

Sam mulls setting up funds to propel economic diversification

Tony Wong

During Saturday's Q&A session with members of the Chief Executive Election Committee, chief executive candidate Sam Hou Fai pledged that his administration would roll out various measures with the aim of stimulating Macau's appropriate economic diversification, which he said is an urgent question that Macau must answer, such as by studying the possibility of setting up public funds aiming to promote the development of emerging industries.

The government-appointed Chief Executive Electoral Affairs Commission (CAECE) hosted a session on Saturday for Sam, the sole candidate for next month's chief executive election, to present his election campaign manifesto and answer questions from election committee members.

The session, which was broadcast live, was held at the Services Platform Complex for Commercial and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (aka Forum Macao Complex) between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., including a 25-minute break.

According to public broadcaster TDM, the three-hour session was attended by 315 of the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee.

After presenting his election campaign platform, Sam answered questions from 16 electors.



Macau's sole chief executive candidate Sam Hou Fai addresses Saturday's session with Chief Executive Election Committee members to present his election campaign manifesto and answer their questions at the Forum Macao Complex. — Photo: GCS

The ongoing chief executive election campaign period, which started on Saturday, runs until October 11 before the election on October 13, which will also be held at the Forum Macao Complex, located near Macau Tower.

Sam's candidacy has been endorsed by 386

electors, or 96.5 percent of the 400 members of the Chief Executive Election Committee.

Diversification concerns residents' own interests

Presenting his election campaign

manifesto, Sam underlined that appropriate economic diversification is a strategic requirement from the central authorities for Macau. The ex-top judge said that appropriate economic diversification concerns Macau residents' own interests and the city's long-term prosperity and stability, adding that it is "an urgent question that must be answered".

Replying to a question from election committee member Wong Ian Man from the business sector, Sam underlined that Macau's appropriate economic diversification is not only the central authorities' requirement but also a consensus that has been reached by Macau's civil society after the adverse impact of the three-year COVID-19 pandemic on the city's economy.

Sam also praised the current government for laying out "very detailed" information in its 1+4 plan to appropriately diversify Macau's economy, the final version of which was announced in November last year.

The government's 1+4 model aims to consolidate and diversify the development of the city's tourism and leisure industry while putting special emphasis on promoting the development of four nascent industries, namely Big Health mainly driven by traditional Chinese medicine (TCM); modern finance; high-tech; and MICE and commerce as well as culture and sports.

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Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (right) greets some of the 21,000 enthusiastic participants in the Macau Bridge walk yesterday morning. — Photos: GCS, Story on p.12

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The Macau Post Daily

China's achievements over past 75 years unprecedented in history: Rousseff

China's achievements toward economic, social, cultural and political modernization over the past 75 years are unprecedented in history, Brazil's former president Dilma Rousseff said in Beijing yesterday.

— Story on p. 7

UK lawmaker quits Labour over Starmer's 'hypocrisy'

The new government of UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer reeled from its first resignation on Saturday, as lawmaker Rosie Duffield quit the Labour Party, accusing him of "hypocrisy" over his acceptance of free gifts.

— Story on p. 11

Angolan officials hail strong cooperation with China

"China is a partner deserving of our utmost respect, and we must always preserve and strengthen our relationship," Fernando dos Santos, a veteran of Angola's ruling party, says.

— Story on p. 12

Building on 75 Years of Achievements and Opening Up A New Chapter in Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics

By Commissioner Liu Xianfa

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. For the past 75 years, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has united and led the Chinese nation in successfully finding the Chinese path to modernization, and in creating the two major miracles of fast economic development and long-term social stability. China has seen a substantial rise in its composite national strength, becoming a pivotal player in the global economic landscape while achieving a historic leap towards a moderately prosperous society in all respects for its people. China has successfully accomplished the daunting task of eliminating absolute poverty, contributing to over 70 percent of poverty reduced globally. Infrastructure construction has expanded rapidly, with significant advancements in transportation. Remarkable progress has been made in scientific and technological development, and high-tech innovation has yielded fruitful results. Cultural undertakings have also flourished, with the country's soft power substantially enhanced. A range of green-development initiatives has been successfully implemented, promoting harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. China's contribution to global economic growth has exceeded 30 percent for multiple years in a row. These constitute not only China's major achievements, but also great contributions to the world.

Over the past 75 years, China has unwaveringly pursued peaceful development and made important contributions to world peace and development. Committed to its foreign policy goal of safeguarding world peace and promoting common development, China has actively advanced world multipolarity and democracy in international relations, unequivocally opposed hegemonism and power politics, and worked to make the international order more just and equitable. Our external environment has been historically improved, our core interests strongly safeguarded,

our cooperation with other countries greatly expanded and our international status and influence remarkably enhanced. In the new era, under the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core and the scientific guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, China's diplomacy has upheld fundamental principles while breaking new ground and forged ahead. We have created a favorable environment for building a great modern socialist country and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and made new contribution to maintaining world peace and promoting common development.

