

JLL forecasts up to 5 pct drop in property prices in H2

Yuki Lei

At the end of last year, the government announced that it would relax its real-estate control measures in response to local residents' aspirations to move into a new flat and improve their living environment so on April 20 it finally abolished its three immovable property stamp duties with immediate effect, and JLL Macau and Zhuhai General Manager Oliver Tong Wai Lok stressed yesterday that the removal of the cooling measures would help drive real-estate transactions back to a "reasonable and healthy" level, now forecasting overall property prices to drop up to 5.0 percent in the second half of this year.

In order to maintain the stable development of the real estate market, the government implemented in 2010 a range of real-estate demand management measures (commonly known as property cooling measures), including the Acquisition Stamp Duty (ASD), the Special Stamp Duty (SSD) on the change of the property owner's name within two years of purchase, and the Special Stamp Duty on the purchase of properties mainly by non-local residents.

However, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon announced early this year the scrapping of all property cooling measures, with effect from April 20: "The government has taken into account the current situation, considering the sufficient supply of various types of properties in recent years, and that the conditions are ready to abolish the three stamp duties in response to the demand for immovable property", he said.

In addition, the Macau Monetary Authority (AMCM) issued on April 20 new guidelines to standardise the mortgage loan-to-value



This photo taken from Hotel Central's sightseeing promenade on Monday gives a bird's eye view of a part of the city centre.

– Photo: Yuki Lei

ratio cap at 70 percent for both local residents and non-local residents, and to suspend the stress test requirement of a two-percentage-point increase in mortgage interest rates.

Commercial real estate services company Jones Lang LaSalle Limited (JLL Macau) held a press conference yesterday at its local office in the Finance and IT Centre (FIT) in

Nam Van about the US agency's Macau Mid-year Property Review.

According to Tong, in the first half of 2024, the rental value of high-end residential flats increased by 0.3 percent, while that of mass residential rental values, i.e., small- and medium-sized residential flats, rose by 7.4 percent compared with the end of last year.

With the performance of asset trending in the opposite direction amid developers lowering the asking prices of new projects, prices of high-end residential flats fell by 4.5 percent and that of small- and medium-sized residential flats dropped by 3.5 percent in the first half of 2024 compared with the end of last year.

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Thousands protest Netanyahu outside US Capitol

WASHINGTON – Thousands of demonstrators marched towards the US Capitol yesterday to protest about Benjamin Netanyahu and call for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, as the Israeli premier prepared to address the US Congress.

Crowds carrying Palestinian flags and signs ranging from left-wing slogans to Bible verses gathered near the Capitol calling for a ceasefire and the arrest of Netanyahu, as prosecutors seek a warrant for him at the International

Criminal Court (ICC).

Small clashes broke out as police fired pepper spray on some protesters to redirect the demonstration as it neared the seat of US government, which was the scene of a riot by Trump supporters on January 6, 2021.

Several demonstrators could be seen washing their eyes and faces after the scuffle.

"The hypocrisy of our politicians today has gone beyond any limits," Mo, a 58-year-old protester, told AFP.

Netanyahu was addressing a joint session of Congress in a high-profile speech. The US is Israel's steadfast ally in its war against Hamas.

Relations have grown strained as the civilian death toll in Gaza has grown, leading to protests in the United States and increasing criticism from President Joe Biden's administration, although little has changed in the way of US military support. – AFP

(More on p. 10)



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu waves before addressing a joint meeting of Congress at the US Capitol yesterday, in Washington, DC. Israel, the United States and the Arab world are under threat from Iran's "axis of terror," Netanyahu told US lawmakers. "Our world is in upheaval. In the Middle East, Iran's axis of terror confronts America, Israel and our Arab friends. This is not a clash of civilizations. It's a clash between barbarism and civilization," Netanyahu said. – AFP

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China will further expand high-standard opening-up: VP Han

China will further expand high-level opening-up and continue to foster a first-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based, and internationalized, Vice President Han Zheng said yesterday in southern France's port city of Marseille. – Story on p. 7

