

New Coloane jail to start operating on Saturday

Yuki Lei

The Correctional Services Bureau (DSC) announced yesterday that inmates held at the current prison on Rua de São Francisco Xavier (聖方濟各街) will be transferred on Saturday to the city's new jail on Estrada da Barragem de Ka Ho (九澳堤壩馬路), both of which are located in Coloane.

In response to the *Post's* enquiry as to whether the relocation will include its "special detention zone" next to the Academy of the Public Security Forces for inmates requiring special detention, the bureau replied by mail last night that "information on the relocation arrangements for the Coloane Prison is not available due to security considerations".

According to the bureau's reply to several media late last year, the new prison at Ka Ho will be able to accommodate a total of 2,700 inmates, i.e., an additional 659 places. According to the annual report by the bureau on Tuesday, at the end of last year, 1,331 convicted prisoners and those on remand were held in the jail, of whom about 1,122 were male and 209 were female.

The construction project of the new prison, divided into four phases, commenced in August 2010, when the government said it expected the project to be completed by the end of 2014. The first two phases of the new prison project, including the construction of external roads, watchtowers, electricity substations and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) rooms, as well as the construction of prison cell blocks and the whole complex, were started in August 2010 and March 2016 respectively. At that time, the first phase of the project was scheduled to be completed in 2012, but in the end, due to "problems with



This undated file photo taken from the website of the Public Works Bureau (DSOP), which oversaw the construction project, shows the new Coloane prison in Ka Ho.

the quality of the construction materials, the unstable mountainous terrain and typhoons", the first two phases of the project could only be completed in December 2019. The third phase, mainly for the prison administration consisting of four buildings – the Administration Building, Inspection Building, Staff Complex, Training Building, and a two-storey underground car park, commenced in April 2019 and was completed in July last year.

Following the completion of the fourth

phase of the project, including the construction of security facilities, signalling and network systems and weak current engineering*, in June this year, the bureau announced in a statement yesterday the relocation of inmates to the new prison on Saturday, pointing out that the relocation was slated to be completed on that day.

The statement pointed out that for the sake of smooth relocation and safety, a raft of traffic control measures, including re-routing of buses and temporary closure of some parking

spaces, would be implemented in the relevant area, calling upon members of the public to cooperate with the instructions given by police officers when travelling through the area.

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) announced yesterday the temporary traffic arrangements to be in effect on Saturday at various roads including Estrada de Hac Sá (黑沙馬路), Estrada de Choc Van (竹灣馬路) and Estrada da Barragem de Ka Ho, noting that bus stops in Estrada de Hac Sá heading towards Coloane Village will be temporarily suspended, while bus routes 15, 15T, 21A and 26A will be re-routed that day.

With the new prison in operation, according to the statement, the current prison on Rua de São Francisco Xavier will cease operation from Sunday. The statement added that all visits to the prison will also be suspended on the day of relocation.

The statement did not reveal the future use of the old jail.

Meanwhile, also yesterday, the Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) said in a statement that no drones will be allowed in Coloane on Saturday: "The Civil Aviation Authority will implement an unmanned aircraft ban on Coloane Island on October 19, 2024 to ensure that the government activities on the island can be carried out smoothly and safely".

The notice was published in the Official Gazette yesterday. Violators of the ban face a fine of between 2,000 patacas and 20,000 patacas. ■

* In electrical engineering, "weak current" refers to low current levels that are used in certain applications, particularly in the context of signalling and control systems. – Source: Poe

Legislators pass bill toughening penalties for illicit gambling, criminalising illicit currency exchanges

Tony Wong

The Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday passed a government-initiated bill that will raise the penalties for illicit gambling activities, specifically bar the operation of online betting, clearly define parallel betting as an illicit gambling activity, and criminalise illicit currency exchanges occurring on gaming resorts.

The bill will become law on the day after its promulgation in the Official Gazette (BO).

The bill passed yesterday will be a new criminal law on illicit gambling replacing

the current one enacted back in 1996 when Macau was still under temporary Portuguese administration.

The bill's outline was passed during a plenary session of the legislature in February, after which the bill was reviewed by its 2nd Standing Committee, before it was resubmitted to yesterday's plenary session, which Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon attended, when it was voted on article-by-article in its second and final reading.

According to gaming industry sources, some of the now defunct junket operators ran untaxed parallel betting (aka side betting) schemes that reduced both the government's gaming tax receipts and the gross gaming revenues (GGRs) of some of Macau's gaming concessionaires and sub-concessionaires.

The new law defines parallel betting (aka betting under the table) as illicit gambling.

The new law will specifically bar the operation, promotion and organisation of online gambling activities, regardless of

whether the respective IT systems, devices and equipment are installed in Macau or not.

