

Cross-platform interchange between LRT Taipa & Hengqin sections completed

Tony Wong

Construction of a cross-platform interchange connecting the current Lotus Station on the Light Rail Transit (LRT) Taipa-Cotai section and its adjacent station on the soon-to-open LRT Cotai-Hengqin section has been completed, the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) announced on its website yesterday.

The 2.2-kilometre-long Cotai-Hengqin section's construction was "basically" completed earlier this year, after which train operation tests on the line started.

According to the DSOP website, the Cotai-Hengqin section project is scheduled to be fully completed in November this year. The government is aiming to open the section before the end of this year.

The Cotai-side station of the two-station Cotai-Hengqin section is tentatively known as HE1, while the station on the other side, located under the Hengqin checkpoint, is tentatively known as HE2.

The newly completed cross-platform interchange will enable LRT passengers to change trains



These two handout photos released and taken by the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) yesterday shows the newly completed LRT cross-platform interchange's corridor (left) and its location entering the Hengqin section's HE1 station.



between the Taipa-Cotai and Cotai-Hengqin sections through an indoor corridor on the same level.

The cross-platform interchange is part of the podium of a future office building, to be located between the current Lotus Station and the soon-to-open HE1 station.

The office building project is being carried out through three separate tenders – a tender for its pile foundation, a tender for

its basement and podium, and a tender for its superstructure. The project's foundation work got off the ground in October 2022 and was completed in September last year. The government is yet to launch a tender for the high-rise's basement and podium work.

The high-rise, aka Lotus Multifunctional Building, will be primarily earmarked for office spaces and other commercial facilities.

The DSOP website notes that the Lotus Multifunctional Building project is being carried out in phases, the foundation work of which first got off the ground in October 2022.

The website notes that with the LRT Cotai-Hengqin section slated to come into service in 2024, the government launched a project to build a cross-platform interchange between the current

Taipa-Cotai section and the future Cotai-Hengqin section, which got off the ground in June last year. The website announced yesterday that the cross-platform interchange project has now been completed.

Construction of the LRT Cotai-Hengqin section has a price tag of about 3.5 billion patacas.

The cross-platform interchange project was carried out with a price tag of 125 million patacas. ■

US Fed keeps key lending rate unchanged



WASHINGTON – The US Federal Reserve left its key lending rate unchanged again yesterday and said it had made "some further progress" in its inflation fight.

Polymakers voted unanimously to maintain the US central bank's benchmark interest rate between 5.25 percent and 5.50 percent, the Fed announced in a statement following two days of deliberations.

After a small uptick in inflation earlier this year, recent data suggest that the Fed's mission of bringing inflation back down to its long-term target of two percent is now firmly back on track.

Its favoured measure of inflation eased to an annual rate

of 2.5 percent last month, while economic growth has remained resilient, and the labour market has come into better balance.

"In recent months, there has been some further progress toward the Committee's 2 percent inflation objective," the Fed said.

This marks a slight change in tone from its decision in June, when it noted only that "modest further progress" had been made.

"The Committee judges that the risks to achieving its employment and inflation goals continue to move into better balance," the Fed said, adding that it was "attentive to the risks to both sides of its dual mandate." – AFP



China's Zheng Qinwen returns to Germany's Angelique Kerber during their singles quarter-final on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland-Garros Stadium during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, in Paris yesterday. (More on Olympics on pages 9 13 14&16) – AFP

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Xi encourages model military company to build itself into highly capable unit

President Xi Jinping has encouraged a model military company to strengthen training in real combat conditions and build itself into a highly capable unit with great courage to fight and firm determination to win.

– Story on p. 7

Hamas says leader killed in Israel strike in Iran

Hamas said yesterday its political leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed in an Israeli strike in Iran, where he was attending the swearing-in of the new president, and vowed the act "will not go unanswered".