Anti-poverty campaigners put UK govt under pressure on child welfare

Simeera Hassan works at a women's community centre in East London, where she says many mothers are "really struggling" because of limits on UK government child welfare payments and a wider cost-of-living crisis. – Story on p. 11

Lula rallies G20 countries against world hunger ahead of meeting

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva launched an initiative yesterday to fight world hunger ahead of a meeting of G20 finance ministers in Rio de Janeiro. – Story on p. 12

Traffic curbs to be imposed for joint anti-terrorism drill in Cotai

Yuki Lei

A large-scale joint anti-terrorism drill will take place at the Macau East Asian Games Dome in Cotai tomorrow afternoon, during which temporary traffic control measures will be adopted in Rua de Ténis, Rua da Patinagem, Estrada Flor de Lótus and Avenida da Nave Desportiva in the dome's periphery.

The Unitary Police Service (SPU) said in a statement yesterday that it in conjunction with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Office of the Macau Garrison and in coordination with a number of public entities, including the Macau Customs Service (SA) and Public Security Police (PSP), Judiciary Police (PJ), Fire Services Bureau (CB), Health Bureau (SSM), Government Information Bureau (GCS) and the Sports Bureau (ID), will conduct a large-scale joint anti-terrorism drill tomorrow afternoon at the dome, with a view to "perfecting" Macau's security command system and strengthening the mechanism of inter-departmental and rapid cooperation.

According to the statement, the drill will simulate a terrorist attack and hold-up involving



This poster provided by the Unitary Police Service (SPU) yesterday reminds the public of tomorrow's joint anti-terrorism drill "Coiling Dragon" at the Macau East Asian Games Dome.

chemical weapons during a large-scale concert, including scenarios such as holding a large number of people hostage, chemical gas contamination, explosive ordnance removal, and the pursuit of suspects in Macau's coastal waters.

The drill aims to test the information notification, command and coordination capabilities of the city's various public security forces in working with the PLA Macau Garrison and the relevant public entities, as well as their ability to detect and dispose of poisonous gas or chemical weapons,

strengthening the mechanism of coordination in rescue and relief work between the public security forces and the Health Bureau, reviewing and improving the deployment and operation of the counter-terrorism programmes of the various entities, while further enhancing the professionalism and coordination of frontline police and emergency response officers in tackling terrorist attacks.

The statement underlined that the temporary traffic control measures will be in effect from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. tomorrow. ■

Man uses pole to steal women's underwear, films locals in bathrooms

William Chan

A non-resident worker (NRW) from the mainland has been arrested for stealing women's underwear and filming four locals in bathrooms, including a man, Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Lai In Hong said yesterday.

The suspect, surnamed Zhao, is in his forties, working for a food processing company in Areia Preta. The industrial facility where he works is situated in Areia Preta district, directly across from the residential building where the victims live.

According to Lai, a local woman in her thirties contacted police on Sunday after observing a pole extending from the industrial building towards the washing she had hung out, in an apparent attempt to steal some of it. The distance between the two buildings is only one metre. The woman also told police that the pole was soiling her washing.

Later that day, the police apprehended Zhao in the stairwell of the industrial building and discovered female undergarments worth 500 patacas in his bag.

Upon inspecting Zhao's smartphone, the police found 21 video recordings of three women and a man showering and using the



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows a police officer escorting the mainland underwear theft suspect to the Northern District Police Station for questioning.

toilet. All the individuals recorded are residents of the same building opposite Zhao's workplace.

Lai noted that the victims are aged between 20 and 60.

Zhao has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing charges of invasion of privacy, theft and property damage, according to Lai. ■

Woman cheated out of 363,000 patacas in cryptocurrency scam

William Chan

A local woman was scammed out of over 363,000 patacas after investing in cryptocurrencies, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Lou Chan Fai said at a press conference yesterday.



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Lou Chan Fai looks on during yesterday's regular press conference.

— Photo: William Chan

Lou said the victim is aged under 30.

According to Lou, the victim read an advertisement about investing in cryptocurrency on a social networking site and joined a chat group on Telegram. She then followed the group's instructions and purchased virtual currency from the cryptocurrency exchange platform Binance.

