

InnoCarnival 2024 showcases I&T achievements to propel future development (with photos)

Organised by the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC), InnoCarnival 2024 (IC 2024) is being held from today (October 26) to November 3 at the Hong Kong Science Park. Under the theme "Let's Sail with Innovation and Technology", this year's carnival features a number of exhibits of local innovation and technology (I&T) achievements. IC 2024 is also one of the signature events to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Officiating at the opening ceremony of IC 2024, the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said that the theme of IC 2024 matches the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's policy in fostering economic diversification by creating a favourable environment for emerging industries to develop via technology. He said that I&T are not out of reach; rather, they are closely related to daily life and can produce substantial benefits. The Government has strived to enhance the I&T ecosystem of Hong Kong over the past few years, while the Chief Executive also announced multiple measures to promote the development of the technology industry in last week's Policy Address.

Mr Chan continued that it is also necessary to elevate the foundation of popularising science to have a vibrant local I&T development, while the InnoCarnival serves as a good opportunity to foster popularising science among the public. In fact, the carnival is not only an I&T event for the public to enjoy but also a platform for programme partners, especially start-ups, to realise their dreams. He believed that different activities in the carnival will inspire people's interest in I&T and cultivate more talent to join the I&T field and contribute to Hong Kong and the country.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, acknowledged that popularising science culture is crucial for developing the I&T ecosystem in Hong Kong, while the carnival undoubtedly serves as an event to foster science education for all. He expressed special thanks to universities, research institutes and government departments for their enthusiastic participation in the carnival. He noted that universities and research and development (R&D) centres have been the backbone of the I&T ecosystem of Hong Kong, which have spawned a number of disruptive technologies in the past and nurtured many outstanding scientific talents, while government departments have responded positively to the development of Hong Kong into a smart city in recent years by utilising technology in their daily work. He said he believes that the annual InnoCarnival, where programme partners showcase their I&T achievements with pride, presents a good opportunity for technology education for the public.

The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups and the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation are campaign partners of IC 2024. The event is receiving support from over 75 programme partners, including local universities, R&D centres and platforms, government departments and other organisations, which have set up booths at the Hong Kong Science Park, showcasing a series of I&T achievements and interactive games. Also, a diverse line-up of about 150 workshops and webinars across various subjects will be available during the carnival, with the aim of showing the public the importance of I&T in people's daily lives.

In addition, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, some significant scientific research projects in co-operation with Mainland institutions will be displayed, including the "Hong Kong Youth Scientific Innovation", the world's first large-scale artificial intelligence model scientific satellite jointly developed by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and ADA Space with funding support from the Innovation and Technology Commission; "Surface Sampling and Packing System", a space instrument developed for the Chang'e-6 by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to assist the country in completing the world's first lunar far-side sampling mission; and the "Digital Deep-sea Typical Habitats (DEPTH)," an initiative under the United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development led by the country and participated by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. These projects not only testify to country's remarkable achievements and developments in science and technology but also recognises Hong Kong's contributions to the country's I&T development.

Furthermore, 23 winning I&T solutions and some of the prototypes of the second City I&T Grand Challenge will also be displayed for trial in the carnival. To promote an I&T culture and enhance the application of I&T in the community, the second City I&T Grand Challenge was launched in March this year under the theme "Hong Kong's Got I&T". It invited submissions from different sectors of the community to develop I&T solutions focusing on two subjects, namely "I&T for Nature (Yama)" (improving the operation and management of country parks and campsites, and enhancing hikers' experiences in nature) and "I&T for Community (Community Wellness)" (enhancing support for carers). After rounds of assessment and pitching, over 50 awards across four categories, which were the Primary School Group, the Secondary School Group, the University/Tertiary Institute Group and the Open Group, were presented at the Grand Pitch in August this year.

All IC 2024 activities are free of charge. Some of the activities require preregistration. Details are available on the thematic webpage (innocarnival.hk). Members of the public are most welcome to join.