– Story on p. 10

UK police brace for more violence after knife attack on kids sparks riot

UK police mobilised yesterday to prevent a repeat of overnight violence in which dozens of officers were injured, following the mass stabbing at a Taylor Swift-themed dance party that killed three children.

– Story on p. 11

China's Reform in the New Era: Opportunities for the World

By Commissioner
Liu Xianfa

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has just successfully concluded its third plenary session in Beijing. The *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization* is the most important outcome of the Session, which is a new blueprint for China's reform and opening up, sending a strong message to the world on China's steadfast commitment to reform and opening up as well as creating more opportunities for the world in the new era.

Reform and opening up have been crucial to the cause of the Party and the people, enabling us to catch up with the times in great strides. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee ten years ago was of epoch-making significance. It marked the start of a new journey of comprehensively deepening reform in the new era with systematic and holistic plans, thus paving the way for a brand new stage in China's reform and opening up endeavors. At that Session, the Central Committee set up the Commission on Comprehensively Deepening Reform, with General Secretary Xi Jinping taking the lead and chairing 72 meetings of the commission since then. Over 2,000 programs have been introduced to strengthen, broaden and deepen reform. Reform measures in various sectors have brought China's openness to a significantly higher level. From establishing 22 Pilot Free Trade Zones and the Hainan Free Trade Port, the signing and entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, to the building of a globally-oriented network of high-standard free trade areas, from repeatedly shortening the negative list for foreign investment to reducing market access restrictions in telecommunications, healthcare and other services sectors, from promoting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation to establishing international cooperation platforms for trade and economic exchanges, such as the China International

Import Expo, China International Fair for Trade in Services, and the China International Consumer Products Expo, these important measures to expand high-quality opening up benefit the international community through China's development, and give the world reason for optimism about China's growth outlook. China has remained the world's largest trader in goods for seven years running, and the world's largest exporter and second-largest importer for 15 consecutive years. It has been among the world's top three sources of outbound investment for 11 years in a row. 155 countries and regions around the world are beneficiaries of the funding that China provides.

As Chinese modernization has been advanced continuously through reform and opening up, it will surely embrace broader horizons through further reform and opening up. The present and the near future constitute a critical period for our endeavor to build a great country and move toward national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernization. To deal with complex environments both at home and abroad, adapt to the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, and live up to the new expectations of our people, it is vital that we continue to advance reform. It was pointed out at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee that the overall objectives of further deepening reform comprehensively are to continue improving and developing the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernize China's system and capacity for governance. By 2035, China will have finished building a high-standard socialist market economy in all respects, further improved the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, generally modernized our system and capacity for governance, and basically realized socialist modernization. All of this will lay a solid foundation for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects by the middle of this century. To steadily advance reform, we will focus on building a high-



Undated file photo of Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Liu Xianfa
— Photo: Courtesy of OCMFA

standard socialist market economy, advancing whole-process people's democracy, developing a strong socialist culture in China, raising the people's quality of life, building a Beautiful China, advancing the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level, and improving the Party's capacity for leadership and long-term governance. In order to realize these reform goals, the Resolution elaborates on reform plans in specific fields such as the economy, politics, culture, society, environmental conservation, national security, and national defense and the military, involving over 300 concrete measures. It has been made clear that the reform tasks laid out in the Resolution shall be completed by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2029.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of peaceful development. The Resolution solemnly states that China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace and is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future. We will stay committed to the common values of all humanity, pursue the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, and call for an equal and orderly multipolar world and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. We will deepen institutional reforms related to the

work of foreign affairs and get involved in leading the reform and development of global governance system. We will resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security, and development interests and foster a favorable external environment for further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization. In addition, more development opportunities will emerge because of China's reform and Chinese modernization. The important reform measures enshrined in the Resolution include steadily expanding institutional opening up, deepening the foreign trade structural reform, further reforming the management systems for inward and outward investment, optimizing the layout for regional opening up, and improving the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, among others. I believe that the implementation of these measures will enhance various institutions and mechanisms, remove obstacles, provide a steady source of dynamism for Chinese modernization, and create more opportunities for China and the rest of the world to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and thrive and prosper together. The first half of 2024 has seen China's economy doing better in speed and quality, with GDP growing by 5% and investment in high-tech sectors rising by 10.6%. The International Monetary Fund has revised up its forecast for China's