In addition, the new law will also raise the penalties for illicit gambling crimes.

According to the current illicit gambling law, Law 8/96/M, illicit gambling activities carry a prison term of up to three years.

According to the new law, illicit gambling activities will carry a prison term of between one and eight years. Illicit currency exchanges will carry a prison term of up to five years. ■

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The Macau Post Daily

Xi urges Fujian to play pioneering role in nation's modernization drive

President Xi Jinping has urged Fujian Province to play a pioneering role in the country's modernization drive by staying committed to its development goals.

– Story on p. 7

Nigeria fuel tanker explosion kills more than 140: emergency agency

An explosion has killed more than 140 people in northern Nigeria as crowds rushed to collect fuel spilling from a crashed tanker, officials told AFP yesterday.

– Story on p. 11

New assisted dying bill introduced in UK parliament

A new proposal to legalise assisted dying in England and Wales was introduced in the UK parliament yesterday, sparking concern from senior church leaders and opponents about its implications.

– Story on p. 12

Over 66 pct of fires caused by human error: Fire Services Bureau

Yuki Lei

The Fire Services Bureau (CB) yesterday announced the number of fire attendances in the first three quarters of this year, in which human error remained the most common cause of fires, accounting for 66.47 percent of the total number of fire attendances, urging the public not to leave their cooking unattended and to turn off all their electrical appliances before leaving home, while also being careful in handling and disposing of flammable items in their daily life, including cigarette ends.

According to yesterday's press conference by CB spokesman Wong Si Tim, the number of fire alarms attended stood at 680 between January and September, an increase of 47 cases, or 7.42 percent, as compared with the same period of last year, and the most frequent cause of fires continued to be the result of human carelessness, including leaving food unattended on stoves, short-circuiting of electrical wires, malfunctioning of machinery and equipment as well as unattended burning joss sticks and joss paper, which all together accounted for 452 cases, or 66.47 percent, of the total number of fire alarms attended.

Detailing the bureau's fire and rescue incident statistics for the first nine months of this year at its headquarters in Nam Van, Wong noted that the number of fire services and ambulances in attendance during the period exceeded 40,000, an additional 1,948 cases, or an increase of five percent over the same period last year. Among them, about 34,000 ambulance trips were made during the same period, a year-on-year surge of 2,131 attendances, or 6.6 percent, with an increase in the number of patients seeking treatment at hospitals' emergency departments for minor ailments such as fever, dizziness and headache, with a total of 18,329 trips, accounting for 53.71 percent of the total number of ambulance attendances.

Wong warned members of the public over the misuse of ambulances: "Ambulance resources are always precious and limited, and they should be reserved for those in need," also urging motorists to give way to ambulances and other emergency vehicles.



Fire Services Bureau (CB) officers, including its spokesman Wong Si Tim (centre), release details of the bureau's fire and rescue incident statistics for the first nine months of this year during yesterday's press conference at its headquarters in Nam Van. — Photo: Yuki Lei

Meanwhile, the Office of Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said in a statement on Tuesday that as this year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland, several mega events and celebrations are scheduled to be held one after the other, resulting in a significant increase in the number of crowds, adding that under the guidance of the Secretariat for Security, the Fire Services Bureau has formulated a range of operational plans and measures in respect of the fire safety risks associated with mega events, including the formulation of rescue plans for a number of venues, and the arrangement of its officers and emergency vehicles to stand by in the vicinity of such large-scale events and possible crowded areas.

In response to media enquiries, CB spokesman Wong said that the bureau has remained in close communication and liaison with a range of public entities, including the Public Security Forces, to take relevant actions concerning different activities and incidents, including stepping up inspections in the community. He also said that the bureau would continue to proactively conduct inspections in different neighbourhoods and deal with the opinions expressed by members of the public in accordance with the monitoring and enforcement powers conferred on the bureau under the new legislation.

Regarding the data on the fire safety inspections in residential buildings, the bureau, according to Wong, conducted 12,236 inspections between January and September, involving 5,156 buildings and a total of 54,598 households, among which 1,682 were carried out in low-rise buildings. Under the new Framework Law on Fire Safety in Buildings and Premises, 32 households were fined for placing miscellaneous objects, shoe racks and motorcycles in the evacuation routes of their buildings and failing to rectify the situation despite repeated notifications, or in particularly serious cases. ■

Health Bureau logs 2 more reported dengue fever cases

Yuki Lei

The Health Bureau (SSM) announced yesterday that two more dengue fever cases have been reported, comprising a 37-year-old tourist from the mainland and a 42-year-old non-resident worker (NRW) from Nepal, making them the 12th and 13th cases of travel-associated dengue cases in Macau this year.

