-related deaths are caused by complications including swelling of the brain and dehydration. WHO says complications are most serious in children under age five and adults older than 30. More than 95% of measles deaths occur in developing countries, mostly in Africa and Asia. There is no specific treatment for measles, but the two-dose vaccine against it is about 97% effective in preventing severe illness and death. In July, the U.N. said 25 million children have missed out on routine immunizations against diseases including diphtheria, largely because the coronavirus disrupted routine health services or triggered vaccine misinformation.

Chinese coast guard seizes rocket debris from Filipino navy

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — The Chinese coast guard forcibly seized floating debris the Philippine navy was towing to its island in another confrontation in the disputed South China Sea, according to a Philippine military commander. The debris appeared to be from a Chinese rocket launch. The Chinese vessel twice blocked the Philippine naval boat before seizing the debris it was towing off Philippine-occupied Thitu Island, Vice Admiral Alberto Carlos said. He said no one was injured in the incident. It’s the latest flare-up in long-seething territorial disputes in the strategic waterway, involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. Chinese coast guard ships have blocked Philippine supply boats delivering supplies to Filipino forces in the disputed waters in the past, but seizing objects in the possession of another nation’s military constituted a more brazen act. Carlos said the Filipino sailors, using a long-range camera on Thitu island, spotted the debris drifting in strong waves near a sandbar about 800 yards away. They set out on a boat and retrieved the floating object and started to tow it back to their island using a rope tied to their boat. As the Filipino sailors were moving back to their island, “they noticed that China coast guard vessel with bow number 5203 was approaching their location and subsequently blocked their pre-plotted course twice,” Carlos said in a statement. The Chinese coast guard vessel then deployed an inflatable boat with personnel who “forcefully retrieved said floating object by cutting the towing line attached to the” Filipino sailors’ rubber boat. The Filipino sailors decided to return to their island, Carlos said, without detailing what happened. Maj. Cheryl Tindog, spokesperson of the military’s Western Command, said the floating metal object appeared similar to a number of other pieces of Chinese rocket debris recently found in Philippine waters. She added the Filipino sailors did not fight the seizure.



CHA CHAAN TENGs. Eric Tam, an insurance manager who moved to Liverpool with his family in June, poses for a photo after an interview in Hong Kong. As tens of thousands leave Hong Kong for new lives abroad, many are craving a flavor from childhood that’s become a symbol of the city’s culture: the sweet, heavy tea with evaporated milk that’s served both hot and cold at diner-like restaurants called cha chaan tengs. Workshops are popping up to teach professionals to brew tea like short-order cooks, and milk tea businesses are expanding beyond Chinatowns in Britain. (AP Photo/Vernon Yuen)

Hong Kong émigrés seek milk tea in craving for taste of home

By Kanis Leung
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — In London, Wong Wai-yi misses the taste of home.

A year ago, the 31-year-old musician was in Hong Kong, earning a good living composing for TV and movies and teaching piano. Today, she makes about half as much in London working part-time as a server alongside her musical pursuits. She chose the job in part because staff meals allow her to save money on food.

It’s a difficult adjustment. And Wong, who left Hong Kong with her boyfriend in January, has turned to a beloved hometown staple to keep her grounded: milk tea. She brings the beverage to parties with Hong Kong friends and gives bottles to co-workers as gifts.

“It’s like reminding myself I am a Hong Konger. It will be fine as long as we are willing to endure the hardships and work hard,” said Wong, who left as part of an exodus that began after Beijing passed a law in 2020 that curtailed civil liberties.

As tens of thousands leave Hong Kong for new lives abroad, many are craving a flavor from childhood that’s become a symbol of the city’s culture: the sweet, heavy tea with evaporated milk that’s served both hot and cold at diner-like restaurants called cha chaan tengs. Workshops are popping up to teach professionals to brew tea like short-order cooks, and milk tea businesses are expanding beyond Chinatowns in Britain.

In Hong Kong, milk tea is an unassuming beverage, something you use to wash down sweet French toast off a plastic plate. It’s so

beloved that members of Hong Kong’s protest movement have called themselves part of a “Milk Tea Alliance” with activists from Taiwan, Thailand, and Myanmar who drink similar beverages.

Following a law that silenced or jailed most political opposition, more than 133,000 residents have secured a special visa that allows them to live and work in the U.K. and apply for British citizenship after six years. Official figures have not been released on how many have gone, but most recipients are expected to do so given the visa’s cost.

The pathway was introduced last year in response to China’s 2020 enactment of the National Security Law, which the U.K. called “a clear breach” of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. The declaration included a promise to retain the former British colony’s rights and freedoms for 50 years after it was returned to China’s rule in 1997.

Exiled activist Lee Ka-wai said that immersing himself at a Hong Kong-style café in London with a cup of milk tea was a “luxury.”

The 26-year-old fled Hong Kong in March last year out of fear of being arrested. He is wanted by the city’s anti-graft body for allegedly inciting others to boycott the legislative election in December 2021. As an asylum seeker in Britain, he is not allowed to work and is living on savings.

Even if the taste is right, he said, the feel of a cha chaan teng and the sounds of customers chatting in Cantonese cannot be replicated.

“It’s strange because I can feel a sense of home overseas. But it also has another

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The Asian Reporter is published on the first Monday each month.

News page advertising deadlines for our next two issues are:

January 2, 2023 edition:
Space reservations due: Wednesday, Dec. 28 at 1:00pm
Artwork due: Thursday, Dec. 29 at 1:00pm

February 6, 2023 edition:
Space reservations due: Wednesday, Feb. 1 at 1:00pm
Artwork due: Thursday, Feb. 2 at 1:00pm

Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 12/02

Bangladesh Taka	102.3
Cambodian Riel	4111.6
China Renminbi	7.019
Fijian Dollar	2.1683
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7838
Indian Rupee	81.41
Indonesian Rupiah	15389
Iranian Rial	42400
Japanese Yen	135.36
Laos New Kip	17,303
Malaysian Ringgit	4.383
Nepal Rupee	130.35
Pakistani Rupee	223.65
Papua N.G. Kina	3.521
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Sri Lankan Rupee	368.13
Taiwan Dollar	30.609
Thai Baht	34.69
Vietnam Dong	24363