economic growth rate in 2024. The global business community has also expressed stronger optimism about China's economic prospects, with new foreign enterprises in China increasing by 14.2%. China welcomes all countries to actively integrate into the Chinese market and share China's development opportunities, so as to achieve common development and deliver benefits to all the people in the world.

Macao plays an integral part in China's further comprehensively deepening reform. The Resolution underlines supporting Hong Kong and Macao in building themselves into international hubs for high-caliber talent, improving relevant mechanisms to see the two SARs playing a greater role in China's opening up to the outside world, and encouraging cooperation between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in the Greater Bay Area by promoting closer alignment of rules and mechanisms. The Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will fully support all sectors of the society in Macao in implementing the spirit of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee by further leveraging Macao's unique advantages endowed by the "One Country, two Systems" and its role as a platform for international cooperation. We will also give a boost to Macao's efforts to develop new quality productive forces, promote appropriate economic diversification in compliance with its 1+4 plan through technological innovation and industrial upgrading, and develop the In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and the Greater Bay Area. Since its return to the motherland 25 years ago, Macao has enjoyed the biggest constitutional advantage—"One country, two systems", abundant horizons for development, a highly internationalized business environment, the strong economic foundation, the advantage of multiculturalism, and a traditional passion of patriotism and loyalty. I believe that with these advantages and through embracing the new opportunities created by further deepening reform and opening up, Macao's golden business card as an international metropolis can and will be polished even brighter!

Liu Xianfa, who holds a doctoral degree in Management Science, is the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR). A former assistant minister of foreign affairs, Liu, born in Qingdao, Shandong Province, in 1963, has headed the Office of the Commissioner of the MFA of the PRC in the MSAR since 2021.

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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

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FORCE 3 TO 4 SOUTH TO SOUTHWESTERLY WINDS, OCCASIONALLY FORCE 5 WITH GUSTS.

RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 70% AND 98%.



26°C~31°C

Source: SMG

MIMF to feature Valery Gergiev, Herbie Hancock & Wynton Marsalis

William Chan

The 36th Macao International Music Festival (MIMF) is slated to take place from October 4 to November 4 under the theme “And the Stars Shine”.

The festival comprises 12 programmes, showcasing the well-known Mariinsky Theatre from Russia under the distinguished classical music conductor Valery Gergiev, alongside jazz icons Herbie Hancock and Wynton Marsalis as its key highlights.

A programme presentation was held yesterday at The Londoner Macao. Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) Director Leong Wai Man said that the budget for this year’s festival was around 33 million patacas.

The festival kicks off with Tosca – Opera in Three Acts by Italian classical composer Giacomo Puccini. According to a statement

released at the ceremony, Tosca has been hailed as one of the most famous operas, and it is one of the most frequently performed in the world. The statement noted that the opera will be performed by the Mariinsky Theatre from Russia and acclaimed classical music conductor Valery Gergiev.

The Mariinsky Theatre is a historic opera house in Saint Petersburg, opened in 1860.

Gergiev, 71, is a Russian conductor and opera company director. He is currently general director and artistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre and the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, as well as the artistic director of the White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg.

Gergiev will also lead the orchestra in two symphonic concerts, presenting

Russian orchestral music through a repertoire of classics by Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Rachmaninoff.

