

MGTO chief says campaign to attract foreign tourists 'relatively satisfactory'



Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes speaks to the media yesterday in Barra. - Photo: MPDG

Yuki Lei

The government has earmarked 235 million patacas for expanding its international tourism market this year, and its tourism chief told reporters yesterday that "more than half of the amount has already been spent", describing the effectiveness of the promotion drive to attract foreign tourists as "relatively satisfactory".

According to Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, the ongoing promotion campaigns include the provision of a wide range of travel concessions and diversified tourism products in cooperation with Air Macau, regional and international airlines and the tourism industry, as well as operators of transport services between Hong Kong and Macau: "Cooperation with Air Macau accounts for a large part of the budget. In addition, we also cooperate with some international airlines flying to Macau. And since the beginning of the year, we have been offering free bus rides from the Hong Kong International Airport to Macau, as well as a one-way ferry ticket for our international tourists who have boarding passes that are valid for seven days during their stay in Macau.

Including other promotions, I think it all adds up to 235 million patacas".

In a reply to a recent written interpellation by lawmaker-cum-banker Ngan Iek Hang early this month, Senna Fernandes noted that as of the end of the second quarter of this year, the number of tickets booked under the airline cooperation programme exceeded 70,000, the number of tourists benefiting from the cooperation programme on transport services to and from Hong Kong and Macau surpassed 100,000, while the sales volume of online and offline travel agency, electronic commerce and banking cooperation programmes exceeded 50,000 visitors, i.e., the government has offered 70,000 discounted air tickets to attract foreign tourists from places including Malaysia, North America, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand while MGTO also offered free bus and ferry rides to 100,000 foreign visitors arriving from Hong Kong.

"We've seen that although Asian tourists account for the majority [of those benefitting from the promotion campaigns], we've also seen a lot of European and US tourists, and even some from other places, taking up such offers," the tourism chief told the media

on the sidelines of a public event in Barra yesterday, adding that next year's focus will continue to be on promoting Macau to "international" visitors.

"International" visitors are foreign nationals visiting Macau, i.e., excluding those from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The MGTO director also revealed to the media yesterday her office's preliminary plans for next year, including the continuation of the ongoing offers of discounted air tickets, free Hong Kong-Macau bus and ferry rides, as well as MGTO's participation in travel trade shows and the organisation of six overseas roadshows in foreign countries: "In fact, this year, we're offering a wide range of concessions, including air and ferry tickets, as well as even free bus trips [from Hong Kong's airport to Macau], which seem to be more popular among the public... I'm sure we'll continue to do that, and we'll review what we've done this year, and then we'll see if there are any changes we need to make next year, or who we're going to work with." She admitted that the campaigns were launched after making use of Hong Kong's wider network.

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China's PCT international patent applications top world for 5 consecutive years: WIPO chief

HANGZHOU – China's international patent applications via the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) ranks first in the world for five consecutive years, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) chief said during the ongoing 2024 International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI) World Congress.

During the congress that opened on Saturday in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, WIPO Director General Daren Tang said it is a milestone that the congress is being held in China for the first time.

Tang said in a video message that in the mid-1990s, when China joined the PCT of the WIPO, the annual number of international patent applications via the PCT framework was only about 100, and by 2023 the number reached about 70,000.

According to AIPPI President Shoichi Okuyama, in recent years, the number of intellectual property applications in China has grown rapidly, and China has become the country with the most international patent applications, meaning that China's sci-tech innovation capacity has made great progress.

China has been working hard to formulate and improve relevant laws on intellectual property protection and has maintained active communication and exchanges with other international parties, he added.

China became the first country in the world to have more than 4 million valid domestic invention patents. The number of applications for international patents via the PCT, design patents in the Hague System and international trademarks under the Madrid System rank among the top in the world. - Xinhua

National Health Commission unveils obesity diagnosis, treatment guidelines

BEIJING – The National Health Commission has released its first set of guidelines aimed at standardizing the diagnosis and treatment of obesity.

Over past years, China has witnessed an upward trend in the morbidity rate of its overweight and obese population, according to the guidelines issued by the commission.

As an independent disease and a major causative factor for multiple chronic diseases, obesity has become a major public health issue in China, ranking as the sixth leading risk factor for death and disability in the country, the guidelines say.

They provide detailed guidance and regulations in the areas of clinical

nutrition, medication therapy, surgical treatment, behavioral and psychological intervention, and exercise intervention for obesity, ensuring the safety and quality of medical care while protecting the health rights of patients, said Zhang Zhongtao, director of the guideline drafting committee and deputy head of Beijing Friendship Hospital.

