

# Dominic Sio stresses importance of linkage between rule of law & business environment

*CE-elect Sam's legal background 'is his greatest strength'*

Interview by Yuki Lei

Running as the sole candidate for the sixth-term chief executive election, Sam Hou Fai was elected with 394 of 398 votes in Sunday's poll, making him the first Macau Chief Executive-elect with a legal background – and Macao-Japan Chamber of Commerce President Dominic Sio Chi Wai pointed out yesterday the linkage between the rule of law and the business environment.

During yesterday's interview with the *Post*, Sio repeatedly stressed the chamber's expectations on how Sam will lead the community in the future, saying that "we are confident that he will lead Macau to a better future". At the same time, as investors, the chamber, according to Sio, is also concerned about the development trend of the market and the possible changes in the investment environment: "With the emergence of a new leader, will the existing policies of society continue? Will there be new breakthroughs?"

Sio, who owns a trading and investment company, went on to explain how the continuity of the current government's policies would lead to faster economic growth driven by foreign investments attracted by Macau's social stability: "If a place is socially unstable, even if it has a good market, social changes can lead to new challenges". Sio was quick to add that under the institutional



Macao-Japan Chamber of Commerce President Dominic Sio Chi Wai speaks to the *Post* yesterday at his office in Nam Tung Commercial Building in Nam Van. – Photo: Yuki Lei

advantage of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, Macau's social stability was evident to the whole world, and it was precisely for this reason that in the 25 years since Macau's return to the motherland, the continuity of its policies has not been affected

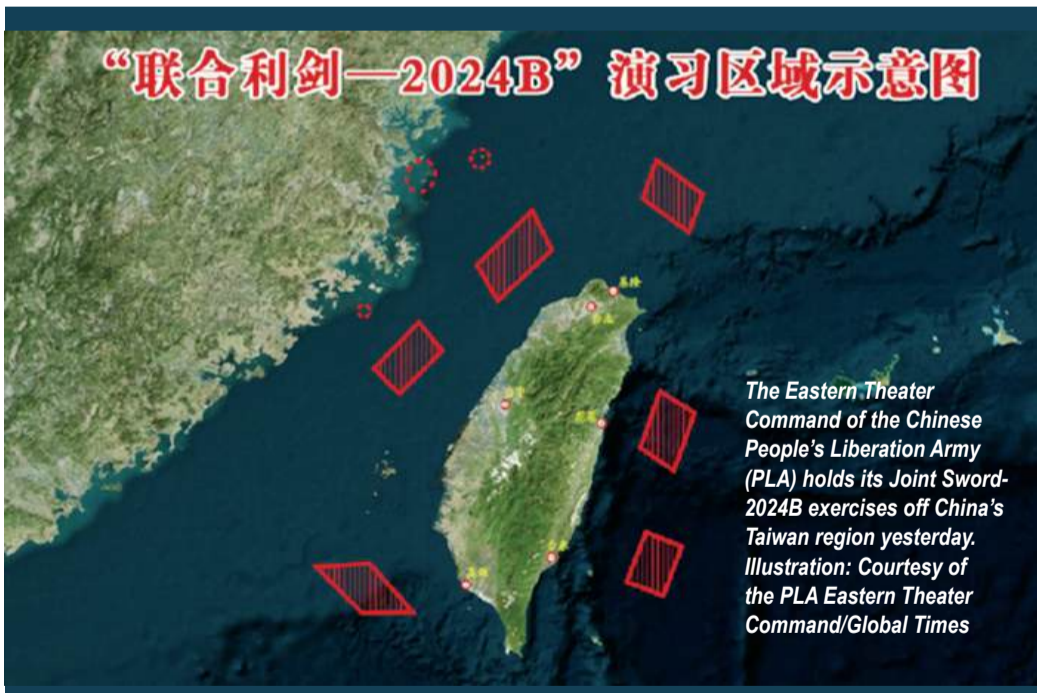
by the election of a new chief executive: "Therefore, from these perspectives, we can see that the Macao-Japan Chamber of Commerce is not only interested in continuing the investment of Japanese enterprises that have already invested in Macau, but also

has the opportunity to attract more and more Japanese enterprises from different industries, including catering, retail, tourism, and even the manufacturing industry".

In Sam's campaign manifesto, he pledged that he would continue to appropriately diversify Macau's economy and transform its industries from the "wild" expansion of its gaming industry, underlining that in the future, the government would strengthen its leading role in the promotion of Macau's new four key industries – 1) big health, 2) modern finance, 3) high-tech, and 4) conventions and exhibitions as well as culture and sports, and would even take the initiative to invest in the creation of new conditions for the industries, such as high-tech enterprises in particular, and that it would also discuss with local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to study Macau's changes in the consumer landscape, and would also give them more support by the public administration to assist in the transformation of the SMEs.