In the jazz music genre, the festival has invited two American jazz legends – octogenarian Herbie Hancock and trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. The great jazz pianist Herbie Hancock, winner of Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award will be performing with his five-man combo, while Wynton Marsalis, 62, will join the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

The closing performance will be presented by the world-renowned Portuguese fado diva Mariza and the Macao Chinese Orchestra (OCHM) under the baton of Shanghai-born Singaporean Tsung Yeh (葉聰), blending Western poetry with Chinese melodies. Leong underlined that the fusion of fado and the Macao Chinese Orchestra underscores Macau’s distinctive identity as a meeting point of East and West. She added that one ongoing goal for the



Director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) Leong Wai Man presents the 36th Macao International Music Festival (MIMF) at The Londoner Macao yesterday.

– Photo: William Chan

bureau during international music festivals is to facilitate interactions between local artists and world-class musicians and ensembles.

This year’s MIMF also includes 16 outreach activities, such as master classes, workshops, and film screenings, with the aim of

enhancing musical dialogue and exchange in the community and bringing the public closer to music, according to the statement. Tickets will go on sale on August 18. To purchase tickets and view the schedules of performances, visit <https://www.macauticket.com/>. ■

CTS Macau receives 1,700 foreign permanent residents’ mainland travel permit applications

Yuki Lei

Starting July 10, non-Chinese, i.e., foreign permanent residents of Macau can apply for ID card-like travel permits to enter mainland China on multiple trips for up to 90 days each time within a five-year validity period, and China Travel Service (Macao) Limited Entry Permit Centre Deputy General Manager Conny Chan Kit Mui told the *Post* that as of 5 p.m. yesterday, the number of online applications received by the agency had reached about 1,700, mostly Portuguese nationals.

The National Immigration Administration (NIA) announced in early July that non-Chinese nationals who are permanent residents of Hong Kong and Macau may apply from July 10 for Hong Kong and Macau Residents’ Entry and Exit Permits for Travelling to and from the Mainland, underlining that those travelling to and from the mainland

for short-term entry purposes such as investment, visiting relatives, tourism, business, seminars and exchanges, can submit their applications in person to China Travel Service (Hong Kong) Limited and China Travel Service (Macao) Limited respectively.

After completing the fingerprint collection and other formalities at border checkpoints, the travel card holders are exempted from filling in the alien entry card and can go through e-channels, according to NIA, which stresses in a statement on its website that permit holders shall not work, study or engage in activities such as news reporting while in the mainland.

Speaking to the *Post* on WeChat, Chan noted that among the about 1,700 applicants who have made online appointments, about 820 have meanwhile been processed, with nationals from Portugal, Malaysia and the Philippines accounting for most of the applicants. ■



This file photo taken on July 10 shows the four dedicated service counters for processing applications by foreign permanent residents of Macau for special travel permits to enter mainland China at China Travel Service (Macao) Limited on the first floor of Nam Kwong Building in Zape.

– Photo: Yuki Lei

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Catch a glimpse of Macau history at 'Old Meets New' exhibition

Rui Pastorin

The “Old Meets New: A Historical Photo Exhibition Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Macao’s Return to the Motherland” is currently on at the Macau Museum, presenting nearly 120 photos and objects until September 8.

The exhibition is located in the gallery on the third floor of the museum.

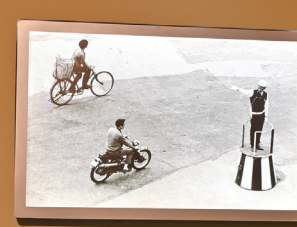
The objects and photographs, both old and new, are exhibited across five sections: “Historical Buildings”, “Everyday Life”, “Scenes of the Past”, “Celebrating the Return” and “Today’s Macao”, according to a recent statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC).

A statement from the museum added that some of the new photographs on display were taken at the same location as the old ones “after studying the original scenes captured in the old photographs”.

Moreover, the IC statement said that the exhibition “recreates the urban landscapes of Macau in the 19th and 20th centuries” through historical photographs of buildings, harbours and all walks of life. This draws “a comparison between the urban landscapes of the past and the prosperous cityscape after Macau’s return to the motherland, while delineating the development of the city and reflecting the enhancement of urban functionality”, according to the statement.