Experts emphasize that most overweight and obese cases are caused by unhealthy lifestyles. The fundamental solution is to maintain a healthy lifestyle, which includes a balanced diet and appropriate exercise to keep weight within a healthy range.

- Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

Xi to attend 16th BRICS Summit in Russia

President Xi Jinping will attend the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, from October 22 to 24 at the invitation of President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced in Beijing on Friday.

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Thousands protest in Spain's Canary Islands against mass tourism

Thousands of flag-waving demonstrators hit the streets across Spain's Canary Islands yesterday to demand restrictions to the mass tourism they say is overwhelming their Atlantic archipelago.

- Story on p. 11

2 associates of Mozambican opposition candidate gunned down

Two close associates of Mozambique's leading opposition candidate Venâncio Mondlane, who ran for president in October 9 elections, were gunned down in Maputo on Saturday as they prepared to challenge the contested elections.

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Sam Hou Fai – our ‘down-to-earth’ CE-elect



I must admit that when I first heard a rumour in late August about Macau’s top judge, Sam Hou Fai, going to run for the special administrative region’s top executive post and the current chief executive, Ho Iat Seng, would not be seeking a second term, I was flabbergasted.

Well, a study released by the US-based science advancement online journal *PlosOne* in 2016⁸ found that rumours that are ultimately proven true tend to be resolved faster than those that turn out to be false.

In this particular case, the rumour was proven true within a matter of days.

Well, politics is full of surprises. Many of my colleagues, acquaintances and friends also expressed surprise at the fact that a judge without a major family business background was set to become Macau’s chief executive.

Typically, judges and political leaders tend to have separate career paths, but legal expertise can, of course, lead to prominent roles in governance. There is an abundance – some would say an overabundance – of lawyers that have been in top political positions such as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Tony Blair.

Moreover, chief justices are widely seen as operating in an ivory tower, aloof from the rest of the world.

Indeed, in terms of his family and professional background Sam is quite different to his three predecessors. He will be the Macau Special Administrative Region’s (MSAR) first chief executive not born here and also the first not born into a prominent business family. In terms of their professions, Edmund Ho Hau Wah (CE from 1999 to 2009), a banker and auditor with a degree in accounting; Fernando Chui Sai On (CE 2009-2019) a school principal with a PhD in public health, and Ho Iat Seng (since December 2019), one of Macau’s best-known industrialists and an alumnus of Jinan University. All of them are former local lawmakers. Edmund Ho and Ho Iat Seng are former Macau deputies to the National People’s Congress (NPC). Edmund Ho is nowadays the highest-ranked Macau-based political figure in his capacity as vice-chairman of the National

Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

When Sam became president of Macau’s highest court, the Court of Final Appeal (TUI), on December 20, 1999, at the “tender” age of 37, he was reputed to be the world’s youngest chief judge. He remained in his post for nearly a quarter of a century, until he resigned at the end of August this year so that he could launch his CE candidacy.

At least initially, some local commentators made much of the fact that Sam will be the first chief executive not born in Macau. I think their US-styled “birther” argument is a fallacy. Article 46 of the MSAR Basic Law states that the chief executive “shall be a Chinese citizen of not less than 40 years who is a permanent resident of the Region and has ordinarily resided in Macau for a continuous period of not less than 20 years”.

Sam moved from his hometown Zhongshan, a mere 40 kilometres north of Macau, to our city back in 1986. Tens of thousands of Macau residents have their roots in Zhongshan. Some commentators, mainly those expressing their views through social media, still do not seem to understand that Macau and Zhongshan are cities of the same nation – China.

Our future chief executive is a law graduate of one of the country’s most prestigious tertiary education institutions, Peking University, and he also attended courses at Portugal’s august Coimbra University. Unlike Macau’s first three chief executives, Sam is versed in the Portuguese language, jurisprudence and culture, which is definitely a plus, considering that Portuguese is one of Macau’s two official languages and the local legal system is based on the one in Portugal.

Sam was elected by 98.99 percent of the votes cast by the 400-strong Chief Executive Election Committee. The impressive outcome is similar to those of previous elections by the committee, which consists of a wide range of business, labour, community and religious representatives as well as a number of ex-officio members representing the Macau Legislative Assembly (AL), NPC and CPPCC. For instance, in 2004, Edmund Ho garnered 99.00 percent of the votes cast by the then 300-member CE Election Committee. Ho Iat Seng won 98.00 percent of the votes in

2019. He announced in August this year that he would not seek a second five-year term – the maximum allowed under the MSAR Basic Law – citing health reasons.