From June 18 to last week, the victim transferred a total of 363,000 patacas worth of cryptocurrency to the designated account provided by the fraudsters in the Telegram group. The fraudsters assured her of profits each time she made an "investment".

The victim was suddenly kicked out of the Telegram group on Monday, with her messages erased, leading her to suspect that she had been scammed and reported it to the police. ■

JLL forecasts up to 5 pct drop in property prices in H2

Continued from p.1

Tong said that the property market outlook was still not optimistic in the short term, with Macau's property loan delinquency rate having risen to 4.1 percent in May: "It is expected that the downward trend will continue in the second half of the year, with a drop of no more than 5.0 percent. However, depending on developers' inventory and financial pressure, it is believed that property prices will be subject to even greater pressure if developers increase the incentives and reduce prices to remove their inventory".

According to the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC), residential real-estate transactions in the first quarter of this year were mainly concentrated in Taipa at 82 units, Areia Preta district at 65 units and San Kio district at 41 units, with an average price of 87,249 patacas per square metre, 92,941 patacas per square metre and 55,318 patacas per square metre respectively.

JLL's press conference yesterday cited statistics from the Finance Service Bureau (DSF) as noting that the property market transaction volume decreased by 12.7 percent year on year in the first half of this year, while presales recorded 172 units during the same period.

Tong pointed out that the removal of all property cooling



JLL Macau Director of Valuation and Risk Advisory Services Mark Wong Choi Si (left), Senior Manager of Leasing Matt Kou Ieng Kit (right), and JLL Macau & Zhuhai General Manager Oliver Tong Wai Lok pose during the real-estate agency's Macau Mid-year Property Review press conference at JLL Macau's office at the Finance and IT Centre of Macau in Nam Van. — Photo: Yuki Lei

measures by the government did impact to some degree the property market: "In terms of transactions we have roughly about 1,500 residential units transacted in the first six months, which is a good sign. But then when we compare the figure to last year, we see a double-digit drop in terms of transactions, even after the measures have been removed. And if we are comparing this to the figure of [pre-pandemic] 2019, it only represents around 40 percent of the total transactions..... So, we are seeing an impact on the residential market, but I think

personally the impact is smaller than what I've expected".

In terms of the retail property market, according to Tong, rents for prime street shops dipped by 0.5 percent in the first half of this year compared to the end of last year, with capital values dropping 4.6 percent in the same period.

Tong said that driven by the recovery of Macau's tourism sector, the leasing of shops in tourism districts has increased, but shops elsewhere are under greater pressure, due to the "significant" changes of local residents and tourists' shopping behaviours. ■

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Macau Weather

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27°C~35°C

Source: SMG

DSAL stops 4 construction projects due to safety hazards in 1H

Ginnie Liang

Yesterday's current affairs phone-in programme hosted by Ou Mun Tin Toi, the Chinese-language radio channel of public broadcaster TDM, discussed the enhancement and promotion of occupational safety and health, during which Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) Occupational Safety and Health Department Head Lei Seak Chio noted that the bureau had temporarily stopped the work at four construction sites in the first six months of this year due to serious accidents or potential safety hazards.

According to Lei, the bureau conducted in the first six months of the year a total of 1,610 inspections of 826 construction sites, of which five sites were found to have committed occupational safety and health offences, involving inadequate safety measures for work-at-height activities and unsafe use of electricity.

Lei noted that more than 120,000 Occupational Safety Cards have been issued since 2014, covering the whole construction sector, adding that the bureau also

continues to organise occupational safety seminars for the sector, with 9,200 participants in the first half of this year, apart from having launched various industry occupational safety and health incentive schemes and training programmes for participants from other sectors.

Earlier this month, a 59-year-old air-conditioning worker fell from a high-rise flat of a residential building in Zape while he was repairing a compressor, as his safety rope fastened to an AC bracket on the external wall of the flat broke, causing him and the compressor to fall to the ground, where he died on the spot.

Lei stressed that safety should always be at the forefront of our minds, and that we should not be complacent at any time and should do a good job in ensuring safety, adding that it was difficult for the bureau to monitor home renovations, and if the property management company of a building discovers any irregularities in home renovation work, it should alert the company and the owners concerned,

and it could also notify the bureau to send staff to follow up on the matter.

