

Sam to report his choice of top officials to Beijing this month, outlines 7 criteria for them

Tony Wong

Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai says that he expects to complete the selection of his incoming administration's top officials later this month and then report his choice to the central government requesting their appointment by the State Council.

Sam made the remarks during a 30-minute press briefing at the local airport in Taipa on Saturday, after returning from his three-day working visit to Beijing where he received his appointment certificate from Premier Li Qiang on the sidelines of his meeting with President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People on Friday, which was also attended by Li and several other top officials from the central authorities.

Sam also laid out seven criteria for him to choose his administration's top officials, i.e., seven requirements that they must possess, namely the central government's trust and recognition from Macau's population; patriotism and love for Macau; determination to safeguard the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests; a commitment to serving the population; team spirit; governance capability and a sense of shouldering responsibilities; plus integrity.

Sam in particular stressed that integrity is a fundamental and indispensable one that his top official must possess, underlying that without integrity, even very capable officials will undermine the image of the entire government as well as its reputation among residents.

Sam also elaborated on the other six criteria.

Sam said that as Macau's top officials are appointed by the central government, they must be trusted by the central government.

Sam also said that patriotism and love for Macau is a fundamental requirement for ensuring the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

Sam said that it is very important for top officials to be committed to contributing to the development of Macau's civil society.

Sam said that top officials without team spirit would hinder the government from implementing its policies and measures.

Sam also said that only top officials with a sense of responsibility will have the courage to solve Macau's various problems and to tackle its different challenges.

Sam also said that he was now looking for his future principal officials from among the current principal officials, as well as people with a good reputation from civil society, including distinguished professionals who everybody thinks can shoulder a heavy responsibility.

According to Article 50 of the Macau Basic Law and the current structure of the local government, Macau's principal officials comprise the government's five policy secretaries, anti-graft commissioner, audit commissioner, head of the Unitary Police Service (SPU) and chief of the Macau Customs Service. According to Article 63 of the Basic Law, Macau's principal officials shall be Chinese nationals who are permanent residents and have ordinarily resided in Macau for a continuous period of no less than 15 years.

Sam mentioned the selection process concerning his future principal officials in response to a TDM reporter's question about his requirements for choosing them.

Macau's incoming chief executive made the remarks amidst raft of media speculation and rumours about his future team of policy secretaries.

According to the Macau Basic Law's Article 50, the chief executive "nominates and reports to the Central People's Government for the appointment" of Macau's nine principal officials and the chief prosecutor, and recommends to the central government the removal of them.

The Central People's Government shall appoint or remove the Macau Special Administrative Region's (MSAR) chief executive, principal officials and chief prosecutor, according to Article 15 of the MSAR Basic Law.

Continued on p.6



Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai addresses Saturday's press briefing at the local airport after returning from his three-day working visit to the nation's capital where he received his appointment decree from Premier Li Qiang on Friday. - Photo: Tony Wong



Shenzhou-18 return capsule touches down, astronauts all sound

The return capsule of the Shenzhou-18 manned spaceship, carrying astronauts Ye Guangfu, Li Cong and Li Guangsu, touched down at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region this early morning.

The three astronauts are all in good health condition, according to the China Manned Space Agency. - Xinhua, MPD

The return capsule of the Shenzhou-18 manned spaceship, carrying astronauts Ye Guangfu, Li Cong and Li Guangsu, touches down at the Dongfeng landing site in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region this early morning. - Xinhua

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German ruling parties agree parliament anti-Semitism resolution

Germany's ruling parties have agreed a landmark resolution on combatting anti-Semitism that will be put to parliament this week, political sources said on Saturday.

- Story on p. 10

Crowd hurls mud, insults at Spanish royals, PM on visit to flood zone

Furious locals pelted Spain's royals and premier yesterday with mud and cries of "murderers!", forcing officials to cut short their visit to the town worst hit by the floods which have killed more than 200.