Macau’s political system is based on traditional Asian consensus policies that try their best to avoid open conflict and confrontation, preferring deliberative or consultative democracy instead. This concept, which in the case of Macau is devoid of political parties, includes the local Legislative Assembly and Chief Executive elections. Incidentally, the current composition of the local legislature originated from the mid-1970s when the city was still under temporary Portuguese administration. Since then, it has been revamped several times but not fundamentally changed, as it has kept its three-tier system of directly and indirectly elected and government appointed lawmakers intact.

Macau’s pre- December 20, 1999 governors were appointed by Portugal’s president.

As I have seen Sam only occasionally at formal functions over the past 25 years, I do not know much about him as far as his personality is concerned. So, I did what every professional journalist ought to do in this case – I talked to quite a number of people – both “commonfolks” and “people in the know”. That took time, and that’s why I decided to write this editorial only yesterday.

Sam’s candidacy nomination period ran between August 29 and September 12, while his election campaign took place between September 28 and October 11.

According to Sam’s election campaign office, he met with 108 community associations, involving 2,194 residents from various segments of civil society, during the campaign, in the course of which his office gathered over 2,200 opinions and suggestions. He also hosted a Q&A meeting with hundreds of residents who could apply online to participate in it.

And, perhaps most importantly in terms of boosting his image among the general public, Sam went on five walkabouts in different neighbourhoods across the city, namely Iao Hon and San Kio districts, the Inner Harbour area, central Taipa, and Coloane’s sprawling Seac Pai Van public housing estate. Talking to reporters after the walkabouts, Sam confessed that some of the views and opinions raised by residents triggered “very deep feelings” in him.

The outcome of my own little “vox pop” is that many of those who met him during his campaign activities concluded that he was “jie di qi” (接地气) or “tip dei” (貼地), Mandarin or Cantonese for “down to earth”, pragmatic and realistic.

I have been told by friends that the term is a genuine compliment for a senior official who is people-orientated and actively engaged with the community, listens to their concerns and makes himself accessible, ensuring that citizens

feel valued and, last but not least, heard. In other words, an official who is approachable and genuinely cares about the well-being of the community. One of the term’s meanings – realistic – is, of course, music to my ears, as I am convinced that not only politicians but also journalists should be, first of all, realists. Being regarded by one’s fellow citizens as friendly or kind is a nice thing but not enough to pursue people-orientated policies effectively. For that, government leaders in particular, need, first of all, to be realistic and pragmatic – down to earth. Being friendly and kind is, quite naturally, an additional image bonus but not enough to be a capable leader.

An informed source pointed out to me last week that Sam’s “ordinary” family background both in Zhongshan and the one of his in-laws in Macau has enabled him since moving here nearly four decades ago to easily “feel the pulse” of the man and woman in the street, irrespective of his half-a-century long position as Macau’s most senior judge.

In his election acceptance speech on October 13, Sam pledged to build a “capable” government which will adopt a “proactive” approach to Macau’s economic development and as well as to make greater contributions to the nation’s ongoing development drive. He also promised to improve the population’s well-being in various aspects, such as education, healthcare, transport, and senior citizens’ retirement. He described his election as chief executive as “the highest honour of my life.”

Being the MSAR’s chief executive is, indubitably, the greatest honour that a local citizen can achieve. But it will, I have no doubt, also be a mammoth task, considering the complexities and intricacies of Macau’s socio-economic conditions.

The point is that present-day Macau is both an international metropolis but still also a town and even, as far as its rather distinct neighbourhoods are concerned, a village. It depends how one looks at local society. In the national context, Macau is a rather small city, both in terms of size and population. But unlike other Chinese cities, Macau is, due to its past and present, a world city whose financial prowess exceeds its minute geographic dimension of 33.3 km², accounting for 0.00034 percent of China’s total land area of 9.6 million km². The MSAR enjoys one of the world’s highest GDPs per capita and fiscal reserves of around 600 billion patacas (that’s, just to make the figure a bit more impressive, 0.6 trillion patacas, or around US\$75 billion) – and no public debt to boot, something that globally is virtually unheard of.

Despite all that, as one would expect, Macau has its specific problems and issues that need to be tackled, some of them as soon as possible, such as its embarrassing public transport and traffic conundrum that affects locals and

visitors alike. It’s simply ridiculous that the simple task of flagging down a taxi has become something like trying to hit the jackpot in Macau. Urban renewal is another challenge, namely if the government wants to succeed in its much-talked-about aim of developing community-based tourism. Last year, I walked from a meeting in Ilha Verde to our newspaper office near the city’s main square, Largo do Senado, because – no surprise – I wasn’t able to hail a taxi but then, while walking, I grew more and more eager to see the neighbourhoods I was crossing. Well, I was rather shocked by the dilapidated state of many residential buildings – walks-up in particular – and run-down alleys (which, actually, have the potential to be renovated into charming quarters), some even right in the city centre near our office on Rua dos Mercadores.

