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**Report Highlights:**

Bite size local news, Post reports and activity summaries wrapped by ATO Hong Kong. In this issue: U.S. Food Companies Return to FoodExpo After Three-Year Hiatus; Hong Kong's Economic Recovery Softens in Second Quarter; Trade Volume External Merchandise Lowers in June; Hong Kong Plays Host to 3.6 Million Travelers in July; Mid-Year Population Increases 2.1 Percent; Macau Tourism Industry Sees Increasing Number of Tours Group; Macau Forecast 2024 Deficit Despite \$25.6 Billion on Expected Gaming Revenue; Evening Shows Key to Night Economy; Halal Eateries Hold Key to ASEAN Push; Hong Kong-Macau Cross Boundary Good Vehicles Using the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge to Start on August 8; Smuggled Goods Including Frozen Wagyu Beef and Dried Shark Fins Worth \$2.4 Million Seized.

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## U.S. Food Companies Return to FoodExpo After Three-Year Hiatus

Last week, FoodExport Midwest USA and Foodexport USA Northeast brought three U.S. companies to join the FoodExpo trade show to exhibit shelf-stable products such as condiments, sauces, cereal bars, and organic dehydrated fruits. Over the last three years, pandemic restrictions discouraged the participation of U.S. exhibitors. However, during its peak years, the show attracted as many as eighteen U.S. companies. In the first six months of 2023, U.S. exports of consumer-ready products increased 3.5 percent compared to the same period last year despite a drop in Hong Kong's global imports of these products. During this period, U.S. exports sales to Hong Kong improved in poultry meat, edible tree nuts, seafood, beef, and fresh fruit.

## ECONOMY



## Hong Kong's Economic Recovery Softens in Second Quarter of 2023 [[HKSAR Press Release](#), Aug 11]

According to the government's Half-year Economic Report 2023, the Hong Kong economy continued to recover in the second quarter of 2023, led by inbound tourism and private consumption. However, momentum softened on the back of the strong rebound in the preceding quarter. Real GDP grew by 1.5 percent year-on-year, compared to 2.9 percent in the preceding quarter. Total exports of goods plunged further 15.2 percent year-on-year in the second quarter amid weak external demand for goods. Exports to the Mainland, the United States and the European Union fell sharply. Conversely, exports of services continued to grow noticeably by 22.9 percent. Domestically, private consumption expenditure rose

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notably further 8.2 percent year-on-year alongside the continued economic recovery. Overall investment expenditure reverted to a mild decline of 0.9 percent amid tightened financial conditions. The labor market continued to improve in the second quarter. The unemployment rate declined further from 3.1 percent in the first quarter to 2.9 percent in the second quarter. The unemployment rates of many major sectors declined. Inbound tourism and private consumption will remain the major drivers of economic growth for the rest of the year. As transportation and handling capacity continue to recover, visitor arrivals should increase further. The improving economic situation and prospects should bode well for domestic demand, though tight financial conditions may impose constraints. Improved labor market conditions and the Government's various measures that boost the momentum of the recovery are expected to provide additional support to private consumption. Yet, the difficult global economic environment will continue to weigh on Hong Kong's exports of goods. Real GDP growth forecast for the whole 2023 year was revised to 4.0 - 5.0 percent, from 3.5 - 5.5 percent in May. The Consumer Price Index rose by 1.7 percent year-on-year in the second quarter, compared with the 1.9 percent increase in the preceding quarter. Prices of meals out and takeaway food, and clothing and footwear rose visibly, but the former showed a decelerated increase. Meanwhile, price pressures on other major components were broadly in check. Overall inflation should stay moderate in the near term. While domestic business costs might face some upward pressures alongside the economic recovery, it should remain largely moderate in the near term. **ATO Notes:** [In the second half of 2023, Hong Kong's economy is still growing at 1.5 percent, albeit at a softer pace compared to the first quarter. The city is counting on private consumption and tourism as lagging import and export performance continues to temper Hong Kong's economic revival.](#)