According to an SSM statement, the first patient, who came to Macau from the mainland last Thursday and stayed in a flat in Hoi Wan Building in the Praça de Ponte e Horta (司打口) area with his relatives, developed a fever on Monday and went to the private Kiang Wu Hospital on Tuesday, where he was diagnosed with a red rash on his hands and back.

The second patient, living in Chun Yi Building on Rua dos Curtidores (涼水街) and working in the Avenida Dr Sun Yat Sen (孫逸仙博士大馬路) area, returned to Macau last Tuesday

after visiting relatives in Nepal from September 10 and sought treatment at the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre on Saturday and Tuesday due to fever and muscle pain that he came down with last Thursday. Both patients were confirmed yesterday to have been infected with dengue virus type 1 and type 2, respectively.

The statement noted that the two patients, who were in stable condition yesterday, had not visited any local parks, adding that after the onset of the disease, both mainly stayed indoors. None of the household members and colleagues living and working with the two infectees, the bureau noted yesterday, have become ill.

The bureau said that SSM officials would carry out preventive anti-mosquito measures in the vicinity of the patients' residence, workplace, and their main areas of activity in Macau. ■

DENGUE SYMPTOMS

Fever with any of the following

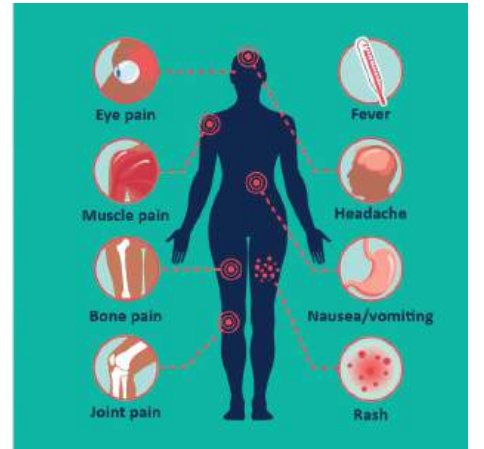


Image courtesy of US CDC

Police nab 4 local males for drunk driving

William Chan

Four local men have separately been arrested for drunk driving, Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Cheong Im Sim said at a press conference yesterday.

In the first case, the 33-year-old local suspect surnamed Yu works as a restaurant manager.

At around 1 a.m. on Friday, the police received a report of a traffic accident on Sai Van Bridge. When police arrived at the scene, they found 10 damaged collapsible posts, and some debris left by a vehicle.

A few minutes later, the police received another report of an accident in Rua de São Lourenço (風順堂街), where five motorcycles were knocked down and damaged. Two witnesses told the police that a car had hit the motorcycles, after which it drove into a nearby carpark.

Police officers went to the carpark and found Yu sleeping in his car. A breathalyser test showed that his alcohol concentration was 1.71 grams of alcohol per litre of blood. He admitted to drunk driving and hit-and-run. Cheong also noted that Yu drove into a wall in a Cotai hotel carpark at midnight that same night, when he was leaving.

In the second case, the 46-year-old suspect surnamed Guan told

the police that he works as a driver.

On Saturday at 10 a.m., while patrolling the roundabout near the local airport, a police officer noticed a car had hit a roadside stone wall, a road sign and a lamp post, while Guan was standing next to his vehicle. A breathalyser test showed that his alcohol concentration was 2.15 grams per litre.

Under questioning, Guan told the police that he began drinking alcohol the previous night and continued drinking until the early hours of the morning.

In the third case, the 48-year-old suspect surnamed Iu told the police that he's a businessman.

At 11 p.m. on Saturday, the police received a report of a traffic accident in Taipa involving a car which rear-ended a motorcycle, injuring the rider's right hand. Upon arrival, police officers found Iu reeking of alcohol, and a breathalyser test showed that Iu's alcohol concentration was 1.46 grams per litre.

Iu requested another test, and the subsequent result showed a blood alcohol content of 1.94 grams per litre. He admitted to drinking in his friend's home in Coloane.

In the fourth case, the 35-year-old suspect surnamed Ma is an

administrative manager. In the wee hours of Sunday, Ma crashed his car into two road signs, eight green iron railings, and eight motorcycles in Fai Chi Kei district. A breathalyser test showed that Ma's alcohol concentration was 2.24 grammes per litre.

Ma requested another test, and the subsequent result showed a blood alcohol content of 2.66 grams per litre. He admitted to drunk driving.