These are just two festering sores that need the incoming administration’s intensive attention.

Another challenge is to advance Macau’s integration into the Greater Bay Area (GBA), including the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, in a way that local people feel it benefits them. Sam was right when he underlined the need to tackle the economic challenges resulting from the drastically changing consumption and travel patterns by mainlanders and locals that are affecting the local economy.

After observing Sam’s deportment and hearing his remarks over the past few weeks, and also after reading our reporters’ many articles about his election manifesto, themed “Endeavour, Solidarity, Persistence and Innovation” (according to our translation from the original Chinese version) and campaign activities, I am confident that he will prove a very worthy successor to Ho Iat Seng who, I would like to stress, was able to keep Macau pretty safe during the three-year COVID-19 pandemic, also thanks to his close cooperation with the Central People’s Government on the public health front.

In this vein, I expect Sam to continue seeking assistance from the Central People’s Government Liaison Office and Foreign Ministry Commission here in overcoming Macau’s various predicaments. Close cooperation with the mainland authorities does not do any harm to Macau’s high degree of autonomy – much to the contrary, I believe it helps further develop it.

Sam is slated to receive his CE appointment letter from Premier Li Qiang quite soon, when he will become Macau’s chief executive-designate until his swearing-in on December 20, which will coincide with the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the MSAR and the expected visit by one of the nation’s most senior leaders.

– Harald Brüning

⁸<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0150989>

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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY PERIODS.

ONE OR TWO SHOWERS AT FIRST.

FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.

RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL

RANGE BETWEEN 55% AND 90%.



25°C~31°C

Source: SMG

PATA Macau Chapter Student Club visits MGTO

Rui Pastorin

A total of 55 students from the Student Club of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Macau Chapter paid their first courtesy visit to the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) on Friday, which featured a full-day programme prepared for them.

According to the statement, PATA is a “non-profit membership association dedicated to building responsible development of the Asia-Pacific travel and tourism industry”.

The statement noted that the students are studying in tourism-related programmes at the Macao University of Tourism (UTM), Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST), Macao Polytechnic University (MPU),

City University of Macau, and University of Macau (UM).

The statement said that an overview of MGTO’s activities was presented by its director, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, while presentations delivered by different departments on topics like innovative tourism ensued, along with best practices experience. A guided tour of the Macau Grand Prix Museum in Zape was also held.

Meanwhile, at the closing session, the students also discussed how other students can establish relations with the stakeholders in the local tourism sector and those sectors related to it, with the aim of exploring opportunities to join industry activities in the future, according to the statement. ■



This handout photo taken and provided on Friday shows Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes giving a presentation to students during their visit to the MGTO headquarters.

29th MIF, 2024MFE log growth in trade visitors

Rui Pastorin

The 29th Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (29th MIF) and the simultaneously held Macao Franchise Expo 2024 (2024MFE) wrapped up on Saturday, with the four-day event having drawn 66,000 visitors, of which over 9,600 were trade visitors, a 14 percent increase from last year, the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) said in a statement on the same day.

According to the statement, the event, which had over 1,300 exhibitors from 18 countries and regions, recorded an increase in the number of business matching sessions and projects signed, pointing out that there were over 1,000 business matching sessions and 103 projects signings.

The statement added that nearly half of the projects were related to Macau’s four emerging major industries, aka 1+4. Moreover, according to the statement, around 18 companies said they planned to set up shop in Macau, with seven already having finished the government’s company registration procedure.

In a TDM report on Saturday, IPIM President Vincent U U Sang told reporters that the dual fair saw an increase of around eight percent in business meetings. Moreover, running one day longer than in the previous



This handout photo provided on Saturday by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) shows visitors at the four-day concurrent 29th Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (29th MIF) and the Macao Franchise Expo 2024 (2024MFE).

years, U remarked on the event’s first time opening on a Wednesday compared to previous editions when it opened on a Thursday. “This change has garnered very positive feedback from the tourism and hotelier sector, and we will continue with this arrangement next year”.

Among other highlights and activities held across the event were over 80 trade and investment promotion sessions that focused on the “1+4*” industries such as eight themed matching sessions, two signing ceremonies, five “multi-venue events”, and over 10 activities involving Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs).

This year’s simultaneous exhibitions boasted four pavilions and 10 exhibition zones, spanning a total of 38,000 square metres, which a previous IPIM statement highlighted as being the largest two-fair event has been in recent years. ■

*The Macau 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 1) big health, 2) modern finance, 3) high-tech, and 4) MICE and commerce as well as culture and sport.