## **Trade Volume External Merchandise Lowers in June 2023** [[HKSAR Press Release, Aug 10](#)]

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) reported that in June 2023, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods decreased 14.7 percent and imports of goods decreased 15.5 percent compared to June 2022. Comparing the first half of 2023 with the same period in 2022, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods and imports of goods also decreased 18.7 percent and 16.2 percent respectively. Comparing June 2023 with June 2022, the prices of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased 4.3 percent and 3.9 percent, respectively. Comparing June 2023 with June 2022, declines were recorded for the import volume from all main suppliers: Singapore (-34.2%), mainland China (-17.1%), Taiwan (-16.3%), Japan (-7.5%) and the USA (-3.1%). Over the same period, import prices from all main suppliers increased: Taiwan (8.8%), mainland China (5.2%), Singapore (3.6%), Japan (2.6%) and the USA (2.0%). **ATO Notes:** [Import and export of goods are still falling behind in the first half of 2023 for Hong Kong. Imports from Singapore, China and Taiwan had the steepest drop in terms of total volume. Higher import prices contributed to the drop in Hong Kong's demand for trade.](#)

## **Hong Kong Plays Host to 3.6 Million Travelers in July** [[HKSAR Press Release, Aug 11](#)]

Some 3.6 million tourists visited Hong Kong in July, marking a 31 percent increase from the previous month, according to latest data released by the city's tourism board. Among the visitors, nearly 3 million were from mainland China. The average daily visitor arrivals were 116,000. Cumulatively, nearly 16.5 million visitor arrivals were recorded in the first seven months of this year. The board's executive director Dane Cheng Ting-yat said Hong Kong's tourism industry is recovering gradually and noted that visitors are looking for more in-depth and diversified experiences. "Visitor arrivals to Hong Kong have recovered the fastest in Southeast Asia, with visitor arrivals from the Philippines and Thailand each

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reaching more than 90 percent of pre-pandemic levels last month, followed by mainland, which has recovered by about 70 percent,” Cheng said. “About half of all visitors are overnight visitors, slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels.” **ATO Notes:** [Visitor arrivals in Hong Kong have improved significantly. However, visitor numbers from mainland have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. On the other hand, visitor numbers from other locations like Japan, Thailand and South Korea had the most visible growth. In June, the Philippines, Taiwan, and the United States provided the highest number of visitors.](#)

## **Mid-Year Population Increases 2.1 Percent [[HKSAR Press Release, Aug 15](#)]**

According to the statistics released by the Census and Statistics Department, in mid-2023, the provisional estimate for Hong Kong’s population was 7,498,100, an increase of 152,000 or 2.1 percent from mid-2022. A government spokesperson pointed out that with the gradual relaxation of anti-pandemic control measures since the second half of 2022, normal travel between Hong Kong and the mainland and other parts of the world has been progressively resumed. Many Hong Kong residents who stayed abroad during the pandemic have returned to Hong Kong, while some mainland and overseas persons have also been admitted to Hong Kong through various schemes. A large net inflow of Hong Kong residents was hence recorded in the first half of 2023. **ATO Notes:** [The Hong Kong government continues to offer new talent acquisition schemes to recover from the immigration loss. In discussions with restaurateurs, ATO has heard little optimism that departing expats will return and that new overseas companies establishing operations in the city are primarily from mainland. Nevertheless, there is some hope that a new generation of expats will eventually venture out to Hong Kong to live and work.](#)

## **Macau Airport Handled Over 550,000 Passengers in July with 28 Percent Increase from June [[Macau Daily Times, Aug 8](#)]**

The Macau International Airport handled over 550,000 passengers last month, the Airport Company (CAM) has said, referring to the July statistics. This figure represents a month-on-month increase of 28 percent and puts the total movement of passengers at the local airport at about 60 percent of the pre-pandemic level. The number of flights followed a similar trend, increasing 10 percent to 4,000 compared to the previous month with the average daily flights recovering 58 percent of pre-pandemic levels. Aligned with the new tourism development strategy of the government, the CAM added that Macau promotions in markets of medium-haul routes, such as Indonesia, will attract more international tourists to Macau.