Concerning Sam's manifesto, Sio said: "I believe that many of these Japanese enterprises, as our members, are very concerned about what kind of leader will emerge in Macau and how he will lead society in the right direction by improving administrative efficiency, as one of the important tasks in his governance."

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The Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) holds its Joint Sword-2024B exercises off China's Taiwan region yesterday. Illustration: Courtesy of the PLA Eastern Theater Command/Global Times

## 'Taiwan independence' activities doomed to fail: mainland spokesperson

BEIJING – A Chinese mainland spokesperson yesterday warned that attempts by separatists seeking "Taiwan independence" are doomed to fail.

Wu Qian, spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, made the remarks in response to a media enquiry.

Noting that the drills conducted by the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) yesterday were aimed at cracking down on "Taiwan independence" separatists, Wu emphasized that the drills did not target Taiwan compatriots.

"We will continue to strive for peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and the utmost effort, but we will never promise to renounce the use of force and will not leave any room for 'Taiwan independence,'" Wu said.

The command yesterday organized its troops of army, navy, air force and rocket force to conduct the drills in the Taiwan Strait and in areas to the north, south and east of the island of Taiwan.

The Ministry of National Defense declared yesterday's drills over at around 6 p.m., about 13 hours after they had begun. – *Xinhua, AFP*

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### Xi says China willing to jointly promote high-quality B&R cooperation with Indonesia

President Xi Jinping said yesterday that China is willing to work with Indonesia to jointly promote high-quality Belt and Road (B&R) cooperation. – *Story on p.13*

### People near Israeli army base shaken by Hezbollah drone attack

People living near an Israeli army base hit by a Hezbollah drone strike described a loud explosion then multiple ambulances arriving, as fresh rocket fire and air raid sirens sent them rushing to shelters yesterday. – *Story on p.16*

### US trio wins economics Nobel for work on wealth inequality

The Nobel prize in economics was awarded yesterday to Turkish-American Daron Acemoglu and British-Americans Simon Johnson and James Robinson for research into wealth inequality between nations. – *Story on p.17*



## HK man hired by 'guess who I am' gang to pick up cash in Macau: police



The hooded organised-crime and fraud suspect from Hong Kong is escorted by Judiciary Police (PJ) officers from the PJ headquarters to a police vehicle in Zape after yesterday's special press conference. — Photo: William Chan

William Chan

A Hong Kong man was hired by a "guess who I am" telecom fraud gang to travel to Macau to pick up money from a senior citizen, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Kim Fong said at a special press conference yesterday.

According to the female victim's report, Cheong said, she received on June 20 a call from a man, claiming to be her "nephew", on her fixed-line telephone at home, telling the victim that he had been arrested for injuring someone, urging her to hand 220,000 patacas in cash to a "legal assistant" in order to compensate the injured person.

The victim handed the money to a man, the 28-year-old Hong Kong man surnamed Chik, on the ground floor of her residential building in the city centre later that day.

Afterwards, the victim received a call from the purported "nephew" again, demanding

more cash. She gave another HK\$300,000 this time to a female "legal assistant" from the gang.

When the scammers called for the third time demanding more money, the victim finally became suspicious. She later called her nephew and realised that she had been defrauded, leading her to report the case to the police.

PJ officers reviewed the CCTV footage near her home, and identified Chik as one of the suspects who picked up the money.

Chik re-entered Macau on Sunday via the Taipa Ferry Terminal and was intercepted at the checkpoint.

Under questioning, the suspect refused to cooperate. Police were still investigating the whereabouts of his accomplice, "the other legal assistant", at the time of the press conference.

Chik was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, where he faces charges of organised crime and fraud. ■

## Residents call for official accredited training platform: survey

Yuki Lei

The findings of a survey show that Macau residents' needs for training and professional development are often closely related to their social needs and career advancement, with over 70 percent of the survey respondents expecting the government to set up an official training platform with certificates.

The Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM – commonly known as Gung Luen in Cantonese) and the Macau Society of Social Sciences jointly conducted between April and last month their "Survey on Macau Residents' Needs for Training and Professional Development". A total of 1,213 questionnaires were collected by means of face-to-face, telephone and online interviews, of which 1,144 resulted in valid questionnaires, mainly from local residents aged between 18 and 44. Over half of the respondents are university graduates and now full-time employees covering the hotel and catering, wholesale and retail, as well as cultural, entertainment, gaming and other service sectors. The findings were released yesterday by the two groups' representatives, including lawmaker Leong Sun Iok and Department of Economics Assistant Professor at the University Macau (UM) Kwan Fung, during a press conference at Gung Luen's Amateur Continuing Study Centre in Nape yesterday.