JACOB & CO. boutique makes Macau debut

Rui Pastorin

US privately held jewellery and luxury watch brand JACOB & CO. in partnership with Singapore-based luxury watch retailer Cortina Watch, recently had the grand opening of its first Macau boutique according to a recent joint statement.

The boutique is located at Shoppes at Venetian at The Venetian Macao in Cotai, for which a media preview event was recently held.

Cortina Holdings Limited Regional General Manager Benny Chong was quoted by the statement as saying: “This partnership exemplifies our commitment to present our clients with the most extraordinary pieces, where artistry meets innovation, and

where each timepiece tells a story of pushing boundaries.”

The boutique’s design features a mix of “elegance and contemporary style”, according to the statement, and houses the brand’s complication timepieces. The statement added that guests can appreciate the craftsmanship of models like the Bugatti Tourbillon, a collaboration with supercar brand Bugatti; the Casino Tourbillon (Roulette); the Bugatti Chiron Tourbillon, and the limited-edition EPIC X CR7, which was created in partnership with Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo.

The boutique is open from Sundays to Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. ■



This photo taken during Wednesday’s media preview shows the JACOB & CO. boutique at The Venetian Macao. – Photo: Rui Pastorin

Oxfam TowerRun recognised as major sports tourism event in Macau

Yuki Lei

The 11th Oxfam TowerRun fundraising sporting event took place yesterday at Macau Tower, during which Michael Wong Ho-ming, director of Fundraising and Communications at Oxfam Hong Kong, expressed special gratitude to the runners: “Every step they took contributes to Oxfam’s poverty alleviation project and policy advocacy, making a meaningful impact on the lives of the less fortunate”.

Now in its 11th year, more than 300 participants signed up for the Half Tower 31-floor race, Full-Tower 61-floor race and the “Relay Team Challenge”, raising nearly 4.7 million patacas in total for the campaign over the past 10 years.

When asked by the media, Wong said he estimated that this year’s fund-raising will reach 500,000 to 600,000 patacas, adding that the exact amount of money raised was still being counted yesterday.

In his opening remarks, Wong pointed out that for the second year, Oxfam TowerRun has successfully obtained international recognition as a qualified tower running competition, accredited by the Towerrunning World Association (TWA) and the Asia-Pacific Vertical Marathon Association (AVA) with 120 points, adding that about one quarter of this year’s runners came from overseas.

In line with its theme “Join the Oxfam TowerRun, challenge yourself, and raise funds to



Oxfam Hong Kong’s Director of Fundraising and Communications Michael Wong Ho-ming delivers a speech during yesterday’s Oxfam TowerRun at Macau Tower in Nam Van. – Photos: Yuki Lei



Malaysian tower runner Soh Wai Ching, ambassador of Oxfam TowerRun who emerged as the world champion in the 2024 Towerrunning World Championships runs towards the start to begin his run up the 1,298 stairs.

support left-behind children”, the funds raised from this year’s campaign will be used to support Oxfam’s children’s development programmes in Gansu, Guizhou

and Shaanxi provinces, helping them improve their life skills and enabling them to grow and develop in a holistic manner through support and companionship. ■



5 artists show works at 'The One Less Traveled By' exhibition

Rui Pastorin

A group of artists are presenting their works at the Humarish Club at Lisboaeta Macau's H853 Fun Factory in Cotai, with the works on display until November 17.

The exhibition kicked off last week.

Entitled "The One Less Traveled By: Group Exhibition of Asian Emerging Artists", the free admission exhibition showcases the works of five artists: Wang Jinbo, Minami Kitabayashi, June Hee, Wu Shi, and Shek. Except for Minami who is from Japan, all the other artists are from the mainland, with each of their respective styles and mediums, which range from oils to acrylics to mixed media, displayed on the walls of the gallery.

Wang is presenting a set of serene paintings, with "sparkling light" being the artist's "artistic language", according to a recent statement from the gallery. This also presents either his own or other people's "deep-seated fear of socialising".

Minami, according to the statement, has forests, solitary figures and animals in her works, with the statement adding that the artist paints "imaginary forests" to fill in the darkness and make them habitable, and not to ignore them, showing that if each person can realise that they have their own darkness, one can hold someone's hand with ease.

Hee, meanwhile, is showcasing scenes that question consciousness and reality. The statement noted that Hee, who mostly works with oils and watercolours, tackles the topic of consciousness and emotions between imagination and reality in life.

Sand and stone are used to create works presented by Wu, creating pieces that focus on experience and transience, the statement said. Wu's works are described in the statement as being "a record of life's silhouettes that are happening to you and me from God's point of view".