The four suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing drunk-driving and related charges, according to Cheong. ■



Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Cheong Im Sim looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. — Photo: William Chan

Published since Aug 2004

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- Printed by Tipografia Welfare Lda., 82-86 Rua dos Pescadores
- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua



Macau Weather

CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS. ONE OR TWO SHOWERS. FORCE 3 TO 4 EASTERLY WINDS, OCCASIONALLY FORCE 5. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 70% AND 95%.



25°C~29°C

Source: SMG

Concerts boost local economy: StarMac CEO

Ginnie Liang

With about three to five concerts being held in Macau every week, Macau's "concert economy" is very "hot", boosting the number of visitor arrivals and economic development, StarMac Entertainment Chief Executive Officer Lou Kit Long said yesterday.

Lou made the remarks in a phone-in programme hosted by public broadcaster TDM's Chinese-language radio station, Ou Mun Tin Toi. Yesterday's episode discussed how the "entertainment and convention" industry can boost the city's economy.

Lou said that as Macau was striving to build itself into a city of performing arts and develop non-gaming attractions, it had an advantage over its neighbouring regions in hosting concerts, considering that the local venues were better equipped and advanced, and it was also simpler to apply for the use of the venues than elsewhere.

Macau Economic Association Vice President Lei Chun Kwok said during yesterday's phone-in programme that the "concert economy" was generating a direct impact on economic growth by boosting visitor spending.

Lei pointed out that in recent years various cities around the world have been striving to attract international superstars to hold concerts. Taking Japan as an example, Lei said that according to an earlier study, when a famous female singer from the United States organised a concert in Japan recently, the country's concert box office and total consumption revenue were boosted by nearly five times, which showed that the concert economy's great impact.

Lei further suggested that Macau should consider how to add more event attractions to enrich the ancillary services surrounding the concert economy.

Macau Federal Commercial Association of Convention and Exhibition Industry President Lo Wang Chun said in yesterday's programme that the atmosphere and momentum for the exhibition industry were showing strong signs of recovery this year, adding that in the second quarter alone 368 exhibition events took place, an increase of 80 compared to the previous year.

"These events generated approximately 1.48 billion patacas in non-gaming revenue, primarily from exhibitions and trade activities, followed by contributions from tourism, finance, and information

technology," Lo said, adding that during the first half of the year, a total of 658 meetings and events took place, reflecting an increase of 166 compared to the same period last year.

Notably, attendance at large conferences surged by 130 percent, reaching around 9,770 participants, Lo pointed out.

Govt urged to train more talent

Lo said that the local sector was striving to attract large international conferences to Macau, noting that more than 10 international conferences with over 1,000 participants have been held in Macau so far this year.

Lo pointed out that the average spending of exhibition attendees is about 5,000 patacas, which is more than double the average spending of regular tourists at around 2,000 patacas, reflecting the significant economic impact brought by business travellers.

Lo pointed out that some large exhibition events have "exhibitions within exhibitions," increasing the demand for exhibition talent and logistical staff, urging the industry and government to continue to organise relevant training courses for this kind of talent.

Lei agreed that the government should collaborate with the industry in training more professionals related to the exhibition sector. He added that to develop the "tourism+" and concert economy in Macau, the government needed to excel in coordination and overall planning.

Lei said he believed that with the right policies and support, the industry would enhance its competitiveness to attract different brand exhibitions to Macau.

Additionally, a listener pointed out during yesterday's phone-in programme the serious issue of ticket scalping for concerts in Macau, urging the government to establish mechanisms to address it.

Lou said that ticket scalping was a common problem worldwide. He underlined that the mainland has already implemented real-name ticketing and other measures to curb this issue, but, he claimed, the result had "not been effective".

Lou added that the local exhibition and concert sectors had also taken various measures, such as "proactively" contacting fan clubs for group ticket purchases, to ensure more people can buy tickets at reasonable prices. ■



Macau Federal Commercial Association of Convention and Exhibition Industry President Lo Wang Chun (left), StarMac Entertainment Chief Executive Officer Lou Kit Long (centre), and Macau Economic Association Vice President Lei Chun Kwok pose during yesterday's phone-in programme hosted by public broadcaster TDM's Chinese-language radio station, Ou Mun Tin Toi. - Photo courtesy of TDM

29th MIF, 2024MFE open with 1,300 exhibitors



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (first row, 7th from left), Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Zheng Xincong (first row, sixth from left), Commissioner of the Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the MSAR Liu Xianfa (first row, 8th from left) and Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong (first row, 3rd from right) pose with other officials and business-sector representatives attending yesterday's opening ceremony of the 29th MIF and 2024MFE at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo. - Photo: GCS

Rui Pastorin

The 29th Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (29th MIF) and the Macao Franchise Expo 2024 (2024MFE) kicked-off yesterday at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo, with the two-fair event attracting over 1,300 exhibitors throughout its run.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong, Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Zheng Xincong, and Commissioner of the Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's

Republic of China (PRC) in the MSAR Liu Xianfa were among the officials who attended yesterday morning's opening ceremony.