## **Tourism Industry Sees Increasing Number of Tours Group [[Macau Daily Times, Aug 9](#)]**

The city currently sees about 100 tour groups arriving daily, with room for incremental growth, a local tourism group head has said. This figure equates to 30 – 40 percent of 2019 levels. In the first half of the year, the city has seen 349,000 tourists entering Macau through group tours. In June alone, there were 64,000 tourists. Despite the optimism, it has been suggested that the figure will only return to 80 percent of 2019 levels at best, or about 300 groups per day on average. This is based on the changing travel habits of mainland residents. **ATO Notes:** [According to the Macau tourism industry, one of the biggest impediments to increasing the number of visiting tour groups remains labor shortages. In the past few years, coach drivers have reached retirement age and unable to renew their licenses. In addition, there have been minimal new drivers entering the tour industry.](#)

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## **Macau Emerges as Mainlanders' Top Tourist Destination [[Macau Daily Times, Aug 14](#)]**

The China Tourism Academy last week issued the “Big Data Report on Outbound Tourism in the First Half of 2023,” revealing that Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan were the top destinations for Chinese outbound tourists. Macau accounted for more than half of mainlanders’ top outbound travel destination. According to the report, a total of 40.3 million mainland tourists visited outbound destinations in the first half of this year, with Macau accounting for 50.9 percent, ranking first, Hong Kong for 26.66 percent, ranking second, and Taiwan accounting for 2.33 percent, ranking fifth. In addition, according to the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC), during the first six months of 2023, the number of mainland visitors to Macau recovered to 52.7 percent of the same period in pre-pandemic 2019, which was faster than that of neighboring areas. According to the statement, the government will continue to adopt a strategy of appropriate diversified economic development, utilizing the high-quality tourism facilities and services that Macau has to offer.

## **Government Forecast 2024 Deficit Despite \$25.6 Billion on Expected Gaming Revenue [[Macau Daily Times, Aug 14](#)]**

The government is preparing to forecast another deficit in 2024, the Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, admitted at the Legislative Assembly (AL). The CE said next year’s budget is still expected to have greater expenses than revenues, hinting the budget could be some \$1.3 billion short of being balanced. This is despite the government’s forecast of about \$25.6 billion in gaming revenue, which is expected to grow 53.8 percent compared to 2023. The CE said that despite next year’s budget deficit, the government is not cutting any population livelihood benefits, which will remain untouched for 2024. The topic seems to anticipate debate to come later this year when the CE will present the Policy Address for 2024 (LAG24), as several lawmakers have previously called for the resumption of the injection of the money into the provident fund accounts to support those of an older age (above 65 years old), who can withdraw such funds immediately.

## **Grab the Opportunity Tourism Industry Offers [[Macau Daily Post, Aug 5](#)]**

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has issued a notice requiring management companies at tourism spots to promptly respond to changes in market demand and optimize reservation measures to better serve visiting tourists. The full recovery of the tourism industry can both boost the overall economy and contribute to improving social expectations. The ministry’s call to help meet tourist demands addresses social concerns and helps to promote more refined services offered by relevant departments. Difficulty in getting a ticket to scenic spots has much to do with inadequate service provided by the operating entities. Focusing on providing high-quality services, improved infrastructure, and ensuring sustainable and responsible tourism practices will contribute to the overall development of the tourism industry.

**ATO Notes:** The Macau Government urged their ministry officials to become more creative in enhancing current tourism products and services. Officials are being asked to adapt to meet tourists’ demand, for example increased efficiency, accessibility, prices, and novel experiences.