One can visit the exhibition from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the last admission being at 5:30 p.m. from Tuesdays to Sundays. Admission is free for Macau residents on Tuesdays and on the 15th of every month. Tickets are priced at 15 patacas for adults and eight patacas for student card holders, while children aged 12 and under as well as seniors over 65 get in for free. For more details, visit www.macaumuseum.gov.mo.

An online virtual reality (VR) version of the exhibition is also set to be launched, the statement noted. ■



Photos: Rui Pastorin

Man cheats gambler out of HK\$50,000 by using 'transfer record'

Yuki Lei

A mainland man, claiming to have "a way to convert casino chips into cash and transfer them to mainland bank accounts", cheated a compatriot early this month out of a casino chip worth HK\$50,000 in a casino in Cotai by using a forged screenshot of a transfer record, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Leng Kam Long said during a regular press conference yesterday.

Leng quoted the middle-aged male victim as noting that he had met the suspect – a 31-year-old surnamed Du – at a casino in Cotai. They then exchanged contact information and met again at the casino in the early hours of the following day to exchange the

chip worth HK\$50,000 into money. The victim told the police that he handed over the chip to Du after he showed him a screenshot of a transfer of 47,900 yuan that day, only realising on July 13 that he had been cheated by Du when he found that Du had not transferred the money to his bank account.

A PJ investigation identified, according to Leng, the suspect and arrested him at a hotel in Zape on Tuesday. Leng said that Du refused to cooperate with the police, but there was strong evidence that Du was involved in fraud involving a large amount of money as well as computer forgery.

The Judiciary Police transferred Du to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday morning. ■

2 locals lose over 1 million patacas in investment scams

Leong Ian Kio

Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Leng Kam Lon announced in a regular press conference yesterday at the PJ headquarters in Zape two separate investment scams victimising two middle-aged local women with their losses amounting to 260,000 yuan (289,000 patacas) and 799,000 patacas respectively.

Each victim met a male "friend" on social media who claimed to share their interest in investing in stocks. The "friends" then introduced the victims to an investment app where they could buy stocks, and both women then linked their bank accounts to the app, according to Leng.

In order to fully persuade the victims and to give them an illusion of legitimacy, initially both victims were able to receive and withdraw money from the investment app, with one of them "earning" 90,000 yuan and the other 500 patacas.

However, the first victim soon found out that she was unable to withdraw any more money from the app when other victims of a WeChat stocks investment group she had meanwhile been added to by her "friend" told the other members of the group that they were unable



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Leng Kam Lon looks on during yesterday's regular press conference at the PJ headquarters in Zape.

– Photo: Leong Ian Kio

to withdraw any money from their investment accounts. Meanwhile, the other victim simply could not withdraw any more money from her account – neither the money that she had deposited nor her purported "earnings".

The Judiciary Police urged anyone encountering fraud or suspecting to have been scammed to call their anti-fraud enquiry hotline 8800 7777 or the crime report hotline 993. ■

Lawmakers pass insurance intermediary business bill

Ginnie Liang

The Macau Legislative Assembly (AL) passed an amendment bill on insurance intermediary business in its second and final reading yesterday in the legislature's hemicycle.

The new law will replace a decree-law that was enacted in 1989.

Traditionally, insurance intermediaries have been categorised as either insurance agents or insurance brokers, according to the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers based in Washington, DC.

During yesterday afternoon's debate in the legislature's hemicycle, several lawmakers raised concerns whether the new law will enable insurance practitioners to practise in the mainland, especially in the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong said that the insurance intermediary business is a regulated activity, and if cross-

border business was involved, it had to comply with the laws of the respective places, including the qualifications and the sale of products subject to the regulations by the relevant mainland authorities.

According to Lei, the government is discussing with the relevant authorities in the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin local residents' right to obtain insurance renewal, claims and surrender services there, adding that a special body has been set up to study the feasibility of implementing the cross-border arrangement.