This time, MIF, which has Shenzhen as its invited partner city this year, has "Economic Diversification and Development Opportunities" as its theme, while MFE is themed "Brands Gathering with Business Opportunities". The simultaneous exhibitions span a total of 38,000 square metres, which a Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) statement noted yesterday is the largest it has been in recent years, and altogether comprises 10 exhibition zones.

Both fairs are open to members

of the public for free daily, to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The events are being held one day longer than previous editions and feature exhibitors from the mainland, Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs), Canada, Malaysia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Macau, among others, according to a separate IPIM statement.

Moreover, there is a "Portuguese-Speaking Countries Market Zone", while 10 trade promotion activities focusing on PSCs are slated to be held.

This year also features 195 exhibitors from the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and 80 GBA delegations. ■



Notice on Further Optimizing Visa Policies for Foreign Macao Residents to Travel to the Mainland

2024/10/16

In order to further facilitate personnel exchanges between the Macao SAR and the Mainland, the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Macao will provide more convenient visa policies for foreign Macao residents (including permanent residents and non-permanent residents) to travel to the Mainland from October 16, 2024. The specific arrangements are as follows:

1. Foreign Macao residents who travel to the Mainland for short-term tourism, trade, visiting relatives, visits and other activities may apply for multiple-entry visas with a validity period of 5 years and a stay period of no more than 180 days.
2. Foreign Macao residents are exempted from submitting round-trip air tickets (train tickets, boat tickets) and hotel reservations when applying for visas to China.
3. Foreign Macao residents may enjoy the policy of "one-time collection and long-term exemption" of fingerprints. Applicants who have left fingerprints at Chinese overseas visa agencies will no longer need to have their fingerprints collected when applying for a visa at the Commissioner's Office.

The Commissioner's Office visa consultation hotline: +853-87915126 (answering time: 14:30-18:30 on working days); the Chinese Visa Application Center in Macao Tel: +853-87998117/8, E-mail: macaocenter@visaforchina.org.



22 MPU students present works at Creative Macau

Rui Pastorin

The Creative Macau gallery in Nape is showcasing the works of 22 students from the Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) until October 26 for an exhibition entitled “Time Pixels”, showcasing creativity through different mediums.

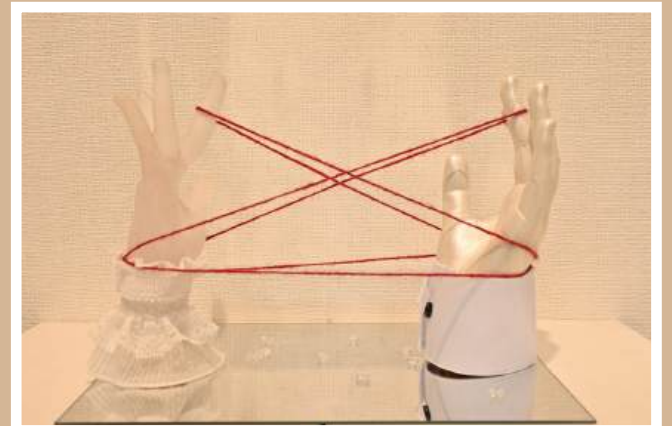
The artworks were created by 22 year-four students who are mainly from the public university’s Visual Arts Programme.

A recent statement on Creative Macau’s website notes that the students completed the works during the “Social Artistic Practice” and “Sociology of Art” modules this year, for which the theme “Family Chronicles” was adopted in early 2024 for teaching and the creation of works.

The statement added that the modules aim to guide students in applying their “artistic abilities”. Expanding on the theme, the statement noted that students were guided to investigate their family histories, construct and integrate connections between themselves, their family history and the changes in civil society.

They then needed to display their “thinking and artistic practice” through paintings, sculptures, photography or text, according to the statement. Those visiting the exhibition will be able to find works created using different mediums from photography to watercolours to even comprehensive and mixed media.

The free-admission gallery, which is located on the ground floor of the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) is open from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. from Mondays to Saturdays and is closed on public holidays.



Photos taken earlier this week by Rui Pastorin

UTM to host 'Discovery Day' next Saturday

Rui Pastorin

The Macao University of Tourism (UTM) will host its "Discovery Day: Exploring Educational Excellence" next Saturday, October 26, aiming to offer the latest admission information and insights into its academic characteristics and culture to local students and parents, as well as those from neighbouring regions, according to a recent statement by the public university.