During yesterday's programme, a resident surnamed Ho who used to be employed as a construction worker, expressed his concern on the safety risk to scaffolders wearing special safety shoes at work, and that wearing safety goggles in the hot summer was causing them to sweat and thus affect their vision.

Lei responded that the bureau has exchanged views with the scaffolding workers' union that workers should wear non-slip or puncture-resistant safety shoes when entering construction sites to prevent them from being injured by nails or debris on the ground, and that they should wear special footwear when erecting scaffolding to ensure safety at work. ■



Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) Occupational Safety and Health Department Chief Lei Seak Chio (second from left) and representatives from the construction sector pose during yesterday's current affairs phone-in programme hosted by Ou Mun Tin Toi at Nam Kwong Building. — Photo courtesy of TDM

Cooling shelter opens due to Orange hot weather alert: IAS



This undated file photo provided by the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) in 2021 shows the cooling shelter at the Ilha Verde Refuge Centre.

Ginnie Liang

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) announced yesterday that its cooling shelter at the Ilha Verde Refuge Centre has extended its opening time to the public in response to the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) issuing the Orange hot weather alert earlier in the day, until the mercury drops.

Since yesterday, the cooling shelter's opening hours have been extended from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. due to the Orange hot weather alert, and if the temperature does not drop by 6 p.m., the shelter will remain open till 10 a.m. the next day, i.e., allowing users to stay overnight, according to the bureau.

The cooling shelter will open to the public from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. if a Yellow hot weather alert is issued.

According to the SMG website, the Orange alert means that it will be "extremely hot" in Macau.

Orange is the highest of Macau's two-level hot weather warning system, Yellow being the lower alert.

The highest temperature is forecast to be over 36° Celsius today, according to the observatory which on its website urged the public to beware of heatstroke and to drink plenty of water.

Meanwhile, in order to take preventive measures against heat stroke and the effects of the hot weather, the bureau urged the public to pay close attention to the physical condition and situation of the elderly, the chronically ill, frail, and those living alone.

Enquiries can be made by calling 2827 0939 during office hours or 6399 1963 during non-office hours. ■

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These photos provided by the organisers show last year's performances.

Immersive 'Sweet Dreams in the Woods' to return to CCM

Interview by Rui Pastorin

"Sweet Dreams in the Woods" will return to the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) from August 7 to 11, set to present immersive theatre for babies that will allow them to explore, while also creating an environment that ignites their senses.

Following its successful debut last year, the show is part of the 1st Macao International Children's Arts Festival (MICAF) and is for babies aged four to 15 months and their parents.

The *Post* spoke with Creative Producer Chan Si Kei and Choreographer Annette Ng (伍淑華) earlier this week at CCM to learn more about the show. The interview was conducted in Cantonese and English, with translation provided by the centre.

Chan is a producer involved in baby theatre, which is internationally known as "theatre for the very young", targeting pre-walking babies. She also is a producer for immersive theatre for adults, along

with festivals. Ng, meanwhile, is a choreographer and also an actor and producer for theatre shows. She was a performer in the first show, this time also taking on choreographer and producer roles.

The concept of Sweet Dreams in the Woods was born during the COVID-19 pandemic when the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) was touting for ideas for theatre shows. Searching for what they could do, Chan was having discussions with choreographer Wendy Choi (徐穎婷), who had moved to Austria, a place where a lot of woodland can be found and enjoyed by families.

In a highly urbanised city like Macau, "natural experiences" like those are not something that can be experienced by parents and their babies, according to Chan, noting that they might have worries about hygiene or have certain perceptions related to Asian people's concerns. "We were thinking, how can we encourage

the families to enjoy nature and the natural environment?", coming up with a performance with the forest as its theme.

Ng later joined the team to co-create the whole performance, finding the concept very interesting, but was "puzzled" as to how forests could attract babies and how they would react to that environment. After try-outs with babies that featured elements inspired by forests to stimulate them, the show came together, premiering at CCM in September last year after several pandemic-related postponements.