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## *HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, AND INSTITUTIONS*

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### **Evening Shows “Key to Night Economy”** [[The Standard, Aug 16](#)]

Hong Kong should organize more art performances in the evenings to help revitalize the city's night economy instead of trying to increase competition between restaurants, Institution of Dining Art chairman Simon Wong Kit-lung said. His call came after Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said that the administration would work to revive night bazaars in the short-term to consolidate the economic recovery. Wong said a common current problem for restaurants was not having sufficient patrons during dinner time, and that even the rollout of discounts has proven ineffective to boost receipts. Peter Shiu Ka-fai, who represents the wholesale and retail sector in the Legislative Council, said the administration can learn from night markets in Bangkok and Taiwan. New People's Party Legco member Dominic Lee Tsz-king said "the government could encourage malls to extend opening hours to host night markets and busking activities. The government could also look into expanding the types of food allowed under the temporary food factory licenses beyond heating up precooked food. He also said markets such as nighttime Mid-Autumn Festival and Christmas celebrations and Lunar New Year markets could be held for longer periods such as at least three weeks or a month. **ATO Notes:** Prior to the pandemic, restaurant closing hours were after mid-night and after 10pm for shopping malls. However, after the pandemic, restaurants now close between 10-11pm while shopping malls close between 8-9pm. Labor shortages in the food and beverage sector have tempered the return to extended opening hours, with some restaurants limiting their operations to providing only lunch or dinner services. According to a local chef association, over the last four years, the sector has lost a notable 500,000 workers. In addition, several restaurant owners (from high to medium-end establishments) have told ATO that beyond limited ability to expand night operating hours, providing weekend services is currently a challenge as many Hongkongers are now opting to travel to mainland over the weekend to dine out or go shopping. Some Michelin-starred establishments reported having a difficult time booking more than two tables on a regular Saturday as this consumer trend continues to take hold. Conversely, larger scale restaurants are reporting full bookings for major events for the remainder of the year.

### **Halal Eateries “Hold Key to ASEAN Push”** [[The Standard, Aug 7](#)]

Hong Kong will encourage more ASEAN enterprises to expand businesses in Hong Kong by opening more halal food places. This announcement came as Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu's trip to three members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations - Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia - last month led to increased trade cooperation. Many Indonesian firms had expressed interest in listing in Hong Kong and the city will step up connections with them to seize these business opportunities. "More importantly, we need to consider if there's a need to open more halal restaurants because food is the first necessity of the people. If they feel at home in Hong Kong, they will find more opportunities here." Hong Kong signed 33 agreements and memorandums of understanding in the three countries and will resume the civil service exchange program with Singapore. Malaysia has also extended visa-free entry for Hong Kong passport holders from a month to 90 days. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong is cooperating with

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ASEAN countries hoping to expand trade, investment, and people exchanges with ASEAN firms. The HKG is encouraging the establishment of more halal restaurants to fulfill anticipated demand. Hong Kong is known for its diverse culinary scene. As of 2023, there are already 75 restaurants and 2 airline kitchens with Halal certification.

## **Hong Kong Disneyland VP Cautiously Optimistic About Theme Park's Prospects [[The Standard](#), Aug 14]**

The three hotels in the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort were nearly fully booked during the summer holiday as it welcomed the first summer break after the re-opening of the borders, and the theme park is looking to hire 500 more staff to prepare for the new attraction that will debut in November. Tim Sypko, the senior vice president of operations of Hong Kong Disneyland noted that over 90 percent of the rooms of the three hotels were booked in the summer holiday, but it would be better to stay conservatively optimistic with the park's outlook as the number of flights has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The vice president remarked that they had hired nearly 1,000 staff since the resumption of cross-border travel, but the park needs assistance in recruiting as it has to compete with other hotels that were also looking for more staffing. **ATO Notes:** Large scale restaurants at hotels and theme parks in Hong Kong are not only competing against one another to attract talent but also reportedly facing major competition from large scale operations in Macau. One hotel chef commented that the few workers available are opting for more premium employment packages offered by casino hotels in Macau that include benefits such as housing and other compensations.