The statement noted that the free-admission event, which will also offer "a glimpse of university life", will feature seminars and workshops on "innovative hospitality and creative tourism", along with a seminar on postgraduate programmes, admission talks and consultations, campus tours, and other activities.

The event will be held at the public university's Mong-Ha campus's Team Building, the statement said.



This poster provided by the Macao University of Tourism (UTM) promotes its Discovery Day next Saturday.

More details and registration for the event can be found on www.utm.edu.mo/s/DiscoveryDay2024. One can also call 8598 3023 or 8598 1559 for details. ■

Legislators pass bill on property & commercial registration

Ginnie Liang

The Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday passed a government-initiated bill that will allow residents to process their property, commercial registrations and notary procedures online through their "Macao One Account" or "Business & Associations Platform" mobile app.

The new law will take effect on December 1.

Lawmaker-cum-lawyer Vong Hin Fai, who heads the legislature's 3rd Standing Committee, said during yesterday's plenary session that the government will expand the scope of its online registration services gradually in light of the actual situation.

Vong said that as the acts of registration and notarisation are closely related to residents' lives and civil society's development, it was necessary and feasible to promote e-enabling in these areas.

Under the new law, the government will introduce several online e-registration services in the first phase, such as fully electronic processes for real estate mortgage registration and for setting up companies. Additionally, in notary services, applicants will be able to apply electronically for sales and mortgage notarisations, Vong said.



This screenshot captured from a live stream of Macau's public broadcaster TDM yesterday shows the legislature's 3rd Standing Committee President Vong Hin Fai look on during yesterday's plenary session in the Legislative Assembly's (AL) hemicycle.

To simplify the notarisation of signatures, the government will introduce remote notarisation, Vong said, adding that if signatures are made in a specified format on an electronic platform and the individual concerned uses appropriate electronic identification to confirm his or her identity, the legal requirement for signature verification will be waived.

Furthermore, Vong said, staff from public institutions will be empowered to verify signatures on documents as required by law, allowing them to validate signatures on the spot, which Vong pointed out that this will ease the

burden on individuals who would otherwise need to visit notary offices for signature verification.

According to Vong, interdepartmental data sharing will also be implemented, making it easier for public entities to access necessary information from the registration and notary entities to fulfil their responsibilities and improve procedures.

Meanwhile, financial institutions will be able to obtain essential information among different public entities to help prevent money laundering and terrorist financing, Vong said. ■

Police bust new type of illegal currency exchange scam

William Chan

Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chong Kam Leong said during a regular press conference yesterday that two men from the mainland have been arrested for involvement in a new type of illegal currency exchange scam tactic.

The 27-year-old suspects are a farmer surnamed Wu and a salesman surnamed Zhang. Both victims are males from the mainland.

According to Chong, one of the victims arranged a currency exchange deal with Wu on WeChat last Thursday. They met in a hotel guestroom, where the victim

agreed to exchange 91,000 yuan into HK\$100,000 in cash to be provided by Wu. After the bank transfer, Wu claimed that 20,000 yuan had not been credited and thus refused to hand over the remaining HK\$28,000 to the victim, coming up with an excuse to leave.

The victim later checked his account and realised that he had indeed transferred the total amount of money, and reported the case to the police.

The other victim experienced a similar scam when dealing with Zhang on Sunday. After Zhang attempted to leave following the scam, the victim pursued him in an effort to intercept him. During this confrontation, Wu appeared to assist Zhang in escaping. The victim then made a scene, which attracted nearby security guards, who subsequently reported the case to the police.

Under questioning, both men refused to cooperate. Chong underlined that the new tactic used by fraudsters is designed to provide them with the opportunity to escape by claiming that they had not received the full amount of money agreed between the two sides.

The suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing fraud charges. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chong Kam Leong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference.

— Photo: William Chan

Be wary of fake 'Macao Spending Rewards' lucky draw SMS scam: PJ

Rui Pastorin

The Judiciary Police (PJ) warned members of the public in a statement yesterday of a fake "Macao Spending Rewards" lucky draw phishing SMS sent out by scammers, wherein victims' information can be used for unauthorised transactions.

According to the statement, the Judiciary Police have recently discovered that scammers have been randomly sending out phishing messages to residents under the guise of "Macao Spending Rewards", claiming that one can enter a "lucky draw" by opening an embedded link.

The statement pointed out that doing so leads to a fake "Macao Spending Rewards" website alleging that the recipient has "won a prize". Personal and credit card information are then requested, which in turn are used for unauthorised transactions.