An immersive experience designed to stimulate all of a baby's senses, Chan noted that the show features two dancers and uses four seasons in a forest as its focal point in lieu of a concrete storyline to help lead the performance, which is more about flow and its environment. Ng added that a great emphasis is placed on immersion and igniting the babies' senses, using the four seasons to also encourage interaction between them and their parents.

The performance also features live music and is not held in a stage setting, with babies and their parents instead placed in a safe space that they can freely explore. The setting incorporates visual and sound elements with a forest theme, along with materials that babies can touch. Chan added: "There are several different things happening at the same time and the babies have their own choice of what they want to explore".

Ng added that they have created a "free-enough" environment that babies can explore themselves and there is no restriction on what they can touch and feel during the entire performance, while dancers

will also pay special attention to how each of the babies reacts to their environment and stimuli.

Also open for educators in kindergarten and nurseries to watch, the performance features three sessions per day, each lasting around 35 to 45 minutes. Time is also allocated for babies to explore, feel safe, and get familiar with their environment before the show starts, while the dancers will also come out to say hello. Ng added that this "warm-up period" or pre-show session also allows them to observe the babies in each session, of which there are up to 15 at a time. "Every show is different because of the different dynamic that the babies and the parents bring", Chan added.

During the show, both Ng and Chan also hope that parents can be more "hands-off". Chan explained that this does not mean that the parents will be doing nothing, but have the role of observing and supporting their children, giving them a feeling of security.

When the babies feel that their parents are there and can go back to them after exploring, Chan said that small interactions between them can be found, increasing and strengthening family bonding, "which is very good for their emotional development". Interaction is also the most important part of the show, according to Ng.

On their expectations for the show, Chan said that she hopes to see parents encourage the children to join any kind of art events in the future. "If this gives them their first theatre experience, one that is a nice experience with art, maybe later, they will continue to participate in different art events".

"We need to build up the whole industry by having all those audiences and participants to support and value the arts", according to Chan.



Creative Producer Chan Si Kei (left) and Choreographer Annette Ng (伍淑華) pose with a mascot for the 1st Macao International Children's Arts Festival (MICAF) at the Macau Cultural Centre after their Post interview earlier this week. -Photo: Rui Pastorin

Lawmaker urges govt to review old bridge's 15-tonne weight limit

Tony Wong

Lawmaker-cum-current affairs commentator Ron Lam U Tou urges the government to carry out rigorous assessments to determine the real load capacity of the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge (informally known as the "old bridge"), or release technical documents supporting the current official rule that vehicles with a gross weight of 15 tonnes or over are barred from crossing the bridge, in the wake of the fact that all public buses must be new energy vehicles (NEVs) from next month so that no large-sized buses can be used on the bridge, thereby potentially reducing the city's sea-crossing public bus service capacity.

Lam made the remarks earlier this month in an interview with the *Post* at his office near Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, the city's main thoroughfare.

The old bridge, which opened in 1974, is one of the city's current three sea-crossing bridges connecting the Macau peninsula and Taipa island. Many of the routes between the peninsula and Taipa run by the city's two public bus operators use the old bridge.

According to the current regulation for the old bridge, which was promulgated in 1995 when Macau was still under temporary Portuguese administration, vehicles with a gross weight of 15 tonnes or over are barred from crossing it.

Only NEVs from next month

According to the two public bus operators' current service agreements with the government, all of their buses must be new energy vehicles (NEVs) by August 1 this year, i.e., Thursday next week.

The two companies' current six-year agreements, which took effect on January 1, 2021, will expire on



Lawmaker Ron Lam U Tou poses during an interview with the *Post* at his office earlier this month. – Photos: Tony Wong

December 31, 2026.

According to the latest available official data, at the end of the first quarter of this year the two public bus operators had a total of 1,057 buses, of which 830 were NEVs, comprising 50 natural gas buses and 780 extended-range electric buses. This means that extended-range e-buses accounted for 94 percent of the two companies' NEVs.

Small-sized public buses are officially defined as those with a length of at least seven metres but less than nine metres, while medium-sized public buses refer to those with a length of at least nine metres but less than 10.5 metres.

Large-sized public buses are officially defined as those with a length of at least 10.5 metres but less than 13.5 metres, while mega-sized public buses refer to those with a length of at least 13.5 metres.