In pursuit of building a community with a shared future for mankind and lending new impetus to the building of a brighter future for humanity. Faced with intertwined traditional and non-traditional security issues and sluggish world economic recovery, China has given its answer – building a community with a shared future for mankind. Since the vision put forth by President Xi Jinping in 2013, building a community with a shared future for mankind has developed from a conceptual proposition to a scientific system, from a Chinese initiative to an international consensus, and from a promising vision to substantive actions. It has been included in resolutions of the UN General Assembly for 7 consecutive years. Extending to various regions and covering various areas, it has served as a glorious banner leading the progress of the times.

Staying committed to dialogue and cooperation and setting an example of healthy interactions between major countries. Relations among major countries bear on the stability of the world. China has continued to deepen its comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era with Russia, with a view to boosting our respective development and revitalization, and promoting world multipolarity and greater democracy in international relations. China-US relations have weathered winds and rains but mainstream public opinion has not changed. The meeting



Undated file photo of Liu Xianfa, Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) – Photo courtesy of mo.ocmfa

between President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden last November shaped the San Francisco vision and stabilized the bilateral relationship, which met the shared expectations of the world. China and Europe have been deepening dialogue and cooperation and reached consensus on jointly safeguarding multilateralism.

Being dedicated to building a new type of international relations and consolidating and expanding the global network of partnerships. President Xi Jinping has pointed out: "Solidarity brings strength, and confidence is more precious than gold." China stands firmly against small circles that seek geopolitical purposes and small blocs that undermine stability. Over the 75 years, the number of the countries which has established diplomatic relations with China has grown to 183. China has acted on the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness and proven a reliable partner in jointly building the Asian home. China-ASEAN cooperation has made solid progress. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has continued to grow. China has also pursued progress for all and stayed a steadfast member of the Global South. We have been working for the historic expansion of the BRICS mechanism. The FOCAC Beijing Summit was successfully held this year and China-African cooperation is getting new fruits year by year. China has established collective cooperation mechanism with all developing countries having diplomatic ties with China. We are making every efforts to give a strong boost to the representation and voice of developing countries.

Working to promote multilateralism and being a strong supporter for global governance. From the first day of the establishment of the PRC, China firmly upholds the UN-centered international system and the basic norms of international relations underpinned by the purposes and

principles of the UN Charter. China holds that global governance is the way to surmount global challenges and put forward the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). Over 80 countries have joined the Group of Friends of the GDI. The GSI has garnered support from over 100 countries and international and regional organizations, and is written into a host of bilateral and multilateral documents. The GCI has turned from vision to practice and the increased communication, mutual learning and appreciation between the Chinese and other civilizations have added new splendor to world civilizations.

Focusing on open development and serving as a powerful engine of global recovery. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has produced fruitful outcomes and become the most popular global public goods and the largest platform for international cooperation. Over 150 countries and more than 40 international organizations jointly ushered in another golden decade of Belt and Road cooperation. The China International Import Expo, the China International Fair for Trade in Services, the China International Consumer Products Expo, and the China International Supply Chain Expo were held in succession. It has become an established consensus of the global business community that "the next China is still China." This year, China rolled out a series of major steps to expand high-standard opening up and promote high-quality development, including streamlining visa procedures and granting unilateral visa exemption to citizens of a number of foreign countries, which are set to bring more benefits to investors and partners from across the world. It has been proven that openness brings progress and cooperation creates a bigger pie.

Remaining devoted to justice and fairness and acting as a critical force for world peace. Over the past 75 years, China, as a responsible major country, has always upheld justice and stood up for fairness. We have resolutely opposed hegemonism and power politics and pushed back against a handful of countries' attempt to dominate international affairs. At the same time, China has been actively exploring and applying a Chinese approach to addressing hotspot issues, and played a constructive role in upholding international peace and security. We have been working hard for the cessation of hostilities and for peace talks in the Ukraine crisis, made unremitting efforts for the de-escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and played a constructive role in addressing

regional issues such as Afghanistan and Myanmar. Defending justice in defiance of hegemonic power is certainly also about safeguarding China's sovereignty, national dignity and territorial integrity. In the face of external interference and provocation, we fought back resolutely and forcefully. In response to various acts of unjustified suppression, we took legitimate and reasonable countermeasures. The international community's commitment to the one-China principle has been further cemented and the 1.4 billion Chinese people's resolution to advance national reunification remains rock-solid.