## **Andaz Macau Hotel to Open Doors on September [[Macau Daily Times](#), Aug 11]**

The Andaz Macau has announced it will open its doors to the public on September 15 this year, ahead of the “golden week” of the National Day. The hotel is the world’s largest Andaz property yet and is a partnership between Galaxy Macau and Hyatt, featuring over 700 rooms and suites. The development is marketed as a convenient offer for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) guests as well as other guests “pursuing a modern lifestyle.” The food and beverage offering will be complete with the Andaz Kitchen which, according to the media release, will offer a selection of Chinese, Portuguese, and Western culinary dishes. **ATO Notes:** Andaz Macau is one of the nine newly constructed hotels in 2023. Andaz has great locational advantage close to Macau’s biggest convention center. All the new developments in Macau are reflecting the city’s intention to diversify sources of revenue by expanding MICE, catering, and retail industries.

## **Expo Exhibitors Condemn Sales Drop [[The Standard](#), Aug 8]**

The third Brands and Products Shopping Festival (BPSF) saw the worst sales this year with customers complaining its location was too far away and exhibitors saying people were spending on travel instead of local consumption. Most of the people turning up at the festival on its last day at AsiaWorld-Expo in Chek Lap Kok were elderly, with some of them bringing along their suitcases. The Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, the organizer, said that as of 5pm, half an hour before the festival closed, visitor numbers exceeded 60,000, with total sales approximately \$7.7 million, meeting expectations. However, an exhibitor who sells dried pork jerky who has had a stall at the festival every year since 2021 insists this year was the worst with his turnover seeing a 30 percent decrease compared with last year, when pandemic curbs were in force. He attributes the drop to the resumption of cross-border travel and to more locals choosing to save instead of spending on local outlets. Another vendor

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selling dried seafood said: "This year's business is worse than before. The sales were slower during the first two days, and it was only yesterday that they improved slightly. However, compared to previous years, daily sales have dropped by tens of thousands of dollars." She also said that in the past, most people would choose more expensive and high-quality items to give as gifts but now tended to prefer more affordable items. The organizer said that although the festival was aimed at locals, its location near Hong Kong Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) succeeded in attracting dozens of tour groups from the mainland and Macau, helping exhibitors expand their customer base in the Greater Bay Area. **ATO Notes:** The BPSF took place at the Asia World Expo located in the airport area, which is far from the city center when compared to previous iterations situated at Victoria Park in Causeway Bay. As the event features discount food products, its target customers are mostly local elderly and housewives. While the change in venue was easier for mainland travelers arriving from Hong Kong Port and HXMB, the new venue was not as convenient for local customers looking for discount and bulk purchases.



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## RETAIL

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### **Monopolies For Online Deliveries and Wholesale Markets Called to Rectify Practices [[The Standard](#), Aug 11]**

Not every case has to be taken to the Competition Tribunal as long as businesses promise to rectify practices, Competition Commission (CC) chairman Samuel Chan Ka-yan said. As an example, online delivery platforms Foodpanda and Deliveroo said in June they would amend agreements with restaurants after the CC warned them that they could be acting as monopolies. Chan said opinions gathered from a recent public consultation will be collected for a report. Ongoing probes include price fixing and market sharing in Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market. **ATO Notes:** Similar to other economies, food delivery became increasingly popular during the pandemic. While Hongkongers still use delivery services for shelf-stable products, they prefer brick-and-mortar options to purchase perishable products like fresh produce.