According to the findings, of the more than 1,100 respondents,

72 percent agreed that vocational training has a significantly positive effect on an individual's career development, yet time and financial factors are often their main barriers to career advancement, with 28.89 percent and 19.57 percent of the respondents indicating "time clashes" and "lack of time", while 16.47 percent said that financial circumstances restricted them from pursuing further studies.

With the aim of encouraging local residents to upgrade their personal qualities and skills through continuing education or by obtaining certificates, so as to complement the diversified development of Macau's economy and different industries through the creation of a learning society, the government has launched its continuing education subsidy scheme.

According to the findings of the survey, the public are inclined to make use of the subsidy scheme to pay for their course fees, with only about 10 percent of the respondents indicating that they had not used the subsidy for further studies in fields such as art and music, translation, business and management, computer science, education science, as well as health and wellness, showing that "providing financial subsidies" and "flexible on-the-job training" were the most favoured motivational strategies by respondents.

In addition, according to the findings, more than 70 percent of the respondents called for the setting

up of an official accredited training platform, with 20 percent of them pointing out that Macau had "seriously insufficient" channels for looking for training courses. The findings added that 55 percent of the respondents expressed their wish to obtain an officially recognised certificate upon completion of the training.

Speaking to the media after the press conference, Leong said that Gung Luen had also received a number of cases in which individuals' training certificates were not recognised and they found it difficult to find employment due to the different standards of different industries in different regions, urging the government to set up a system of training, accreditation and vocational and employment counselling targeting at different industries and, at the same time, to provide one-stop services for local residents, so as to make it easy for them to look for training courses, complete the examinations, obtain certificates and be recommended for employment.

Leong also suggested that enterprises should provide on-the-job training opportunities for their employees, in which the incentives should not only be embodied in the remuneration package, but should also include opportunities for upward mobility, for example, the acquisition of certain certificates or the participation in professional certification training could result in additional points to advance one's career. ■



Representatives of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (Gung Luen in Cantonese) and Macau Society of Social Sciences, including lawmaker Leong Sun Iok (second from right) and Department of Economics Assistant Professor at the University Macau (UM) Kwan Fung (second from left), pose during yesterday's press conference at Gung Luen's Amateur Continuing Study Centre in Nape. — Photo: Yuki Lei

## Dominic Sio stresses importance of linkage between rule of law & business environment

Continued from p.1

Sio also said that with the development of the Internet era, not only Macau, Hong Kong and even the whole nation are facing economic challenges, but other countries are also coping with different challenges, adding that his chamber believes that Sam could lead Macau to move towards an even better future, with his courageous and strong decision-making ability as well as a very in-depth understanding of the actual situation of the community: "Today's Internet era requires a modern government to enhance its administrative efficiency, especially concerning the

business environment". He added that the public administration's current cumbersome application procedures, such as for licences, are not conducive to promoting investments. That's why, Sio said he was hoping that Sam would further shorten the time required for all these vetting and approval processes by upgrading the level of governance capacity.

Unlike previous chief executives, including the first- and second-term chief executive Edmund Ho Hau Wah, the third- and fourth-term chief executive Fernando Chui Sai On and the current chief executive Ho Iat Seng,

all of whom have family business backgrounds, Sam was the president of Court of Final Appeal (TUI) until he announced his candidacy for the sixth-term chief executive in August. Speaking to the *Post* at his office in Nam Tung Commercial Building in Nam Van, Sio said that "Sam's legal background is his greatest strength", adding that his chamber has a "positive" view on the background of Sam's judicial career, "which is not only free from negative concerns, but is also conducive to the future government's efforts to optimise Macau's laws and strengthen its legislative process". ■

Congratulations to  
**Mr. Sam Hou Fai**  
on his election as the sixth-term  
Chief Executive-elect of the Macau SAR

梁安琪

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MACAU POST

### Macau Weather

CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY PERIODS.  
ONE OR TWO SHOWERS LATER.  
FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.  
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 65% AND 95%.



25°C~30°C

Source: SMG





Congratulations to  
Mr. Sam Hou Fai  
on his election as the  
Sixth Chief Executive-elect  
of The Macau S.A.R.

*永利*



# Ho vows full support for Sam forming team

Tony Wong

Outgoing Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng yesterday met with Chief Executive-elect Sam Hou Fai where Ho pledged that the current government team will fully support Sam in forming his own team, according to a statement by the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) yesterday.

During the meeting at Government Headquarters yesterday morning, according to the statement, both expressed their commitment to maintaining close communication and cooperation with the aim of ensuring a smooth transition from the outgoing to the incoming administration.