Lastly, graffiti artist and designer Shek showcases works featuring symbols and syntax on canvas. His works, according to the statement, have always been digging into his upbringing's "ideals and contradictory realities".

The free-admission exhibition is open daily from 12 noon to 8 p.m. More details can be found on: <https://www.humarish.com>

Photos taken yesterday by Rui Pastorin



Kiang Wu's assisted reproductive services benefit 300 couples, 'on par with int'l standards'



Kiang Wu Hospital Deputy Director Chan Tai Ip speaks to reporters at the private hospital on Saturday.

— Photo courtesy of TDM

Yuki Lei

The private Kiang Wu Hospital in 2018 launched its assisted reproductive services, having benefited about 300 couples, an overall success rate of 48 percent, “basically on par with international standards” – and the hospital’s deputy director Chan Tai Ip said on Saturday he hoped that the government would introduce specific policies in response to the city’s low fertility.

The hospital held on Saturday the “Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Reproductive Endocrinology Symposium 2024”, with attendance by experts from the three regions to exchange views on cutting-edge theories and clinical practices.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the seminar, Dr Chan said that in the six years since the setting-up of the assisted reproduction centre

at the hospital, services have been provided to around 300 couples, with 190 assisted ART cycles per year, i.e., for each patient a cycle of assisted reproductive technology starting when a woman begins taking fertility drugs or having her ovaries monitored for follicle production, with an overall success rate of 48 percent. Dr Chan added that this was “basically on par with international standards”.

He went on to say that the social acceptance of assisted reproductive technologies in Macau was “quite favourable”, with the age of women undergoing assisted reproduction in the city favouring the older age group, the oldest patient aged 43. He added that since the launch of the service in June this year, seven women in their forties have successfully undergone egg

freezing, with an egg retrieval rate of 98 percent.

Dr Chan underlined that the hospital has been keeping abreast of the current development of reproductive medicine in terms of technology, investment in equipment and nurturing of talents, with its In vitro fertilisation (IVF) technology having been upgraded to the third generation, in which genetic testing is carried out on the fourth and fifth days after fertilisation to screen for immune or genetic problems.

However, Dr Chan pointed out, although Macau residents do accept assisted reproduction technology reasonably well, the cost of assisted reproduction is around 70,000 to 90,000 patacas, which was a relatively expensive service, hoping that the government would provide assistance to families who

have financial difficulties: “How to provide assistance is an issue that deserves to be considered”.

In his speech, Dr Chan said that ageing and the nation’s paediatric population, as well as the declining birth rate in Macau, have brought new challenges to the field of reproductive medicine, pointing out that the development of assisted reproduction technology was a long-term and arduous task.

Dr Chan quoted official local statistics when telling reporters that the number of newborns in the first two quarters of this year totalled about 1,700, with the number for the whole year to be, as expected, similar to that of last year, at over 3,000. He was quick to add that the number of newborns recorded in 2016 exceeded 7,000, double that estimated for this year. ■

Mainland man robs female gambler's chips worth HK\$210,000

Yuki Lei

Thanks to the notification mechanism between the police and the hotel sector, the Judiciary Police (PJ) solved on Thursday a robbery within just an hour, in which the victim was bound up in a hotel guestroom for a short period of time and robbed of HK\$210,000 in casino chips, PJ spokesman Cheong Kim Fong said during a special press conference on Friday.

The incident happened at a casino hotel in Zape on Thursday night, according to Cheong, when the female victim from the mainland met a man, aged 24, surnamed Liu, who was also from the mainland, in a casino. Both struck a deal to exchange casino chips worth HK\$210,000 the victim had into yuan at Liu’s room, during which Liu delayed transferring yuan to the victim’s bank account several times. After a number of purportedly failed attempts by Liu to transfer the money to the victim’s account, he attacked the victim who was about to leave the room, threatening her by falsely claiming that he had a knife, pushing her down on the bed, gagging her with a towel, using a charging cable and shoelaces to tie her hands and feet and snatching HK\$210,000 in chips from the victim.

Cheong noted that 10 minutes after Liu had left the room, the victim managed to untie herself and sought help from hotel security guards in the lobby, adding that within an hour of receiving the report from the victim, the Judiciary Police arrested Liu in the hotel, on whom PJ officers found HK\$239,000 and 500 patacas in cash, but not the knife he had claimed to be in possession of, nor any other sharp weapons.

A PJ investigation showed, according to Cheong, that after the robbery, Liu gambled with the chips he had snatched from the victim in the hotel’s casino and won HK\$130,000. Under questioning, Liu told the police that he had given HK\$100,000 of the amount to a local woman for safekeeping.