### **Consumer Watchdog Reveals Over 70 Percent Online Stores Overcharge for Excess Plastic Bags [[The Standard](#), Aug 15]**

After the plastic bag levy doubled in late 2022, the Consumer Council has found that more than 70 percent of traders and online shopping platforms have overcharged for plastic bags or handed out too many to customers. The Consumer Council conducted a buying test by ordering items from 11 different online stores from June to July, which included online stores of supermarkets and food stores, along with third-party distributors of the supermarkets. The Council urged online stores to simplify packaging and provide options for consumers to reduce plastic bag usage. In addition, the Environmental Protection Department was also reminded to provide more precise guidelines for online grocery shopping services, including fresh, chilled, and frozen meats. **ATO Notes:** After the change in plastic bags levy was imposed at the beginning of 2023, retail is still taking time to adjust to the proper charging rules. Retailers have reported that the practice is not uniform and difficult to follow.

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## **Centre for Food Safety Announces Test Results of Summer Food Surveillance Program [[HKSAR Press Release, Aug 9](#)]**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) released the findings of its Summer Food Surveillance Program 2023. The results of about 1,850 food samples tested were satisfactory except for one sample. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.9 percent. A CFS spokesman reminded members of the public to remain vigilant and pay more attention to food safety and environmental hygiene as the hot and humid climate of summer in Hong Kong facilitates the multiplication of bacteria. The samples comprised 175 samples of dairy products and frozen confections, 131 samples of cut fruit and salads, 90 samples of desserts and drinks, 45 samples of sandwiches, 268 samples of cold cuts or cooked meat products, 607 samples of aquatic products (such as sushi and sashimi, fish, crustaceans, mollusks and other edible aquatic animals) and 536 samples of other ready-to-eat foods. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's Centre of Food Safety maintains three types of food surveillance practices, namely routine food surveillance, targeted food surveillance, and seasonal food surveillance. This program refers to the seasonal food surveillance that examines summer products at different selling points to ensure these are safe to consume.

## **Wynn Macau Sees Revenue Surge Along with “Very Healthy” Tenant Retail Sales [[Macau Daily Times, Aug 11](#)]**

Wynn Macau has generated revenues exceeding analysts' expectations as Macau undergoes a robust recovery. Meanwhile, on the non-gaming side, its tenant retail sales have surged up to 47 percent relative to the second quarter of 2019, which the company considered to be “incredibly strong.” According to the gaming operator, the strength has continued into the third quarter. In July, the hotel occupancy was robust and with very healthy tenant retail sales. While customers had shorter stays at the hotel, they have stayed more frequently and spent more money. **ATO Notes:** Gaming revenue has slightly decreased as Wynn Macau reviewed, however the growth in non-gaming sector optimistically exceeded expectations. Macau will depend on increasing private spending and hotel occupancy to offset the loss in gaming revenue.

## **Treasure Island Resort World Shopping Center Macau Set to Open in Fourth Quarter [[Macau Daily Post, Aug 15](#)]**

The “Treasure Island Resort World Shopping Centre Macau” is expected to have its soft opening in the fourth quarter of this year, with 50-60 percent of its retail brands and attractions, such as a seven-screen “modern theatre” by the Bona Film Group and famous French department store Galeries Lafayette. The hotel is located next to the city's public transport hub connecting the Macau peninsula to Cotai and Taipa. The property will be the largest shopping center in the Macau peninsula, featuring attractions such as Chinese and Western restaurants, and a supermarket, among other amenities. The Galeries Lafayette store in the shopping center will mark the fourth branch of the French department store chain in all of China. About 80 percent of the retail outlets have been rented out, with most of the retailers in the shopping center being internationally renowned brands, of which “quite a few” are entering the Macau market for the first time. **ATO Notes:** The new shopping center will offer new retail capacities to the city and the openings of new restaurants and supermarkets presenting new promotion opportunities for food products at different outlets and locations.