The election of the sixth-term chief executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) was held at the Services Platform Complex for Commercial and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (aka Forum Macao Complex) on Sunday morning, where Sam, the sole candidate, garnered 394 of the 398 votes cast by the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee, or 98.99 percent of the ballots cast, with two electors absent. There were four blank and no invalid votes.

During yesterday's meeting, the GCS statement said, Ho once again congratulated Sam on his election as the sixth-term chief executive with a "substantial" number of votes.

Soon after Sam was elected on Sunday morning, Ho expressed his "sincere" congratulations on his election as Macau's next chief executive, through a GCS statement.

According to yesterday's



Current Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (right) shakes hands with Chief Executive-elect Sam Hou Fai on the sidelines of their meeting at Government Headquarters yesterday. — Photo: GCS

statement, Ho noted during yesterday's meeting that after the completion of the necessary statutory procedures for the final confirmation of the election results, the local government will then submit a report on the election results to the Central People's Government requesting its appointment of Sam as the MSAR's sixth-term chief executive.

The results of a chief executive election are required to be submitted to the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) for confirmation, after which the court will then publish the results in the Official Gazette (BO).

Sunday's GCS statement noted that in compliance with the relevant provisions of the MSAR Basic Law

and the Chief Executive Election Law, after the Court of Final Appeal confirms Sunday's election results and publishes them in the Official Gazette, the local government will then submit a report on the election results to the Central People's Government requesting the appointment of Sam as the MSAR's next chief executive. After his appointment and until his swearing-in ceremony on December 20, Sam will be Macau's Chief Executive-designate.

Yesterday's GCS statement quoted Ho as saying during yesterday's meeting that he will order all public entities to fully cooperate with Sam and support him

in forming his administration, by providing all necessary equipment and other resources.

According to the statement, Ho also underlined yesterday that his government will continue to push ahead with its measures and various other kinds of work in line with its plans, with the aim of consolidating the solid foundation that the MSAR has achieved and maintaining the city's social stability and development, adding that this will create a safe and harmonious environment for Macau to welcome the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its return to the motherland and for Sam's administration to take office.

During yesterday's meeting,

Sam expressed his gratitude for Ho's congratulations and the current government team's preparations aiming to ensure a smooth transition from the outgoing to the incoming administration.

According to the statement, Sam pledged that he and his team will maintain close communication with Ho's office with the aim of ensuring a smooth and orderly transition from the current to the future administration.

Sam, the former president of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI), will be sworn in as the MSAR's sixth-term and fourth chief executive on December 20, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland.

Macau's first and second chief executive, Edmund Ho Hau Wah and Fernando Chui Sai On, served two consecutive five-year terms, the maximum allowed under the MSAR Basic Law.

Ho Iat Seng announced on August 21 that for health reasons he was not seeking a second five-year term.

In the previous election in 2019 when all 400 members of the election committee attended, Ho Iat Seng was elected by 392 of them, or 98 percent of the votes cast.

In the 2014 election when Chui was re-elected, he obtained 95.96 percent of the ballots, while he won 95.27 percent of the votes in his first election in 2009.

In the 2004 election when Edmund Ho was re-elected, he garnered 296 of the 299 votes cast by the then 300-member Chief Executive Election Committee, or 99.00 percent of the ballots cast. ■

## China-PSCs Cultural Week to kick off on Thursday

Ginnie Liang

The four-day 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Cultural Week of China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (PSCs), organised by the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao), will kick off on Thursday at Macau Fisherman's Wharf, Forum Macao's Permanent Secretariat Secretary General Ji Xianzheng announced yesterday.

The Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao) is also known as Forum Macao.

Ji made the remarks during a press conference at the Forum Macao Complex yesterday, adding that the budget for this year's cultural week is similar to that of last year, which is about 11.5 million patacas.

Ji underlined that the Cultural Week has been organised for many years, and with the theme of "China-PSCs cultural integration, promoting people-to-people communication", this year's event aims to attract more young people to participate in the event with a new audio-visual exhibition and flash mob activity, so as to reinforce Macau's role as a cultural bridge between China and the Portuguese-speaking world.

The event comprises music and dance performances, culinary teaching workshops, hand-made product shops, booth games, and an art exhibition, focusing on the promotion



Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) President Vincent U U Sang (left), Forum Macao Deputy Secretary General of the Permanent Secretariat Xie Ying (second from left), Forum Macao Permanent Secretariat Secretary General Ji Xianzheng (second from right) and Forum Macao Deputy Secretary Danilo Henriques pose before a press conference yesterday at the Forum Macao Complex. — Photo: Ginnie Liang

of PSCs' different cultures.