Why large-sized e-buses cannot cross old bridge

Due to their batteries, e-buses, including extended-range ones, are heavier than the equivalent diesel buses.

Consequently, while the two public bus operators' large-sized



Passengers catch a No. 52 medium-sized e-bus at the Praça de Ferreira do Amaral bus terminal about three weeks ago. Previously, large-sized diesel buses were used for the route, which runs between this bus terminal and Coloane's Seac Pai Van public housing estate.

diesel buses can cross the old bridge, their large-sized extended-range e-buses cannot cross it as they all exceed its 15-tonne weight limit.

Therefore, no large-sized public buses can cross the old bridge from next month, meaning that only small-sized and medium-sized buses can cross it.

Since earlier this year, the two public bus operators have been gradually replacing their large-sized diesel buses used for sea-crossing routes via the old bridge with their medium-sized extended-range e-buses.

The gross weight of a public bus is officially defined as comprising the weight of the vehicle proper plus the weight of its maximum officially allowed number of passengers.

Each of the two public bus operators' current large-sized extended-range e-buses, i.e., the ones with three doors each, has a gross weight of 18 tonnes.

Buses crossing old bridge set to become more crowded

The *Post* asked Lam to comment on the matter in an interview earlier this month, where he noted that the new situation will make it more difficult for passengers to catch sea-crossing route buses, after the two public bus companies can only use medium-sized buses, which have a smaller capacity to carry passengers than their large-sized counterparts, to operate their busy sea-crossing

routes using the old bridge from August 1.

Lam said that public buses with a gross weight of 15 tonnes or over are barred from crossing the old bridge "merely because of a provision listed in the 1995 regulation but the question is, technically, how did [Macau's then government] come up with the 15-tonne weight limit?"

Lam said that, as far as he knew, the current government had never shown the public the old bridge's original construction design, for justifying its 15-tonne weight limit.

'Not based on scientific grounds'

"Currently, we still do not know the rationale, in terms of engineering, for the regulation's 15-tonne weight limit," Lam said, adding that "the government's implementation of the weight limit seems to be merely complying with a provision, but not based on scientific grounds".

Lam said that if the government did not have the old bridge's original construction design, it should carry out scientific tests and assessments of the bridge in order to establish its exact maximum load capacity.

If the test results would justify the old bridge's current 15-tonne weight limit, Lam said, then, of course, the two public bus operators' large-sized extended-range e-buses should not be allowed to cross the old bridge because safety should always be the top priority.

Public interest

If the test results show that the old bridge's real load capacity is higher than what its current 15-tonne weight limit for vehicles is indicating, Lam said, the weight limit should be relaxed enabling larger-sized public buses to use the old bridge.

Provided that the old bridge's structural safety is fully ensured, Lam said, relaxing its weight limit would be in the public interest, particularly considering that the bridge has for a long time been the main link for the city's sea-crossing public bus services.

Only public buses, taxis, emergency vehicles and other authorised vehicles are allowed to use the old bridge, a measure launched in 2005.

Revamp of circuitous bus routes

Concerning the possible scenario that the assessment results show that the old bridge's 15-tonne weight limit must be kept intact, Lam criticised the government for not having come up with any new measures or contingency plans aiming to ensure that sea-crossing public buses will not become even more crowded, as it could be assumed that the government had been aware for a long time that no large-sized public buses can cross the old bridge from August 1 this year due to the NEV requirements.

Lam said that the predicament resulting from the August 1 NEV requirement affecting the old bridge was also highlighting the city's long-standing fundamental problem for public bus services, one of which, he said, was the government's failure to revamp the city's various circuitous bus routes, which are making the city's public bus service capacity less effective.

Lam underlined that a major revamp of the city's bus-route network would improve its overall bus service capacity, which would help make buses on busy routes less crowded, including those crossing the old bridge. ■



Passengers catch a No. 25 medium-sized e-bus on Rua do Campo about two weeks ago. The route's large-sized diesel buses have been gradually replaced with medium-sized e-buses since earlier this year. The two e-buses in this photo are 10.49 metres long each, just one centimetre shorter than the official definition of large-sized buses with a length of at least 10.5 metres. The No. 25 route runs between the Barrier Gate checkpoint and Coloane Village.