The CPC held successfully in July the Third Plenary Session of its 20th Central Committee, laying out systematic plans for further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization. This will profoundly further transform China. Standing at this new start point, China is going all out to build a great modern socialist country in all respects and pursue national rejuvenation through a Chinese path to modernization. This will create new opportunities for world peace and development. China will work hand in hand with countries around the world to advance the building of a community with a shared future for mankind and create a more peaceful and better tomorrow.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland. Macao has been an important node city of the Maritime Silk Road since ancient times. During the past 25 years, with its special geographic location and the great advantage of "One Country, Two Systems", as well as its close links with the Portuguese-speaking countries in language, regulations, laws and culture, Macao has played an irreplaceable role in China's diplomatic undertakings and made impressive achievements in its external relations. Going forward, Macao will be able to derive more opportunities from the country's new development strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and Hengqin In-depth Cooperation Zone, and continue to strengthen its role as a world center of tourism and leisure, a commercial and trade cooperation service platform for China and Portuguese-speaking countries and an exchange and cooperation base with Chinese culture as its mainstream and co-existence of different cultures. I believe that with our joint efforts, China's major-country diplomacy will continue to pursue progress in the new era and bring about a brighter future of peace, security, prosperity and progress for the whole world!

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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

**VERY HOT.
FINE APART FROM CLOUDY
PERIODS.
FORCE 2 TO 3 NORTHWESTERLY
WINDS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL
RANGE BETWEEN 55% AND 90%.**



26°C~34°C

Source: SMG

MGTO holds annual tray race

Rui Pastorin

The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) held its annual Tray Race on Friday afternoon as part of the celebrations for World Tourism Day, according to a statement released on the same day.

This year titled "Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Macao SAR 2024 World Tourism Day Tray Race", the event saw a total of 225 contestants representing 34 local hotels and restaurants, racing from the Ruins of St. Paul's down to Largo do Senado, all the while balancing a bottle of Macau Beer.

Wu Caiyuan from Studio City in Cotai took home the first prize in the male category, while the female category was won by Deng Lingzhi from The Londoner Macao, according to the statement.

Moreover, the statement said that for the Best Costume Awards, this year themed "100% Celebration" the male and female categories were presented to Tat Thuan from Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), and You Fei, Chan Hio Lam, Chu Sau Ling and Mak Mei Chan representing Hotel Central.

The statement added that this year's new category, the Mascots Fun Run, comprised 18 mascots

representing various government entities and different companies and organisations. The mascots set off from the MinM Plaza mall for Largo do Senado, with MGTO's Mak Mak winning first prize, followed by Wynn Macau's Wing Wing and Lei Lei, and GEG's Wavey.

Meanwhile, the "Lucky Tourists" of the year were also welcomed at the local airport on Friday, each receiving souvenirs and electronic consumption cards, the statement said. Souvenirs were also distributed to visitors via MGTO's Tourist Information counters

An introduction to the newly-launched Macao Tourism AI Chatbot, developed by MGTO, CTM and Baidu, was also provided to media at its Tourist Information counter at the local airport.

According to the statement, the chat bot is built on a large language model called Ernie and provides tourism-related information such as Macau's history and culture, tourist attractions, entertainment and leisure, and tour routes. Traditional and Simplified Chinese, English, Korean and Thai are among the languages available in the first stage, and the chatbot can be used via MGTO's destination promotion website and "Experience Macao" app. ■

Champions of 6-day Sands China Macau Open Badminton 2024 crowned



Men's singles champion Angus Ng Ka-long from Hong Kong celebrates his victory. - Photos courtesy of TDM



Women's singles champion Gao Fangjie from the mainland poses with her medal and event mascot after yesterday's final at the Macau East Asian Games Dome.

Rui Pastorin

The finals of the six-day Sands China Ltd. Macau Open Badminton 2024 tournament took place yesterday at the Macau East Asian Games Dome in Cotai, with Hong Kong's Angus Ng Ka-long crowned champion in the Men's Singles and Gao Fangjie from the mainland winning the Women's Singles, a statement from integrated resort (IR) operator Sands China said last night.

The tournament is an event of the HSBC BWF World Tour Super 300.

According to the Badminton World Federation (BWF) website, Ng is World Rank No. 25 and World Tour Rank No. 10 in Men's Singles. Gao, meanwhile, is World Rank

No. 32 and World Tour Rank No. 27 in Women's Singles.

At yesterday's final, Ng played against Singapore's Jason Teh Jia Heng and won 21-19, 21-17, according to the HSBC BWF World Tour website. Meanwhile, Gao competed versus Lin Hsiang-Ti from Chinese Taipei winning 21-23, 21-9, 21-11, the website added.

Winners of the Double Matches were also crowned yesterday, and taking home the top prize for the men's doubles were the mainland's Chen Xujun and Liu Yi, while Li Wenmei and Zhang Shuxian, World Rank No. 5 in women's doubles, won the women's, the statement noted. Meanwhile, the mainland's Guo Xinwa and Chen Fanghui were crowned champions in the mixed doubles.