According to the press conference, the event will present a series of activities bringing together cultural and artistic teams from China and nine Portuguese-speaking countries, namely, Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal,

São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste (East Timor), to Macau.

In addition, a short video competition will also be held for tertiary and secondary school students in Macau to encourage them to showcase and record the best of Chinese and PSCs' arts and culture.

Besides, a PSCs Culinary Showcase



A Portuguese-speaking (PSCs) culinary showcase at Forum Macao Complex featured speciality menus and food presentations by chefs from PSCs and Macau yesterday. — Photo: Maria Cheang Ut Meng

was also held at the Forum Macao Complex yesterday, featuring speciality menus and food presentations by chefs from PSCs and Macau.

Ji told reporters on the sidelines of yesterday's event that cultural exchanges and cooperation are one of the important contents of Forum Macao, and gastronomy, as a carrier of culture, is an important part of the Chinese cultural heritage and exchanges, as well as one of the most attractive elements.

Ji also said that he hoped that the event would further enhance the public's understanding of the culture of the PSCs, and at the same time contribute to the development of Macau's role as a Creative City of Gastronomy. ■



## 2 nabbed for loan-sharking, falsely imprisoning gambler: police

William Chan

The Judiciary Police (PJ) busted a casino loan-sharking gang last week, arresting two mainlanders, PJ spokesman Cheong Kim Fong said at a special press conference yesterday.

The two suspects, aged 26 and 35, told the police that they're jobless.

According to Cheong, the police received a report on Sunday from a man saying that a family member had borrowed money from a loan shark for gambling and was subsequently confined by them against his will. The police soon located the victim in a hotel

guestroom in Zape and rescued him on the same day. Two suspects were also arrested at the scene.

The victim told the police that he borrowed HK\$60,000 from a man for casino gambling in Zape on Saturday. He was required to pay an upfront "handling fee" of HK\$5,000 and 20 percent of his winnings under certain conditions as "interest." They also signed a loan contract, with the victim giving his car keys to the man.

The victim and a loan shark then gambled together, with Li and Chen acting as lookouts.

The victim initially won money and cleared his debts. After continuing gambling, the victim lost money again and borrowed more from the same gang to try to recover his losses. In the end, he gambled away all the money, having paid a total of HK\$50,000 in interest on both occasions. He was subsequently confined in the guestroom for 15 hours, during which he contacted his family for help.

Li and Chen were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing charges of false imprisonment and usury. Cheong noted that the police were still investigating the whereabouts of the loan shark who lent money to the victim. ■



The two hooded male loan-sharking suspects from the mainland are escorted by Judiciary Police (PJ) officers from the PJ headquarters in Zape to a vehicle after yesterday's special press conference.

— Photo: William Chan

## 29<sup>th</sup> MIF, 2024MFE kick off tomorrow

Rui Pastorin

The 29<sup>th</sup> Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (29<sup>th</sup> MIF) and the Macao Franchise Expo (2024MFE) will kick off tomorrow and run through Saturday at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo, with new features announced during yesterday's press conference at the venue.

This year's MIF is themed "Economic Diversification and Development Opportunities", while MFE is themed "Brands Gathering with Business Opportunities". They have a total area of 38,000 square metres and feature 10 exhibition zones, earmarked to attract over 1,300 exhibitors.

Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) President Vincent U U Sang told the media yesterday that among the new features is one extra working day to enable more time for business discussions and for attendees to avoid the weekend influx of tourists.

Moreover, the exhibition features "the broadest scope of Greater Bay Area [GBA] elements to date", U said, having 195 exhibitors from the GBA, an increase of 112 exhibitors year on year, as well as 80 GBA delegations, being "significantly higher" than last year.

U added that Shenzhen, MIF's partner city this year, will have over 40 enterprises at the 405-square-metre Shenzhen Pavilion. Moreover, the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth



Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) President Vincent U U Sang poses with a robot showcased at yesterday's press conference for the 29<sup>th</sup> Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (29<sup>th</sup> MIF) and the Macao Franchise Expo 2024 (2024MFE) at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo. — Photo: Rui Pastorin

Cooperation Zone in Hengqin will host the Hengqin Pavilion, which comprises over 60 enterprises in nearly 900 square metres of space, U added.

U noted that a "globally renowned China-chic tea brand" will make its Macau debut at MFE, with 7,525 complimentary teas and coffees to be offered for the dual celebrations, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Macau SAR, while "leading-edge technologies" will also be showcased.

Moreover, this year's exhibitions feature 88 concurrent events, a 22 percent increase from 72 events last year.

A "Portuguese-Speaking Countries Market Zone" with over 180 exhibitors from nine PSCs, along with 10 concurrent events related to PSCs, is also featured.