The law extends the validity period of insurance intermediary licences from one year to two years, and clarifies the conditions for renewal of the licences, including the requirement to comply with continuing professional training.

The law also raises the fines for administrative offences, with the Monetary Authority of Macau



Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong addresses yesterday's plenary session in the Legislative Assembly's (AL) hemicycle. – Photo courtesy of TDM

(AMCM) having the right to impose fines ranging from 5,000 patacas to one million patacas, or up to 10 million patacas if that the offence has a particularly serious impact.

The government-drafted law is slated to take effect August 1, 2025. ■

Heath Bureau warns of upward trend in COVID-19 cases

Yuki Lei

The percentage of patients with an influenza-like illness caused by COVID-19 has increased from 7 percent in early June to 24 percent of flu cases in the past week, showing an increasing trend in the activity of COVID-19 viruses, Leong Iek Hou, who heads the Health Bureau's (SSM) Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Division said yesterday.

Speaking on the sidelines of yesterday morning's current affairs phone-in programme, Ou Mun Gwong Cheuhng, hosted by the Chinese-language radio channel of public broadcaster TDM, Leong urged those who have still not been vaccinated against COVID-19 to get jabbed as soon as possible and seek medical attention if they develop symptoms.

As reported by TDM, Leong pointed out that influenza viruses in the community have remained stable over the past week, in which about 8 percent of patients with fever and respiratory flu-like illnesses were caused by influenza viruses, but the proportion of influenza-like patients caused by COVID-19 increased to 24 percent over the past week.

"There is an increasing trend in the activity of the COVID-19 virus, as about seven out of 100 influenza-like patients were infected with COVID-19 at the beginning of June, but as of last week, 24 cases had been caused by the virus," Leong was quoted by TDM as saying, adding that the bureau has also noticed an upward trend in the number of COVID-19 patients seeking treatment in the public hospital's emergency department. ■



The Health Bureau's (SSM) Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Division Chief Leong Iek Hou speaks to public broadcaster TDM yesterday on the sidelines of its current affairs phone-in radio programme, Ou Mun Gwong Cheuhng.

– Photo courtesy of TDM

Senior 'lost' for about 20 days cheated out of HK\$1.42 million in 'fake police' scam

Yuki Lei

A local female senior citizen has fallen victim to a "fake police" scam, in which the scammers, one purporting to be a police officer from the mainland, instructed the victim to stay in a guesthouse in Taipa for about 20 days for the process of transferring HK\$1.42 million from her local bank account to a designated Hong Kong bank account as "bail money", Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Leng Kam Lon said yesterday.

According to yesterday's regular press conference, the victim reported her case to the Judiciary Police on Tuesday, saying that she received a call on June 18 on her mobile phone from a Putonghua-speaking man

who claimed to be a staff member of a mainland bank requesting her to undergo an investigation in the mainland as "her Home Visit Permit was used to defraud another person out of five million yuan, which had led to that person's suicide". The victim added that the call was then transferred to another man claiming to be a police officer after she told the "bank staff" that she was unable to travel to the mainland.

Leng noted that as the "police officer" was able to tell the victim her name, Home Visit Permit number and phone number, she was convinced of the identity of the "officer", staying in a guesthouse in Taipa alone as instructed, during which the victim transferred, on

July 9, HK\$1.42 million from her local bank account into her Hong Kong bank account and gave the "officer" the Hong Kong bank account's transaction password, in order to obtain "bail pending trial". She left the guesthouse on July 11.

On Tuesday, the victim received a call from the bank in Hong Kong which had earlier received the transfer of HK\$1.42 million, requesting proof of the source of the transfer and an explanation of the reason for the transfer. After explaining the case to the bank, she talked to her family members about the incident, and only then realised that she had been defrauded. She reported the case to the Judiciary Police later that day. ■

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 2.01 pct higher

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market rallied yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index up 2.01 percent to close at 17,344.60.