Cheong said that the Judiciary Police later took the local woman to the PJ headquarters for questioning, during which she insisted that she was unaware of Liu’s involvement in the robbery. Cheong added that the Judiciary Police have filed a separate case against the local woman.

The Judiciary Police on Friday transferred Liu to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further investigation, facing charges of robbery and false imprisonment. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded robbery suspect to a PJ vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape after Friday’s special press conference.

— Photo: Maria Cheang Ut Meng

Housing Bureau HQ project set to be completed in 2025

Yuki Lei

The redevelopment of the Housing Bureau’s (HI) headquarters in Patane, which was demolished and rebuilt on the same site in 2019 due to its inadequate capacity, was expected to be completed next January, the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) has noted, with a total cumulative sum for the whole project to be more than 470 million patacas.

According to the DSOP website last week, the piling work for redevelopment of the building, which had been used for nearly 30 years, was completed in January 2022, while work on the basement and superstructure of the building commenced in August of the same year and are scheduled for completion in January next year. The basement and superstructure work of the building were awarded for more than 257.01 million patacas. The work had been delayed by 14 working days in 2022 due to Macau’s second COVID-19 outbreak.

The Housing Bureau headquarters nearing completion is located on Travessa Norte do Patane (沙梨頭北巷), with a site area of about 1,430 square metres and a total gross floor area of about 26,000 square metres over 23 floors plus two basement floors, complete with a reception area, offices, conference rooms, and a carpark.

As the redevelopment project has entered the final



This file photo taken by the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) in June shows the redevelopment project of the Housing Bureau headquarters in Patane.

stage of the interior fit-out, the Public Works Bureau will hand over the project to the Housing Bureau for commencement of the fitting-out work, which, according to its open tenders launched in June this year, cost 113.84 million patacas for 398 working days of the whole fit-out project, with an additional of 2.84 million patacas as the design cost. ■

Impurity detected in Apo-Amitriptyline tablets: drug bureau

Yuki Lei

The Pharmaceutical Supervision and Administration Bureau (ISAF) has warned the public about 12 batches of Apo-Amitriptyline tablets manufactured by Canadian-based Apotex Inc., following the detection of an impurity known as N-Nitrosontriptiline (NNORT) in the product.

According to an ISAF statement on Thursday, the problematic products, a type of medicine used to treat clinical depression, include Apo-Amitriptyline Tablets in both 10mg and 25mg formulations in, respectively, RN6384、RR0266、RV1644、RW8597、TA6008、TF8585、TF8587 and TF8589

batches, as well as RR0781、RW8691、TA6062 and TF8602 batches.

The statement noted that the affected products were supplied to local health centres, private hospitals and polyclinics, adding that as a precautionary measure, it advised those who have recently been prescribed the drug to visit health centres for a replacement of the drug with the prescription issued by the bureau, while those who have obtained the product from other healthcare institutions “may seek advice from their attending doctors or pharmacists for arrangement of disposal”.

The bureau has endorsed a



This undated handout photo provided by the Pharmaceutical Supervision and Administration Bureau (ISAF) on Friday shows two containers of the Canada-made Apo-Amitriptyline tablets in 10mg and 25mg formulations.

recall of the 12 affected batches from the drug manufacturer. ■

Sustainability & biotech innovation forum at MIF focuses on circular economy

Lesley Wells

As part of 29th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF), the “Biotech Innovation and Sustainability Forum”, aiming to signal Macau’s circular economy ambitions, debuted at the Venetian Cotai Expo on Friday, according to a statement released by a representative of the event.

The forum supported by the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT) and jointly organised by the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) Faculty of Business and Law, Sustainable Development Association, AromaBase, and BioMyne Biotech Innovation and Engineering Co. Ltd. showcased innovative technologies that could reshape Macau’s economic landscape, according to the statement.

Experts from Hong Kong, Italy, Macau and other cities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) discussed cutting-edge technologies and their potential impact on Macau’s economy and diversification goals, and the city’s growing ambitions in the circular economy sector.

A wide range of innovations, including sustainable food solutions, healthcare technologies, upcycling innovations, conservation technologies, and other biotechnology and sustainability-focused solutions, highlighted potential new directions



This handout photograph shows participants attending the “Biotech Innovation and Sustainability Forum” on Friday pose on the stage of the Venetian Cotai Expo.

– Photo provided by Echo Chan Keng Hong.

for economic diversification in Macau, demonstrating how the special administrative region (SAR) could develop new industries by adopting and adapting these technologies.

The statement said that possibly these innovations could pave the way for job creation and economic opportunities in Macau while addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development.

During the forum, Macau’s potential to become a hub for sustainable innovation in the Greater Bay Area, a move that could attract investment and talent to the region, was emphasised.