Meanwhile, U, using simultaneous interpretation, told the media during yesterday's Q&A session that the China-Portuguese Speaking Countries Economic and Trade Expo (Macao) C-PLPEX will not be held this year, with its next edition instead slated for 2025, adding that in future it will not be held annually.

C-PLPEX had its first edition last year, during which participation had met expectations, according to U. He also emphasised that PSCs have played a significant role since MIF's first edition. ■



**Congratulations to  
Mr. Sam Hou Fai  
on being elected as the Sixth-term  
Chief Executive-designate of the Macau SAR**



## 2 die after 'falling' from height, senior dies alone in hotel: police

Ginnie Liang

A male senior citizen "fell" from a residential building and died upon impact on Saturday, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman said in a statement on Saturday.

According to the statement, the Fire Services Bureau (CB) and the Public Security Police (PSP) notified the Judiciary Police at 6:40 a.m. on Saturday that a man had died in a "fall" from a flat on Rua Três de Ip Heng (業興三街) in Coloane. The bureau requested PJ officers to go to the scene to investigate.

A resident who had walked past the scene of the incident told PJ officers that at 6:13 a.m. on Saturday, that he had seen human body parts at the scene.

A preliminary examination of the body showed that its multiple fractures were consistent with a fall from a height, according to the statement, which pointed out that there were no suspected criminal injuries on the body.

The exact cause of death would be confirmed after a forensic examination, the statement said, adding that the case was preliminarily listed as a dead body found.

### Middle-aged man 'falls' from height

Meanwhile, the Judiciary Police (PJ) were notified by the Public Security Police (PSP) at 2:51 a.m. yesterday that a middle-aged local man died after "falling" from an industrial building on Rua do Mercado de Iao Hon (市場街), according to a PJ statement yesterday.

The statement did not reveal the man's exact age.

According to the statement, the male victim lived with his family, and his family members told PJ officers that he had been ill before his death, but that he had not been behaving abnormally before he went to sleep the night before he died.

A preliminary examination of the body showed that the injuries were consistent with a fall from a height, according to the statement, which pointed out that there were no suspected criminal injuries on the body.

The exact cause of death would be confirmed after a forensic examination, the statement said, adding that the case was listed as a dead body found.

### Senior dies in hotel guestroom

The Judiciary Police (PJ) received a report from the Fire Services Bureau (CB) on Sunday at 6:20 p.m. that a female senior citizen was found dead in a hotel guestroom in the city centre, according to a PJ statement on Sunday.

The statement said the woman checked into the hotel room on Rua da Caldeira (福隆下街) a few days ago and asked the hotel staff to refill the toiletries on the day after she had checked-in, after which she did not leave the room.

Until about 5 p.m. on Sunday, as the victim did not check out by the designated time, hotel staff went to the room to check and found the woman lying unconscious on the floor of the bathroom and had apparently been dead for a period of time.

No suspicious injuries were found on the body, and the exact cause of her death has yet to be confirmed by an official autopsy. ■

## Woman held, robbed & raped in hotel guestroom: police



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the two hooded suspects from the mainland to a police vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. — Photo: William Chan

William Chan

Two men from the mainland have been arrested for robbing and illegally imprisoning a female mainlander in a Cotai hotel guestroom, with one of them allegedly raping the victim, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Kim Fong said during a special press conference yesterday.

The suspects, both surnamed Li, are aged 38 and 26 respectively.

According to Cheong, the victim initially met the Lis while exchanging currency in September this year. On Saturday, the 26-year-old Li messaged the victim on WeChat, saying that he had hit a lucky gambling streak and had a gift for her in his hotel guestroom.

When the victim entered the guestroom with him, the other Li ambushed her from the bathroom and grabbed her neck, binding her hands and body with a bathrobe belt. Fearing for her life, the victim cooperated with the suspects' demand and handed

over HK\$11,000 in cash and casino chips, as well as providing her mobile banking passwords. The suspects then transferred 24,000 yuan from her bank account.

The Lis took turns guarding the victim, falsely imprisoning her in the room. When the older Li was alone with the victim in the room, he allegedly had unprotected sex with her twice against her will.

The victim managed to escape on Sunday while the two men were asleep and sought help from hotel security. The police, after notification by the hotel, arrested the two suspects in another guestroom of the same hotel.

Under questioning, they refused to cooperate. Cheong said that the victim was confined by the duo for about 17 hours.

The suspects were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing illegal imprisonment and robbery charges. The 38-year-old Li also faces a rape charge. ■

## Officials probe mystery animal deaths at HK zoo

HONG KONG – The Hong Kong government is investigating the death of nine monkeys at the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens (HKZBG).