The Hang Seng China

Enterprises Index also gained 2.01 percent to end at 6,107.16 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index climbed 3.01 percent to close at 3,516.87 points.

– Xinhua

Legislature rejects lawmaker's 2 debate motions

Tony Wong

The Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday rejected two debate motions, both proposed by directly-elected lawmaker-cum-current affairs commentator Ron Lam U Tou.

In his first debate motion, Lam proposed that the government should legalise private-car ride-hailing by establishing a system regulating such services with the aim of tackling Macau's protracted predicament where it is difficult for locals and visitors alike to hail a taxi.

In his second debate motion, Lam proposed that the government should consult the public about the possibility of building a crematorium in Macau.

The 33-member legislature comprises 14 directly-elected seats, 12 indirectly-elected seats and seven government-appointed seats.

During yesterday's plenary session, a total of 28 lawmakers voted against Lam's first debate motion, while one abstained from voting. Only two legislators, Lam and José Maria Pereira Coutinho, voted in favour.

A total of 27 lawmakers voted against Lam's second debate motion, while one abstained. Only three legislators, Lam, Coutinho and Che Sai Wang, voted in favour.

If a debate motion is passed by lawmakers during a plenary session, the legislature will then request government officials to attend another plenary session in the near future for a formal and public debate between the officials and legislators on the matter raised by the debate motion. Yesterday's rejection of the two debate motions means that the legislature will not schedule plenary sessions for debates for either of the two debate motions.



A black taxi and a radio taxi behind it stop at the traffic light-controlled crossing outside the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) headquarters on Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro yesterday. — Photo: Tony Wong

In his first debate motion, Lam said that his calculations based on official data show that since 2020, about 700 eight-year-validity common taxi licences will expire by the end of this year.

Lam noted that the government launched a public tender in October last year for the granting of 10 eight-year taxi company licences each of which will be allowed to operate up to 50 common taxis, thereby up to 500 new taxis in total.

Lam noted that the government completed assessing the accepted bids for the tender earlier this year. He said that even when all the up to 500 new taxis come into service, they will not be enough to replace the number of taxis whose licences have expired over the past few years as well as those that will expire soon.

Consequently, Lam said, when the 500 new taxis start operating, the total number of taxis then would still be unable to meet the growing demand from locals and visitors for taxi rides.

Lam noted that in various countries and regions such as the mainland, the authorities have

legalised and regulated platforms for private-car ride-hailing services.

Lam said that the government should reference other places' experiences and study the possibility of setting-up a system regulating private-car ride-hailing services.

In his second debate motion, Lam noted that bodies of those who died of infectious diseases are not allowed to be transported to the mainland for cremation.

Currently, corpses of people who died in Macau have to be transported to the mainland for cremation as Macau does not have a crematorium.

Lam noted that in case Macau is hit by a large-scale infectious disease outbreak where a relatively high number of people die of it, burying a large number of bodies is not conducive for epidemic prevention and control.

Lam noted that the Macau government has not come up with any proposal to build a crematorium, after it axed its plan to build a crematorium in Taipa Sa Kong Municipal Cemetery in 2018 due to opposition from residents living nearby. ■

'Amazing Winds' showcases young talents

Review by William Chan

The Macau Band Directors Association (MBDA), co-organised with Sands China, yesterday presented "Amazing Winds – Concert of Macau Youth Symphonic Band" at The Parisian Theatre.

Established in 1996, the association has been involved in conducting band training in numerous local schools and is dedicated to the promotion and development of wind music in Macau.

"Amazing Winds" is a musical series curated by the association, showcasing talented young musicians in solo performances, accompanied by the Macau Youth Symphonic Band. The performance featured a selection of original wind ensemble masterpieces.

The dynamic performance delivered by the youthful musicians and the two conductors was engaging and relatable. Unlike watching seasoned professionals who seem flawless like magicians, witnessing these young talents strive and grow on stage was both discernible and relatable. The journey from initial discomfort to confident displays of strength on stage mirrored personal growth experiences.