The Judiciary Police's Anti-Fraud Coordination Centre warned members of the public not to click on unknown links embedded in any SMS message and to verify the information with official institutions. One should also verify a website's authenticity when personal information, bank and credit card details are requested.



This poster provided by the Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday warns members of the public of the "Macao Spending Rewards" lucky draw SMS scam.

Those suspecting fraud can use the Judiciary Police's "Anti-Fraud Programme" to check the scam risk index or call 8800 7777 or 993 for assistance. ■

Visa policy to be further facilitated for non-Chinese HK residents

HONG KONG — The Commissioner's Office of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) announced yesterday that with immediate effect, a more convenient visa policy will be introduced for non-Chinese residents of the HKSAR to facilitate personnel exchanges between Hong Kong and the mainland.

According to the office, the new policy will be applied to both non-Chinese permanent residents and non-Chinese residents of the HKSAR. They will be issued multiple entry visas with a maximum validity of five years and a period of stay in the mainland not exceeding 180 days for the purpose of business, tourism, visiting family and relatives, and other activities. They do not need

to submit round-trip transportation tickets and hotel orders when applying for visas.

The office said that the above visa policy does not cover foreign domestic helpers. In addition, the arrangement for persons who are subject to multi-year and multiple-entry visas issued between China and some countries will remain unchanged.

— Xinhua

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.16 pct lower

Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.16 percent to close 20,286.85 points. The Hang Seng China Enterprises

Index fell 0.14 percent to end at 7,267.98 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index fell 1.09 percent to end at 4,402.37 points.

— Xinhua

Lawmakers pass bill streamlining procedures on evicting defaulting tenants

Tony Wong

The Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday passed a government-initiated bill streamlining civil procedures on evicting defaulting tenants.

The bill amends eviction rules listed in the Civil Procedures Code. The amended civil procedures on eviction will take effect on March 1 next year.

The newly amended procedures aim to enable landlords to evict tenants who refuse to pay their rent and to move out, within a shorter period of time than now.

The bill's outline was passed during a plenary session of the legislature in May, after which the bill was reviewed by its 1st Standing Committee, before it was resubmitted to yesterday's plenary session, which Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon attended, when it was voted on article-by-article in its second and final reading.

The government has said that

some landlords are affected by the situation where their tenants "intentionally do not cooperate, with the aim of avoiding paying their rent", rendering it difficult for the landlords to recover rent arrears.

The government has pointed out that the current civil procedures on eviction take a relatively long time, because of which the affected landlords are unable to repossess their units within a "reasonable" period of time.

Currently, the affected landlords are required to hire a lawyer for their civil procedures to evict defaulting tenants, while according to the streamlined civil procedures, which will take effect on March 1, 2025, it will not be mandatory for the landlords to hire a lawyer to tackle the issue.

The bill's initial version proposed that the affected landlords would be able to benefit from the streamlined procedures if the tenants were at least five months behind in paying their rent. However, after the legislature's



Flanked by officials under his portfolio, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon addresses yesterday's plenary session in the legislature's hemicycle. — Photo: William Chan

committee review, the government has amended the rule and submitted the bill's new version, i.e., the one passed yesterday in its second and final reading, according to which the affected landlords will be able to benefit from the streamlined procedures if the tenants are at least three months behind in paying their rents.

In order to benefit from the

streamlined procedures, the respective landlords will be required to notify the tenants in writing about their failure to pay their rent, according to the newly amended civil procedures on eviction.

Moreover, only landlords who receive their rent payments by bank transfers will be covered by the streamlined procedures.

During the legislature's committee review of the bill, government officials noted that in addition to a formal written letter including those sent by registered post, the respective landlords who send an email or even messages on an instant messaging app will also be regarded as fulfilling the requirement to notify the defaulting tenants.

According to the newly amended civil procedures, the government will set up a database allowing prospective landlords, through real estate agents, to check whether their prospective tenants previously defaulted on paying their rents.

During yesterday's plenary session, several lawmakers voiced their support for the new civil procedures on eviction, including Ron Lam U Tou who urged the government to strengthen its promotional campaigns for the new eviction rules, ensuring that prospective landlords and tenants will have a better understanding of the matter. ■

SCO member states oppose protectionism, unilateral sanctions

ISLAMABAD – The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states yesterday expressed their opposition to protectionist measures, unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions that undermine the multilateral trading system and hinder global sustainable development.

In a joint communiqué issued during the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Member States of the SCO, the heads of the delegations

said unilateral sanctions violate international law, harm the interests of other countries, and disrupt international economic relations.

They emphasized the importance of leveraging the potential of regional countries, international organizations, and multilateral mechanisms to build a broad, open, mutually beneficial, and equal cooperative space in the SCO region under the principles of international law while

considering national interests.