The dead animals were four White-faced Sakis, three Cotton-top Tamarins, one De Brazza's Monkey, and one Common Squirrel Monkey.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) said it's liaising with officials from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, and autopsies and other tests are being carried out to determine the cause of death.

It said the mammals section of the facility in Central was closed from yesterday for disinfection.

"We will also closely monitor the health conditions of other animals," the LCSD said in a statement.

"During this period, other facilities of the HKZBG will remain open."

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism Kevin Yeung Yun-hung yesterday convened an urgent interdepartmental meeting to discuss the matter.

In a statement, the government said officials have completed the disinfection and

cleaning of animal cages involved, and staff working at the park are in healthy conditions.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said it is uncommon to have multiple animal fatalities within a short time-frame, and an investigation was needed to pinpoint the cause.

It hoped the results could provide clarity and insight into the incident.

Dr Florence Tang, from the Chinese University's School of Biomedical Sciences, said there was a low possibility of infectious diseases being spread.

"If the [death of the] monkeys were caused by infectious diseases, there should be an incubation period. During the incubation period, they should show symptoms," she told RTHK.

"But there were no signals for those keepers to alert those monkeys were sick. The other monkeys are very happy in the cages."

She added that some visitors might have fed the monkeys.

Tang reminded park visitors to avoid having close contact with animals there, and operators should step up sanitation measures to prevent similar incidents from happening.

— RTHK, MPD

Warm congratulations to  
**Mr. Sam Hou Fai**  
for becoming the sixth Chief Executive-elect of  
the Macao SAR



澳門自來水  
MACAO WATER

## STOCK MARKETS

### Hang Seng Index closes 0.75 pct lower

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.75 percent to close at 21,092.87 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises

Index fell 0.54 percent to end at 7,579.94, while the Hang Seng Tech Index dropped 1.43 percent to close at 4,668.18 points.

— Xinhua



# New hopes with new leadership – Macau anticipates brighter future

BEIJING/MACAU – Ng, a 63-year-old chef in the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR), has been following this year's chief executive election since the beginning.

"My expectations for the new chief executive are very simple – develop more industries, create more jobs, and improve our lives," said Ng, referring to Sam Hou Fai, who won the election for the region's top post on Sunday with an overwhelming majority vote.

An old city with a long history of Portuguese rule, the young MSAR, which will soon mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its return to the motherland, bears new hopes with the new leader.

In outlining key governance focuses for the next five years, Sam, the former president of Macau's Court of Final Appeal (TUI), has set the primary goal of meeting people's expectations for a better life, with comprehensively implementing the "One Country, Two Systems" as a basic guideline.

He highlighted the need to enhance public governance capabilities and levels, accelerate moderately diversified economic development, better integrate into and serve national development, improve education, science and technology talent systems, and improve people's livelihoods.

Chui Sai Cheong, president of the Macau Chamber of Commerce, said that Sam's election platform meets the practical needs of Macau in its new development, painting a promising blueprint for the next five years.

"I'm confident he will lead Macau onto a new stage on various fronts," Chui said.

## ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

The new chief executive election came at a time when Macau is striving to diversify its economy.

The MSAR government put forward the strategy for appropriate economic diversification in its policy address for 2023 to build Macau into a world tourism and leisure center and develop its priority industries of big health, modern finance, high technology, exhibition and convention, as well as culture and sports.

Jorge Valente, a member of the Chief Executive Election Committee who cast his vote on Sunday, told Xinhua that economic diversification takes center stage for Macau's future and Sam's policy agenda is well-balanced in this regard.

In building a "world tourism and leisure center," Macau has gone to great lengths to host high-level sports events and performances. This year alone, table tennis, volleyball, basketball and golf games have filled the city's sports calendar. Performing artists from around the world also took to the stage on Macau's numerous arenas, attracting fans from afar.

Macau has hosted a series of large-scale exhibitions and conventions in recent years. It won the title of Asia's best convention city in 2023.

Official figures showed Macau recorded nearly 30 million visitor arrivals in 2023, hiking almost four times year on year. The figure recovered to over 70 percent of the pre-pandemic level in 2019.

Chin Ieng, a lecturer at the Macau University of Tourism (UTM), said cultural and sports events can effectively boost tourism, dining and other related industries, and build up Macau's city image in the long run.

In consistent science and technology pursuits, research teams in Macau's elite universities have made active contributions to the country's Mars, lunar and other space missions. The "Macau Science 1" space exploration satellites, the first such satellites jointly developed by the mainland and Macau, are expected to significantly improve China's space magnetic field exploration technologies. China also selected, for the first time, a payload specialist from Macau as a candidate for the country's fourth batch of astronauts.