Macao Orchestra's 2023-24 season closing concert slated for Saturday

Rui Pastorin

The Macao Orchestra is slated to hold their 2023-24 season closing concert this Saturday at 8 p.m. at the Macao Cultural Centre (CCM) Grand Auditorium under the baton of the orchestra's Music Director and Principal Conductor Lio Kuokman and featuring renowned Japanese pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii.

A statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) noted that the concert, titled "Pushing Boundaries – Nobuyuki Tsujii with Macao Orchestra", will have the pianist present Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 in D major, while the orchestra will also perform Pyotr

Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake Suite.

Born blind, the statement said that Tsujii "has exceptional talent and musical ability". He won gold at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009 at the age of 20, being the award's first Japanese winner and the first blind pianist to win an international piano competition.

The statement added that he has released multiple recordings and collaborated with many orchestras worldwide.

There will be a cocktail reception at 7 p.m. before the concert on CCM's 2nd floor, with tickets priced at 80 patacas. More details available on www.macaoticket.com or by contacting 2855 5555. ■



This poster provided by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) promotes the upcoming Macao Orchestra 2023-24 Season Closing Concert "Pushing Boundaries – Nobuyuki Tsujii with Macao Orchestra" on Saturday.

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.91 pct lower

HONG KONG Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.91 percent to close at 17,311.05 points.

While the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index fell 0.85 percent to end at 6,142.32 points, the Hang Seng Tech Index fell 1.52 percent to close at 3,491.2 points. – Xinhua

UM to run new teaching centre in Hengqin next month

Staff Reporter

The public University of Macau (UM) said yesterday that it will have a new teaching centre in rented premises on Zhuhai's Hengqin island at the end of next month, with postgraduate programmes to be run there initially.

The new teaching centre will be located in an office building in Hengqin.

UM Faculty of Science and Technology Dean Xu Chengzhong made the remarks while speaking to reporters yesterday on the sidelines of an event on the campus.

The UM's current campus is situated in an area of Zhuhai's Hengqin island, which the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) is exercising jurisdiction over, that has been leased from Zhuhai.

The UM was relocated to its current one-square-kilometre Hengqin campus in 2014 from its

former one, located on a hill of Taipa island.

UM Rector Song Yonghua told reporters in January this year that the university was planning to build a new campus in Hengqin. The university's second campus will be half the size of the current one, Song said at that time.

Xu said yesterday that a new teaching centre in Hengqin will come into use at the end of next month. After it opens, Xu said, the teaching centre will be used for running postgraduate programmes first, such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, fintech, and big data run by his faculty.

Xu noted that the current UM campus' teaching space and facilities are now almost used to full capacity, adding that the new teaching centre in Hengqin will provide more areas for teaching and experiments.

In addition, Xu also revealed yesterday that the future UM campus in Hengqin is slated to be completed in 2028.

According to local media reports earlier this month, the UM's new teaching centre will be located on several floors of an office building, near the Macau New Neighbourhood (MNN) residential estate, in Hengqin that the university has rented.

Xu said yesterday that the setting-up of the new teaching centre is an interim measure aiming to provide more teaching areas before the completion of the future UM campus on the island.

Xu said that the university currently has about 14,000 students, adding that after the new campus opens, the number of students is expected increase by between 6,000 and 8,000 from the current one. ■



University of Macau (UM) Faculty of Science and Technology Dean Xu Chengzhong talks to reporters on the university's campus yesterday. – Photo courtesy of TDM



Cai Qi (center), a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, speaks at a mobilization meeting for the lecture program promoting the guiding principles from the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua

Trump's words cause of consternation for Lai

China Daily Editorial

Given the direct bearing it will have on the United States' support for the "pro-independence" cause he espouses for the island, the leader of the secessionist-minded Taiwan authorities Lai Ching-te must be one of the keenest followers of the US presidential election situation.

Lai's hard-line "pro-independence" speech at a meeting of the Democratic Progressive Party on Sunday, shortly after US President Joe Biden announced he was ending his reelection bid, must be taken with a pinch of salt.