The statement pointed out that participants spoke of their aspirations for Macau’s future, envisioning how the SAR might leverage its unique position and resources in the sustainability sector. The event highlighted the community’s hopes for exploring new avenues of economic growth beyond traditional industries.

As Macau continues to seek ways to diversify its economy, events like this forum play a crucial role in showcasing the city’s potential and attracting interest from both local and international stakeholders in the fields of biotechnology and sustainability, according to the statement. ■

MGTO chief says campaign to attract foreign tourists ‘relatively satisfactory’

Continued from p.1

In her recent reply to lawmaker Ngan, Senna Fernandes pointed out that the number of foreign visitor arrivals recovered “significantly”, with more than 1.3 million foreign visitor arrivals recorded in the first seven months of this year, a year-on-year surge of 122 percent, marking a recovery to 68.1 percent of the same period in pre-pandemic 2019. The reply also noted that the Philippines and South Korea accounted the largest part of foreign visitor arrivals, with 277,000 and 265,000 arrivals respectively, amounting to year-on-year increases of 90.7 percent and 300.6 percent;

followed by Indonesia and Malaysia, with 106,000 and 94,000 arrivals respectively, corresponding to year-on-year expansions of 45 percent and 167.2 percent.

Following the Southeast Asian market, MGTO, according to Senna Fernandes, plans to explore source markets in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile, a group visitor from the mainland has recently claimed on a social media platform that she was requested by a Macau tourist guide to pay 200 yuan (225 patacas) in order to enter a local casino. Asked by reporters yesterday, Senna Fernandes said that MGTO has been,

in conjunction with relevant public entities, including the Public Security Police (PSP), Macau Customs Service (SA) and Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED), carrying out impromptu inspections of travel agents, adding that if the claim on the social media platform “was made in response to false information disseminated by local travel agents”, fines would be imposed on the tour guides concerned, or, depending on the seriousness of the case, the renewal of their licence might be affected, while there would be additional penalties if illegal tourist guides were involved. ■



Over 1,300 inmates were transferred on Saturday from the now defunct Coloane prison on Rua de São Francisco Xavier (聖方濟各街) to the city’s new jail on Estrada da Barragem de Ka Ho (九澳堤壩馬路) by the Correctional Services Bureau (DSC) with the assistance of various public security forces. According to the Macau Public Security Forces (FSM), the transfer was completed without any incidents. – Photo: DSC

MGM hosts intangible cultural heritage fashion event

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort (IR) operator MGM yesterday hosted the one-day “Eastern Elegance: Timeless Tale” Intangible Cultural Heritage Fashion Series, an event held in collaboration with Prince Kung’s Palace Museum*.

Held at MGM COTAI’s Vista and co-organised with well-known mainland fashion designer Laurence Xu’s (许建树) “Laurence · Xu Studio”, the one-day event gathered fashion enthusiasts, industry professionals and students from around the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Those attending the event, which was mainly held in Putonghua, were able to listen in on a discussion on fashion expression and the industrialisation development of intangible cultural heritage with Xu, Tsinghua University Academy of Arts & Design’s Department of Textile and Fashion Design Prof. Xiao Wenling, and Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology’s School of Art and Design Prof. Guo Ruiliang.

Moreover, three workshops were held throughout the afternoon, with two of them, “Uncovering: The Making of Haute Couture” and “Craftsmanship: Artisan Patterns and Embroidery” taught by Xu. “Styling: Into the World of Makeup

and Hair”, meanwhile, was hosted by makeup professionals from Beijing and Macau. All three workshops aimed to explore “the creative thinking of the fashion industry with hands-on sessions”, according to a recent statement on MGM’s website.

Fashion shows were also held in the evening.

Chairperson and Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited Pansy Ho Chiu-king said in a speech that the event was the first important project held in cooperation with the museum.

Ho added: “We not only hope to give traditional craftsmanship new heritage power through this event, but also look forward to opening up new thinking directions for Macau’s creative industries and exploring more possibilities for industry diversification”, she added.

*Prince Kung’s Palace Museum, aka Prince Gong’s Mansion and Prince Kung Mansion, is a tourist attraction in Beijing’s Xicheng District. It was constructed in 1777 for prominent court official Heshen (1750 to 1799), according to Wikipedia. It was later renamed after Manchu prince and influential statesman Prince Gong (1833-1898), who lived there in the late 19th century, Wikipedia added. ■



Prof. Guo Ruiliang (right), fashion designer Laurence Xu (许建树; second from right), and Prof. Xiao Wenling answer questions from the MC (left) during yesterday’s event at MGM COTAI.

– Photo: Rui Pastorin

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