They also expressed the belief that it is crucial to work together in opposing trade protectionism that violates the rules and principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO). They emphasized the importance of continuing to consolidate a non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, and transparent multilateral trading system based on WTO rules and principles. — *Xinhua* (More on SCO on p.9)

China ready to join Russia, Mongolia for deeper trilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD – Premier Li Qiang said in Islamabad yesterday that China is ready to work with Russia and Mongolia to further enhance mutual trust, strengthen coordination and promote deeper and more practical trilateral cooperation to better benefit the people of the three countries.

Li made the remarks when meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene on the sidelines of the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Li said that in recent years, under the strategic guidance of the three heads of state, the trilateral cooperation between China, Russia, and Mongolia has maintained a steady momentum of development, which meets the common expectations of the three sides and conforms to the trend of the times.

Noting that China, Russia, and Mongolia enjoy geographical proximity and a shared future, Li said trilateral cooperation enjoys unique geographical advantages and solid popular support.

China stands ready to work with Russia and Mongolia to follow the consensus reached by the three heads of state, implement the mid-term roadmap for trilateral cooperation, strengthen the synergy of development strategies, deepen policy communication and coordination, drive the trilateral cooperation to be more in-depth, more sustainable and more

effective, and set an example of friendly exchanges and mutual benefit among neighboring countries, Li noted.

The Chinese side is willing to work with Russia and Mongolia to focus on key cooperation under the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, deepen multilateral cooperation within the SCO and other platforms, share development opportunities and fruits, safeguard common interests, and jointly write a new chapter in China-Russia-Mongolia trilateral cooperation, Li added.

Mishustin and Oyun-Erdene said that under the strategic guidance of the three heads of state, trilateral cooperation among China, Russia and Mongolia has been carried out steadily, with exchanges and dialogues in various fields expanded and deepened.

This meets the common needs of the three countries and the needs for the stability and development of the region, which has broad prospects, they said.

Mishustin and Oyun-Erdene said Russia and Mongolia stand ready to work with China to strengthen the alignment of the Eurasian Economic Union, the Steppe Road Program, and the Belt and Road Initiative, speed up the construction of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor in line with the key directions specified in the mid-term roadmap, strengthen cooperation in such areas as transportation, energy and culture, and push for more results in trilateral cooperation. — *Xinhua*

Chinese automakers push forward with growth plans despite tariff hurdles

PARIS – Chinese automakers are pushing forward with their development plans despite protectionist tariff threats from the European Union.

Nine leading Chinese brands, including BYD, Xpeng, and Leapmotor, showcased new electric vehicle (EV) models at the 2024 Paris Motor Show, highlighting their technological advancements and determination to grow.

Among the key unveilings was Leapmotor's global debut of its B10 model, a compact electric SUV that will be manufactured in Poland for European consumers.

Zhu Jiangming, founder of Leapmotor, outlined the B10's advanced features, which include Advanced Driver Assistance Systems, a customizable digital cockpit, and intelligent driving capabilities. He also noted the company's collaboration with the Stellantis team for chassis tuning, aiming to meet the preferences of younger consumers seeking innovation and quality.

"The debut highlights Leapmotor's rapid growth in Europe, with over 200 dealers already established across 13 markets, aiming to reach 500 sales points by 2025," Leapmotor revealed.

Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares commended Leapmotor's rapid growth and its in-house R&D capabilities, highlighting that the Leapmotor joint venture will promote affordable EVs globally and reshape Europe's EV market.

China's Dongfeng Liuzhou Motor Co. Ltd. showcased four new energy vehicles: the flagship luxury Forthing V9 MPV, the pure electric sedan Forthing S7, the pure-electric SUV Friday and the hybrid MPV U-Tour.

General Manager Lin Changbo emphasized the company's portfolio of over 21,000 active patents, highlighting the commitment to enhancing global competitiveness and fostering collaboration with industry partners.

Xpeng Motors introduced its AI-powered P7+ sedan, which it described as the "world's first AI car."

Currently, the automotive industry is benefiting from two major advantages: intelligence and electrification, He Xiaopeng, chairman and CEO of Xpeng, told Xinhua in an exclusive interview.

He stressed that as a member of China's emerging car manufacturing forces, the company will continue to invest in R&D and deliver innovative intelligent technology to the European market.

BYD unveiled its mid-sized electric SUV, the Sealion 7, and introduced its luxury Yangwang U8 SUV to the French market. Executive Vice President Li Ke told Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* newspaper that the company plans to start vehicle production in Hungary by late 2025, further cementing its position as a major Chinese player in Europe's EV market. — *Xinhua*