In 2023, the Macau SAR government followed up on around a dozen investment plans on scientific and technological industries, and supported a batch of research fruits to commercialize.

Ma Shaodan, associate director of the State Key Laboratory of Internet of Things for Smart City under the University of Macau (UM), noted that the UM has developed an interdisciplinary team with international backgrounds to better achieve scientific and technological innovations.

"Our aim is to build a world-class advanced lab, in addition to commercializing our research fruits in Hengqin, and applying them in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area [GBA]," Ma said, adding that the area



boasts rich upstream and downstream industry resources, where scientific researches can be easily commercialized and applied.

In the first systematic industrial development plan for Macau's appropriate economic diversification from 2024 to 2028, which was released last year, the MSAR government proposed to speed up developing Macau's Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and big health industry. It pledged efforts to promote research and development of TCM and commercialization of research findings as well as modernization and internationalization of the TCM industry.

Chen Xin, head of the State Key Laboratory of Quality Research in Chinese Medicine, UM, pointed out that Macau has a long tradition of TCM, as well as elements of European herbal medicine, forming a unique medicinal culture. "The Greater Bay Area is also rich in TCM resources and its well-developed medical system provides a broad market for clinical testing and utilization of TCM," Chen added.

Macau has also sped up developing its bond market, improving financial infrastructure, and promoting the bond market to be connected to the international market.

The Micro Connect Macau Financial Assets Exchange (MCEX) officially started operation in 2023, becoming the world's first Daily Revenue Obligations (DRO) financial market. The exchange allows investors to directly invest in the large number of mainland small and micro firms through DRO and generate diversified steady returns.

## BETTER INTEGRATE INTO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At a press conference after the Electoral Affairs Commission for the Chief Executive Election announced Sam's victory, the chief executive-elect said that integrating into national development is Macau's opportunity.

In integrating into national development, Sam said Macau should fully leverage the advantages of the "One Country, Two Systems" policy, uphold national sovereignty, security and development interests as the highest principles, and actively participate in the development of the Greater Bay Area.

He highlighted efforts to advance the building of the second phase of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, a 106-square-km island between Macau and the Chinese mainland, pledging to collaborate with national ministries and neighboring Guangdong Province to vigorously develop the zone.

In 2021, the central government unveiled a plan to boost the development of the in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin, positioning it as a catalyst for Macau's diversified economic growth and a hub that expands the living and work space of Macau residents.

By the end of 2023, there were 11,500 Macau residents working or living in Hengqin, an annual increase of over 70 percent, according to the zone's statistics bureau.

In March this year, Hengqin started to allow most goods to be moved there tax-free from Macau. Under the new customs mechanism, tariffs will be generally lifted for goods entering Hengqin from Macau, while goods moving from Hengqin to the Chinese mainland will now be subject to import duties, if they are not eligible for added-value tax exemption.

"Hengqin has completed a key step toward fulfilling its two main goals, which are promoting the diversification of Macau's economy and creating a new home for Macau residents to live and work," said Xuan Jianguo, secretary-general of the Hengqin Institute of Innovation and Development.

This year, the central government has issued a series of policies to facilitate the flow of personnel and goods between Macau and the mainland. The Central People's Government added eight more cities to the list of places eligible to issue individual travel endorsements for trips to Hong Kong and Macau, raised the duty-free shopping quota for mainland visitors to the two SARs, and allowed non-Chinese permanent residents of the two cities to apply for special travel permits to enter the mainland.

Earlier this month, the mainland and Macau signed an updated version of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), a free-trade-agreement-like arrangement established between two separate customs territories of a single sovereign state, aiming to deepen economic exchanges and cooperation between the two sides. Many of the amendments relate to emerging sectors in Macau's economic diversification plan.

Macau has also drawn upon its unique history to build up distinctive advantages as a major platform linking China and Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs) and has actively participated in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Regarding cooperation with PSCs, Sam underlined that the new administration of the MSAR will further promote cooperation in areas such as trade, finance, tourism, and high tech.

In April, Macau hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao), also known as Forum Macao. During the conference, 20 new initiatives covering six areas were announced, including cooperation in trade and investment, human resources, and healthcare.

Since the inception of Forum Macao over two decades ago, trade between China and PSCs has skyrocketed to 220.9 billion in 2023, a more than twenty-fold increase.

"Macau's role as a platform linking China and PSCs exemplifies how the SAR integrates into the overall national development," said Ji Xianzheng, secretary-general of Forum Macao's Permanent Secretariat, in a recent interview with Xinhua.

The better the relations between China and PSCs develop, the more Macau will benefit from the dividends of national development, Ji noted.

– Xinhua, MPD