The total prize money for the event, according to the statement, was US\$ 210,000 (1.68 million patacas).

Moreover, the company hosted its "Sands Cares Presents: Learn from Badminton Elites" on Saturday in cooperation with the Badminton Federation of Macau, during which Taipei's two-time men's doubles gold-medal Olympian Wang Chi-Lin and Ng discussed their experiences and struggles as athletes. The attendees, the statement said, comprised 40 students from Escola dos Moradores de Macau ("School of Macau Residents") and Our Lady of Fatima Girls' School and members of Sands China's badminton team.

The attendees also got to interact and play with the athletes during the Saturday event, the statement said. ■

盛世回歸

慶祝中華人民共和國成立75週年
暨澳門回歸祖國25週年

In Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25th Anniversary of Macao's Return to the Motherland

ECHOES OF A GOLDEN AGE

MACRO EVENTS THROUGH THE MICRO VISIONS OF MACAO'S LEGENDARY CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

澳門四季名薈六樓 金沙藝廊
Sands Gallery, Level 6, The Grand Suites at Four Seasons

展覽日期: 2024年9月21日至2025年1月5日 | 11:00 - 19:00
Exhibition Period: September 21, 2024 - January 5, 2025 | 11:00 - 19:00

黎鷹 Lai Teng	吳衛鳴 Ung Vai Meng	陳顯耀 Chan Hin Io
陸曦 Lok Hei	廖文揚 Lio Man Cheong	區坤健 Ao Kuan Kin
吳衛堅 Ng Wai Kin	李得之 Li Tak Seng	林子恩 Lam Chi Ian

主辦: Organizer: 金沙中國 Sands China Ltd.

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Sam mulls setting up funds to propel economic diversification

Continued from p.1

Govt's key & leading role

Sam, who has no business background, said that the government should assume a key role in intensifying the development of the four nascent industries. Sam said that it would be difficult for Macau to promote the four industries' development only by mainly relying on market forces, the high-tech and Big Health sectors in particular. Consequently, he said, it would be necessary for the government to strengthen its leading role in guiding the four industries' development.

Sam said that his administration would consider setting up new public funds with the aim of achieving the objectives.

Sam also said that Macau should make good use of the development resources from the mainland including those from Hengqin as well as its advantages in linking the nation with the rest of the world, with the aim of stimulating its appropriate economic diversification.

During a press conference after the Q&A session, Sam said that Macau has "solid, healthy and sustainable" financial reserves because of which his administration would study the possibility of rolling out special support measures to boost the development of the city's high-tech sector and other emerging sectors.

Sam also said that Macau can make better use of its financial reserves with the aim of promoting its appropriate economic diversification such as by setting up industrial funds.

Tax incentives

During the one-hour press conference, which was also held at the Forum Macao Complex, Sam noted that financial support measures and tax policies are two important tools used by many economies aiming to promote their growth.

In addition to financial support measures, Sam said that Macau could improve its taxation system with the aim of promoting its appropriate economic diversification.

Sam noted that Macau is an economy with a low tax system, where only three percent of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), according to official data, are currently required to pay tax, but Sam was quick to add that with the aim of making Macau's business environment more attractive for emerging industries, the future government could propose tax incentives for emerging industries such as the high-tech sector.

Moreover, Sam also mentioned Macau's economic diversification campaign when



Chief Executive Election Committee members attend Saturday's session when the sole chief executive candidate Sam Hou Fai answered their questions about his election campaign platform. — Photo: Tony Wong

answering questions on other topics from several other election committee members during the Q&A session.

Gaming sector, foreign tourists

For instance, Sam said that his administration would ensure that the city's six gaming operators will fulfil the government's requirements listed in their current 10-year concession agreement to invest a total of 130 billion patacas in non-gaming attractions and projects during the 10-year period, with the aim of promoting Macau's appropriate economic diversification.

Replying to a question from election committee member Choi Kam Fu from the labour sector, Sam pledged that his administration would continue to strictly implement the newly amended gaming law. Sam noted that the government's tightened regulation of the gaming industry does not intend to downsize the sector but aims to ensure its orderly and healthy development in compliance with the law, with the objective of "preventing the sector's previous negative incidents from occurring again".

Sam also said that the six gaming operators should work closely with the government to expand Macau's sourcing of tourists from foreign countries.

Replying to a question from election committee member Wong Fai from the professional sector, Sam said that his administration would consider requiring Macau's six gaming operators to set up their own representative offices in Southeast and Northeast Asian countries aiming to promote Macau's tourism, as part of their joint efforts

with the government to help Macau expand its sourcing of foreign tourists.