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## TRADE



### **Hong Kong-Macau Cross Boundary Good Vehicles Using the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge to Start on August 8 [[The Standard](#), Aug 7; [Macau Daily Times](#), Aug 9 ]**

The Government of the Hong Kong announced the implementation of an arrangement for Hong Kong-Macau cross-boundary goods vehicles using the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB). The cross-boundary logistics transfer facility at the HZMB Macau Port (the Macau Port transfer facility) will start operation on August 8. Hong Kong goods vehicles can transport goods from Hong Kong to the Macau Port transfer facility using the HZMB, as well as transport goods from Macau back to Hong Kong. Macau goods vehicles can transport goods to the logistics facilities at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) via the HZMB, as well as transport goods from Hong Kong back to Macau. This arrangement will provide greater convenience for the trade to transport goods between Hong Kong and Macau. The Chief Executive, John Lee, said, "The relevant Hong Kong-Macau cross-boundary goods vehicle arrangement is an essential measure conducive to facilitating the exchanges between the two places and within the Greater Bay Area, stimulating the economic activities and enhancing integration. The initial daily cap for Hong Kong goods vehicles travelling to Macau is set at around 400 trips. **ATO Notes:** Alongside with the new operation arrangement for HXMB, a new cargo station in Macau just opened to handle the cross-border vehicles. It is expected that the HXMB will not only facilitate transit of goods but create new business opportunities for the city.

### **Smuggled Goods Including Frozen Wagyu Beef and Dried Shark Fins Worth \$2.4 Million Seized by Hong Kong Customs [[The Standard](#), Aug 10]**

Smuggled goods worth \$2.4 million have been seized by Hong Kong customs in an anti-smuggling operation in Tai O. A Customs spokesman said officers seized a lorry and four seven-seater vehicles found to be carrying smuggled goods. The batch of smuggled goods seized included frozen Wagyu beef, dried shark fins and used tablet computers.

### **Import of Poultry Meat and Products from Highland of Scotland in UK Suspended [[HKSAR Press Release](#), Aug 15]**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) suspended the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the affected area in the United Kingdom following a notification from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza.

According to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 400 tons of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 180,000 poultry eggs from the United Kingdom in the first six months of this year. **ATO Notes:** Other than China, Brazil, Japan and Thailand, and the United States are major suppliers of poultry and eggs products to Hong Kong. Hong Kong's poultry and egg market has been shrinking steadily over the past five years. In 2022, the market was valued at \$590 million, a dramatic

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drop of 52 percent from the preceding period. In the first six months of 2023, the city's global imports have held steady compared to the same period in 2022 but still way below the six-year average.

## **IAM and GongBei Customs Join Hands to Ensure Food Safety [[Macau Daily Times](#), Aug 10]**

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) and Gongbei Customs signed an agreement to clarify inspection and quarantine arrangements for chilled seafood exported to Macau. The two groups will strengthen inspections on exporters and conduct risk monitoring and technical exchanges. Gongbei Customs will also push forward supervision and quarantine procedures to improve traceability and ensure the quality and safety of chilled seafood, to achieve rapid inspection and release, create conditions for convenient customs clearance and further promote cross-border trade between Macau and Zhuhai.

## **Nearly All Pre-packed Juices Samples Exceed Daily Sugar Intake Standard [[Macau Daily Post](#), Aug 16]**

A comparative testing report on 17 types of pre-packed juice drinks sold in Macau, released by the Macau Consumer Council (CC) last month, notes that nearly all the samples from the 17 types of juices exceeded the daily intake recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), some of which even surpassed the maximum limit. The samples of the survey were randomly chosen at various supermarkets in Macau earlier this year, the report noted, adding that of the 17 different brands of pre-packed juice drinks, none were raw or fresh juice, with retail prices ranging from \$0.50 to \$1.76 and sizes ranging from 120 ml to 500 ml. According to the labels of the samples, the products were from mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. **ATO Notes:** [Macau's main suppliers of fruit and vegetables in 2023 were Thailand, Japan, the United States, Hong Kong and South Korea. In the first six months of 2023, Macau's fruit and vegetable juices imports increased 42 percent to \\$373,000.](#)

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## **Attachments:**

No Attachments.