A notable highlight was the performance's ability to captivate the audience, as most members of the audience remained in their seats post-intermission, which truly marked the performers' ability to appeal to a diverse audience with its genuine quality. ■



Performers pose after the "Amazing Winds" show at The Parisian Theatre last night. — Photo: William Chan

HKSAR govt criticizes US consul general making skewed remarks on HK

HONG KONG – The government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) yesterday hit out at the absurd and unfounded remarks made in a media interview by US Consul General to Hong Kong Gregory May on Hong Kong regarding national security and human rights.

"The legal basis for implementing 'One Country, Two Systems' comprises the Constitution and the Basic Law, which provide a constitutional guarantee for fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to equality before the law, and is buttressed by the rule of law and independent judicial power," a spokesperson for the HKSAR government said.

The United States has deliberately neglected the fact that the Hong Kong national security law has enabled the livelihood and economic activities of the Hong Kong community as well as the business environment to return to normalcy, the spokesperson said, noting the US move exposes its hypocrisy with double standards.

The offences endangering national security stipulated by the Hong Kong national security law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance target acts endangering national security with precision, and define the elements and penalties of the offences with clarity, the spokesperson said.

"The HKSAR law enforcement agencies have been taking law enforcement actions based on

evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons concerned, and law-abiding persons will not unwittingly violate the law," said the spokesperson.

Previously, the Commissioner's Office of Chinese Foreign Ministry in the HKSAR had also lodged condemnations, urging the US diplomat to adhere to the basic professional ethics and conduct guidelines rather than fabricating lies and attacking Hong Kong.

There is no absolute freedom in the world, and freedom has never been borderless, unconstrained, or bottomless, a spokesperson for the commissioner's office reiterated, adding that Hong Kong has undergone profound, new changes and entered a new stage of governance and prosperity.

"It is precisely because those with ulterior motives have lost the 'freedom' of beating, smashing, looting and burning, the 'freedom' of attacking the Legislative Council, and even the 'freedom' of colluding with external forces to oppose China and disrupt Hong Kong," the spokesperson said.

The remarks made by the US consul general on the so-called "chilling effect" are purely malicious smears on the Hong Kong national security law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, said the commissioner's office and the HKSAR government, both demanding the US diplomat immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong matters which are purely China's internal affairs. — Xinhua

Excessive sweetener found in prepacked plums: IAM



This undated handout photo shows the "Seedless Dried Sour-Sweet UME" and "干梅" product that was found by the Macau Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) to contain excessive amounts of the sweetener aspartame.

Ginnie Liang

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) discovered two types of prepacked plum products sold locally that contain excessive amounts of the sweetener aspartame through the bureau's routine food sample testing, according to an IAM statement yesterday.

The first product of prepacked plums, "Seedless Dried Sour-Sweet UME", manufactured in Japan by "Kanro", expires on November 5 next year and weighs 160 grams, the statement said.

The statement pointed out that the problematic dried sour-sweet

Japanese plum product was found to contain 6.2 grams of aspartame per kilogramme.

The other problematic product, "干梅" (dried plums), the brand of which the statement did not reveal, manufactured in Japan, was found to contain 2.59 grams of aspartame per kilogramme, with a weight of 160 grammes and an expiration date of February 24 next year.

The bureau has ordered shops to stop selling and recall the problematic products, and it urged consumers not to eat them, the statement said, which did not

elaborate on the health standards involved.

The statement pointed out that the levels of aspartame detected in the two products were analysed to be generally unlikely to cause adverse health effects under normal consumption conditions.

The bureau reminded traders to source food only from reliable suppliers and not to purchase and sell food if they have doubts about its hygiene and safety, while for consumers, the statement urged them to maintain a balanced diet to avoid excessive intake of a particular substance. ■