Sam also noted that over 90 percent of visitors to Macau are currently from the three Chinese regions of the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Sam pointed out that Southeast Asia has a population of several hundred million in total, because of which the region is a big market source of tourists for Macau. Consequently, Sam said, Macau should come up with effective measures to attract more of those from the region to visit Macau

Forum Macao

Replying to a question from election committee member Casimiro de Jesus Pinto from the professional sector, Sam said that Macau should make better use of its role as a platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries with the aim of diversifying its industries and contributing to the nation's development.

Sam said that Macau's platform between the two sides, which was launched in 2003, has gradually become an integral part of the nation's development strategy over the past 21 years, adding that in addition to its initial function of promoting business between the two sides, the platform now covers various other fields.

The Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, launched in 2003, is known as Forum Macao for short.

For the next step, Sam suggested that Macau should make good use of its platform with the aim of helping products from major manufacturers in the mainland, such as household appliances and new energy

vehicles (NEVs), enter Portuguese-speaking countries with a population of 290 million in total, most of which are countries with lower development levels. For instance, Sam said, Brazil, with a relatively high development level in the nine-nation group, is still a developing country so that medium-quality products made in China are popular there.

Replying to a question from election committee member Zheng Anting representing the Legislative Assembly (AL), Sam acknowledged that Macau achieving its economic diversification will require the presence of a good business environment, which cannot be created without an efficient government.

Sam pledged to study how to streamline the government's administrative formalities assessing and approving applications for licences to run a business.

Meanwhile, replying to a question from election committee member Ma Ching Man from the labour sector, Sam said that his administration "would not consider" lifting the government's current ban on the hiring of non-local casino dealers.

Sam noted that casino dealers currently account for about 10 percent of the local working population because of which it is important to ensure the protection of their employment.

Meanwhile, replying to questions from several other election committee members, Sam pledged that his administration would study how to help local SMEs upgrade their business operations with the aim of enabling them to adapt to the changes in consumption habits and patterns of both residents and visitors alike. ■

21,000 walk across Macau Bridge, opening to traffic tomorrow

Tony Wong

Macau Bridge, the city's fourth sea-crossing connecting the Macau peninsula and Taipa island, will open to vehicular traffic from 2 p.m. tomorrow, after about 21,000 residents walked across the bridge yesterday morning during an event organised by the Sports Bureau (ID) celebrating the bridge's inauguration.

The bridge's inauguration ceremony will be held tomorrow morning, National Day, at Pac On in Taipa, close to the bridge.

The bridge's operational start was announced during a press conference on Friday where officials said that they expected it to be able to divert about 30 percent of vehicular traffic from the nearby Macau-Taipa Friendship Bridge during peak hours.

Macau Bridge connects the peninsula's Zone A land reclamation area and the Zone

E1 land reclamation area near Taipa's Pac On district.

The 3,085-metre-long bridge has eight vehicular lanes – four in each direction, with one lane in each direction for motorcycles only.

According to Friday's press conference, the bridge has a maximum speed limit of 80 kilometres per hour, while the maximum speed limit for the motorcycle lanes is 60 kilometres per hour.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and other top officials officiated at yesterday morning's walk on the bridge. Ho dotted the dragon's eyes.

Only Macau residents were eligible to sign up for the six-kilometre walk.

The activity was initially to provide 10,000 places, before providing 21,000 places finally after its registration was met with a great deal of enthusiasm. ■

This aerial photo shows thousands of people walking across Macau Bridge in both directions yesterday. — Photo: GCS

Sam stresses 'crucial' need for expansion of LRT system

Yuki Lei

The sole candidate for Macau's sixth-term chief executive, Sam Hou Fai, underlines in his election manifesto the importance of the continuous enhancement of the public transport system in the next five years and, in responding to a reporter's question on Saturday about the viability of legalising online ride-hailing services in the future, he stressed the "crucial" need for the expansion of Macau's Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system, saying that after the start of operations of the LRT East Line connecting Taipa Ferry Terminal Station with the Qingmao checkpoint at the northern tip of the Macau peninsula in the future, the next step should be to consider extending the LRT system to Lam Mau Tong, Ha Van (Praia do Manduco) and Barra (Ma Kok) in the southern Inner Harbour area, and even studying the feasibility of extending it to the Macau side of the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge – colloquially known as the "old bridge".

According to previous news reports, the LRT East Line is a route officially proposed in the 2020 Policy Address by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, with a total length of about 7.7 kilometres and a total of six underground stations, running in a north-south direction, passing through the Zone A and E land reclamation areas to connect with the Taipa Line, which will then link up with the Barrier Gate checkpoint, the Taipa Ferry Terminal, the local airport and the Hengqin checkpoint, aiming to meet the transport needs of residents and tourists entering and exiting Macau. The construction of the LRT East Line started last year, and is planned to be completed in 2028 and start operating in 2029. The Public Works Bureau (DSOP) said in a statement earlier this month that benefiting from the advantageous construction conditions of the V-shaped area at the Barrier Gate, the LRT East Line has successfully shifted the ES1 station further to the north and enhanced the convenience of transport interchanges, creating favourable conditions for the future extension of the LRT to the west to the Qingmao checkpoint.