Lai's true motive was to take advantage of the DPP gathering to raise the morale of his crestfallen colleagues amid the pessimism gripping the party at the prospect of Republican candidate Donald Trump occupying the White House for a second time.

Unlike Biden's stress on a "united front" against Beijing, based on the US' global alliance network, Trump has held to his hallmark "America first" principle during his ongoing

election campaign as well. Which means, if Trump wins the election in November, the Lai authorities will face a big change in US policy.

In an interview with the media published five days before Lai's we-are-not-alone bravura on the weekend, Trump said that on taking office again, he would demand Taiwan pay for US protection, and accused the island of taking the chip industry and jobs away from the US. He also dodged the question of whether he would defend the island should Beijing have to resort to national reunification by force.

After the Biden administration's frequent playing of the "supporting Taiwan independence card", Trump's words have taken the wind out of the DPP's sails.

Biden had said he would send troops to defend the island. The "pro-independence" forces in Taiwan have always taken the US' protection for granted, bragging the "rock-solid" and "iron-clad" ties with the US as their largest strategic and political assets.

However, Trump has made his point crystal-clear by saying "Taiwan should pay us for defense ... You know, we're no different than an insurance company." That Cho Jung-tai, head of the island's "executive yuan", responded by saying that Taiwan is "willing to take on more responsibility" and would defend itself only serves to expose the Lai authorities' anxiety at the prospect of more conditional US support.

By continuing to stress "values" in his speech, a catchword of the Biden administration in its clique building, Lai showed the DPP is caught in a dilemma, trying to butter its US bread on both sides.

Yet the studied silence his authorities have maintained over Trump's remark in the same interview that "I mean, how stupid are we? They took all of our chip business. They're immensely wealthy", clearly indicates the Taiwan leader's concern that only paying for US protection may not be enough to satisfy its backer.

– Courtesy of China Daily

Reform of taxation system will support higher quality development, social fairness

China Daily Editorial

Reform of the fiscal and taxation systems is one of the major tasks outlined in the resolution for further deepening reform that was comprehensively adopted at the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, held from July 15 to 18.

The changes to be made to the current taxation system will have an impact on the revenue of the central government and that of local governments, and also on the well-being of ordinary residents. It is little wonder that it has caught the attention of people from all walks of life.

The basic framework of taxation has remained unchanged for 30 years since the system of sharing taxes between the central and local governments was established in 1994. With that system, the revenue of the central coffers was secured and so was that of local governments.

Since then, changes have continuously been made to the taxation regime in the past three decades to allow taxation to play its role in reasonably adjusting the distribution of wealth. For example, the income tax for domestic and foreign-funded enterprises was unified in 2008, and later on business tax was changed into value-added tax, which has reduced the tax burden on both enterprises and consumers.

The income tax reform of 2019 increased the share those with higher incomes have to pay, and reasonably cut levies on those breadwinners who have more people to provide for. As a result, the income tax has become

more fair. Taxes on environmental protection and biological conservation have greatly promoted the improvement of the environment and ecology.

With new objectives set for the building of a great country in all respects and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era, it was inevitable that the taxation system would be further improved to make the system more conducive to high-quality development and the building of a unified market and to further boost social fairness.

The directive outlines the establishment of a clear and balanced fiscal relationship between central and local governments. Key initiatives include increasing local fiscal autonomy, expanding local tax bases, shifting the collection of consumption taxes to later stages and progressively allocating them to local governments, and reasonably expanding the scope of local government bonds. And there is an emphasis on strengthening central government responsibilities and increasing central fiscal spending.

Such measures represent a systematic and forward-looking approach to fiscal policy, providing a solid institutional foundation for improving macroeconomic governance and enhancing the role of fiscal policy in driving economic development. As these reforms take shape, they promise to contribute significantly to the nation's modernization efforts and the establishment of a more resilient and equitable economic system.

– Courtesy of China Daily

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Our print edition offers much more: Local, regional, national, international, sports, culture, lifestyle and entertainment news, views and features, as well as special pages about art events, the Philippines and the Portuguese-speaking world.