After addressing the "Presentation and Question-and-Answer Session on the Political Platform of the Candidate" for the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee on Saturday morning, Sam held



The sole candidate for Macau's sixth-term chief executive Sam Hou Fai addresses Saturday afternoon's press conference after the "Presentation and Question-and-Answer Session on the Political Platform of the Candidate" for the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee, at the Forum Macao Complex in Nam Van. Sam's election campaign manifesto's aims are summarised behind him in Chinese and Portuguese: Endeavour, Solidarity, Persistence, Innovation – Photo: Tony Wong

an hour-long press conference from 1:45 p.m. that day to respond to reporters' questions on his manifesto, during which he was asked about the difficulties faced by tourists and residents in hailing a taxi and whether he would study the feasibility of legalising online ride-hailing services through licensing arrangements in the future.

Sam said: "In solving Macau's transport problems, the next government needs to study how its transport system can be interconnected," adding that it was "unrealistic" to undertake large-scale projects such as road widening, the construction of an underground system and issuing district-based taxi driver licences in such a small place as Macau, "so as a next step, we have to think about how to formulate a proper plan for the construction of the ongoing LRT system".

He referred to Macau's number of visitor arrivals logged in the first eight months this year when underlining the close connection between Macau's rapid economic development and the increase in the flow of people and passengers since its return to the motherland on December 20, 1999: "Since reunification, Macau's economy has

developed rapidly, its society has opened to the outside world, and the footfall has increased. Between January and August this year, the number of visitors to Macau reached more than 23 million, and the figure in August stood at 3.65 million, surpassing the level of the same period in pre-pandemic 2019".

Sam went on to say that the trouble in hailing a taxi has been bothering residents and tourists for a long time, and which was something that everyone told him they were hoping the next government could solve: "Over the past month, I have been in contact with various sectors of society, and the transport problem of Macau is the one that they all unanimously hope that the next government can solve," adding that he has received quite a number of views proposing the legalisation of online ride-hailing services in Macau. He also said that he heard some locals' comments that likened the chance of hailing a taxi such as at the airport to hitting the jackpot.

Sam pointed out that Macau's transport network, including the LRT network, public buses, casino shuttle buses run by the city's integrated resort (IR) operators

and the increasing amount of taxis failed to accommodate the city's holiday crowds at various border checkpoints and streets, with the appearance of long queues at taxi ranks in the city centre, adding that Macau must continue to expand its pedestrian facilities and open up bus connections to make it easier for residents to get around and for tourists to enter the city's various neighbourhoods.

Speaking to the media yesterday morning when attending the Macau Bridge walk, Transport Bureau (DSAT) Director Kelvin Lam Hin San pointed out that the number of taxis in Macau continues to increase, with now about 1,500 taxis being in operation and another 50 new taxis to be put into service in the near future, adding that once all the 500 new taxi licences granted late last year are put into service, the number of taxis will rise to about 1,800.

Referring to the predicament that taxis do not tend to enter people's living areas, Sam said: "Macau is so small that it is impossible to issue taxi driver licences on a zonal basis like Hong Kong" and, therefore, he added, Macau needed to broaden its mindset and try its best to tackle such the thorny issue. He also said that he welcomed suggestions from all sectors in Macau and even visitors in solving the problem together.

Public hearing on Saturday, registrations now open

Meanwhile, the Sam Hou Fai Election Campaign Office announced in a statement yesterday the holding of a public hearing at 3 p.m. on Saturday at Hou Kong Middle School on Estrada Ferreira do Amaral, inviting members of the public to register to take part in an exchange of views about his election campaign manifesto.

According to the statement, the public hearing is limited to 400 participants. Local residents aged 18 or above can now register through the Kong Seng or Macau Ticketing website at <https://www.macauticket.com/enrollment> until 8 p.m. tomorrow (National Day), with the drawing of lots to be held at 4 p.m. the following day (October 2) if the number of registrants exceeds the number of places available, while the results will be announced at 8:30 p.m. on the same day. ■

Macau offers free bus, LRT rides to celebrate 'double happiness'

Yuki Lei

National Day on October 1 falls on Tuesday this year, and in celebration of the "double happiness" event, free bus travel is being offered to residents and visitors tomorrow and free LRT rides today and tomorrow.

The city's two bus operators announced on their respective websites on Friday that with the approval of the Macau government, the two bus operators have jointly launched a special bus arrangement to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1 and the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the mainland on December 20 by making all bus rides free tomorrow for their passengers from the first to the last buses.

The announcement noted that the two public bus operators will closely monitor passenger transport demand and road conditions, while making operational arrangements, contingency plans and staffing arrangements well in advance. In addition, according to the announcement, the two bus operators will also maintain close communication with the Transport Bureau (DSAT) and other entities to exchange information and "flexibly"

increase the frequency of bus services in a timely manner, ensuring orderly operation of the first-line services and passengers' safe and smooth rides.

Government-owned LRT operator Macau Light Rapid Transit Corporation Limited (MLM) said in a statement on Friday that its entire system will be free to ride between September 29 and October 1, i.e., from yesterday through tomorrow, during which passengers can simply enter and exit the gates as instructed by on-site staff at each of the LRT stations.

The LRT carriages were much more crowded than usual yesterday.

The statement also noted that with a view to facilitating the travelling needs of residents and tourists alike during the mainland's National Day Golden Week, the LRT will extend, from tomorrow through October 7, the departure time of its last trains to 11:59 p.m.

On the first day of free LRT rides yesterday, the light rail broke down once, with some stations stopping operations due to train failure.

The breakdown lasted for about an hour. According to a notice issued by the LRT



This photo taken yesterday afternoon shows LRT passengers stuck in one of the carriages during the breakdown. – Photo: MPDG

operator at 2:47 p.m., its service on the Taipa Line between Taipa Ferry Terminal Station and Ocean Station was suspended due to a train failure at the East Asian Games Station,

but limited service was maintained between Ocean Station and Barra Station. The notice urged the affected passengers to consider using alternative modes of transport. ■

Macau, East Timor capital Dili ink twinning pact



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (right) and East Timor's Minister of State Administration Thomás do Rosário Cabral shake hands at Government Headquarters in Nam Van after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on establishing sister-city ties between Macau and Dili on Thursday.

— GCS

Staff Reporter

Macau and Dili, the capital city of East Timor, have signed a twinning agreement, the local government has announced.

According to a statement by the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) yesterday, a memorandum of understanding on setting up sister-city ties was signed by Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and visiting Minister of State Administration of Timor-Leste Tomás do Rosário Cabral at Government Headquarters on Thursday. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of the People's Republic of China in the MSAR Liu Xianfa as well as a number of local and East Timor officials, including the mayor of Dili, Gregório da Cunha Saldanha.

Timor-Leste is East Timor's official Portuguese name.

Ho was quoted as saying during the ceremony that Macau and Dili are "vital nodes" on the Maritime Silk Road. Rosário Cabral said the twinning pact symbolised the "singing of a true song of peace, making a valuable contribution to upholding Asian values."

The statement pointed out that Timor-Leste President José Ramos Horta paid his first state visit to China in July this year, during which both sides signed a cooperation

agreement on advancing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

According to the statement, Macau and Timor-Leste have enjoyed a history of long and friendly relations. In April this year, the Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) and Central Bank of Timor-Leste signed an updated cooperation agreement to further strengthen their partnership, the statement pointed out.

Dili has about 280,000 residents, or about one-fifth of Timor-Leste population of 1.3 million.

Timor-Leste is a member of the Macau-based Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Forum Macao). ■

Uphold global vision to resolve Ukraine crisis

China Daily Editorial

Foreign Minister Wang Yi made China's pro-peace stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict unequivocally clear through a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings he held with foreign leaders and officials on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York over the past week.

In the meetings, the foreign leaders and officials of other peace-loving countries not only supported Beijing's stance but also pledged to work together to help resolve the Ukraine crisis through political means. That is conducive to countering the United States' disinformation campaign accusing China of being the "enabler" of Russia in the conflict.

In a ministerial meeting of the newly formed "Friends of Peace" platform on the Ukraine crisis he co-hosted with other officials at the UN Headquarters on Friday, Wang rightly pointed out that neither war nor hatred can help resolve the crisis, urging the world to choose peace over war, reconciliation over hatred, and dialogue over confrontation.

With the Russia-Ukraine conflict

showing no signs of ending even after more than two and a half years, Wang urged the two parties to give peace a chance. The "Friends of Peace" platform is not about taking sides in the conflict or promoting bloc confrontation. Instead, it is meant to expose the US, which in the guise of "value diplomacy", has been prolonging the conflict by providing weapons, military equipment and material aid to Ukraine.

By doing so, the US aims to kill three birds with one stone – weaken Russia; tighten Washington's grip over Europe; and incriminate China. The US doesn't want peace to be restored in Eurasia or European countries to feel secure, because it is the only party which stands to gain from the conflict commercially and strategically.

As a result, the US has been smearing pro-peace countries, including China, Brazil and other nations that have formed the "Friends of Peace" platform, while pretending to be neutral. That Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said that Kyiv values China's stance on the crisis and its efforts to help restore peace shows that Washington's smear campaign

is divorced from reality and actually is a part of the US' overall China-containment strategy.

Just like in the Middle East crisis, the key to resolving the Ukraine crisis lies with the US. If Washington wanted to restore peace, it should not have ignored China's suggestions, especially because China has been, right from the beginning, advocating for peace and has maintained good relations with both Russia and Ukraine.

Since the world is divided on the Ukraine crisis, the UN Security Council should take the initiative to resolve the differences and contradictions between Moscow and Kyiv, as Wang said at a UN Security Council high-level meeting on the Russia-Ukraine conflict last week.

China did not start the Russia-Ukraine conflict nor is it a party to it. Any attempt to blame, attack or smear it for the conflict, therefore, would be an act of devilishness. As Wang said, the international community should join hands to uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and resist the exploitative attempts of some countries.

— Xinhua

Jan-Aug imports fall 9.5 pct to 84.7 billion patacas

Staff Reporter

Macau's imports in the first eight months of the year decreased by 9.5 percent year on year to 84.73 billion patacas, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a DSEC statement on Thursday, food-and-beverage imports dropped by 12.6 percent to 14.22 billion patacas. Food and beverages accounted for 15.2 percent of all imports between January and August, making up Macau's main import segment.

Gold jewellery imports fell by 25.0 percent to 6.91 billion patacas, imports of beauty and cosmetic and skincare products declined by 27.3 percent to 6.37 billion patacas, imports of watches dropped by 26.5 percent to 4.57

billion patacas, and those of mobile phones decreased by 31.2 percent to 2.24 billion patacas.

Macau's main suppliers of imports in the first eight months were the Chinese mainland (29.5 percent of total imports), France (13.2 percent) and Italy (12.4 percent).

Exports rose by 7.1 percent to 8.94 billion patacas, resulting in a merchandise trade deficit of 75.79 billion patacas. Re-exports accounted for 88.9 percent of all exports. Some 70.2 percent of Macau's exports went to Hong Kong, while a mere 1.6 percent were shipped to the 27-nation European Union.

A major part of Macau's imported retail goods are bought by visitors, those from mainland China in particular. ■

Macau residents' jobless rate remains at 2.3 pct in June-Aug

Staff Reporter

Macau's general jobless rate and local residents' unemployment for the June-August period continued to remain at 1.7 percent and 2.3 percent respectively, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a DSEC statement on Friday, both indicators stayed the same as in the previous period (May-July), but decreased by 0.1 percentage point when compared with the same period (June-August) in pre-pandemic 2019. Meanwhile, the underemployment rate stood at 1.2 percent, down by 0.1 percentage point from the previous period.

The general unemployment rate comprises local residents and non-resident workers (NRWs).

The labour force living in Macau (383,400) and total employment (376,800) grew by 300 and 400 respectively from the previous period, while the number of employed residents (285,900) fell by 400, the statement pointed out. Analysed by industry, employment in the gaming sector increased, while that in hotels, restaurants and similar activities decreased.

Macau's number of unemployed amounted to 6,700, which was similar to that in the previous period but represented a drop of 400 compared to the same period in pre-pandemic 2019. With fresh graduates entering the labour market, the proportion of new labour market entrants seeking their first job increased by 4.8 percentage points to 14.7 percent of the total number of unemployed. Among the unemployed searching for a new job, most of them were previously engaged in the gaming sector and retail trade, according to the statement.

The underemployment situation continued to improve, with the number of the underemployed (4,500) dropping by 300 from the previous period. As regards industries, most of the underemployed were working in the construction sector and retail trade.

In comparison with June-August 2023, the labour force participation rate (67.8 percent), the unemployment rate (1.7 percent) and the underemployment rate (1.2 percent) decreased by 0.1, 0.8 and 0.6 percentage points respectively.

The statement underlined that its employment survey covers all residential units in the Macau peninsula, Taipa and Coloane, excluding collective living quarters such as school dormitories and care homes for the elderly. Individuals living in residential units are included in the survey, and therefore Macau residents and NRWs who work in Macau but live outside the territory are excluded. According to the preliminary estimates from immigration records, an average of about 103,300 Macau residents and NRWs worked in Macau but lived outside the special administrative region during the reference period; when including these individuals, Macau's total labour force (486,800) increased by 700 from the previous period, according to the statement.

At the end of July, according to data from the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), Macau's number of NRWs amounted to 182,307 at the end of July, or 37.5 percent of the total labour force, including 123,186 from the Chinese mainland and 30,045 from the Philippines.

Macau's population stood at 687,000 at the end of June, according to the latest available official demographics. ■