- Story on p. 11

Green shoots spring from ashes in Brazil's fire-resistant savanna

The huge wildfires that have ripped through Brazil recently did not spare its vast tropical savanna, but green shoots are already emerging from the ashes there, proof of the vast grasslands' rare gift for fire resistance. - Story on p. 12

New Coloane Prison solves overcrowding problem: DSC chief

Yuki Lei

The new Correctional Services Bureau (DSC) headquarters on Estrada da Barragem de Ka Ho (九澳堤壩馬路) was unveiled by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng on Friday morning, also symbolising the official opening of the new prison.

The media was not invited to Friday's unveiling ceremony. According to a statement by the bureau that night, the ceremony was also attended by Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário, DSC Director Cheng Fong Meng, and Public Works Bureau (DSOP) Director Lam Wai Hou.

The new DSC headquarters, equipped with facilities such as an administration block, a training block and a staff complex, as well as the Coloane Prison, covers a total gross floor area of over 76,000 square metres with a maximum capacity of 2,704 inmates, marking an important milestone which signifies a new stage of development for Macau's correctional services, the statement quoted Cheng's



This handout photo provided by the Correctional Services Bureau (DSC) shows Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (third from right), accompanied by Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak (second from left), Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário (second from right), DSC Director Cheng Fong Meng (left) and Public Works Bureau (DSOP) Director Lam Wai Hou, officiating at Friday's opening ceremony of the new DSC headquarters in Coloane.

speech as noting.

The new prison project, which took nearly 14 years to build and cost over two billion patacas, was launched in response to chronic overcrowding in Macau's former jail. As early as in 2022, in response to a lawmaker's question, Wong said that it was more comfortable

to be a prisoner in Macau than elsewhere as Macau's jail was too small for its inmates to work there, resulting in the fact that mainlanders imprisoned in Macau might not be willing to serve their sentences in the mainland, while local people imprisoned elsewhere preferred to return to Macau to serve their

sentences here, rendering Macau's prison even more overcrowded.

According to the DSC annual report, as of the end of last year, the number of inmates at Coloane Prison stood at 1,331 – 1,122 males and 209 females. Macau's prison is composed of a Male Detention Zone and a Female Detention Zone. Unlike

the main prison, its Block 9 remains next to the Academy of the Public Security Force in Coloane Village. It functions as a special detention zone for confining inmates "requiring special detention", according to the DSC website. Colloquially, Block 9 is known among locals as the city's "VIP jail". The youth detention centre next to the old jail is still operating.

The government has still to announce the future use of the old prison. All its inmates were moved by a convoy of vehicles under tight security measures on October 19.

The statement noted that the new prison is a smart facility with more space for educational and vocational skills training, with the aims of enhancing its security and management levels through the application of various advanced technologies and intelligent management measures, while, at the same time, providing inmates with more learning opportunities to help them reintegrate into civil society to a greater extent. The statement added that the new DSC premises would help enhance prison officers' professionalism in law enforcement. ■

Seminar aims to strengthen public support for National Security Law

Yuki Lei

Organised by the Alliance for Common People Building Up Macau (API), in conjunction with the Association for the Promotion of Public Legal Services, a fourth-session seminar on the Macau Basic Law and the local National Security Law was held yesterday, with the aim of giving a further boost to the development of Macau's rule of law, as well as strengthening the public's understanding of, and support for, the city's National Security Law.

The association's chief supervisor Ivan Fong In Long, assistant researcher at the Centre for Constitutional and Basic Law Studies of the Faculty of Law at the University of Macau (UM), pointed out in a speech the importance of the National Security Law in an era of globalisation and rapid technological development, saying that the ongoing seminar aims to explore in-depth the further improvement of the rule of law protection for Macau under the "One Country, Two Systems" framework, so as to address the current needs

of national security and, at the same time take the relevant cooperation between Guangdong and Macau to a new level.

Lawyer Chan Pei Kei and Fan Xueke, assistant professor of the Faculty of Law at the private City University of Macau, attended yesterday's seminar at Nam Tung Commercial Building as keynote speakers. Both briefed the attendees on their views, respectively, themed "Analysing the Procedural Provisions in the New National Security Law of Macau" and "Strengthening National Security Education at Macau Tertiary Education Institutions to Enhance Young People's Correct and Rational Understanding".

Chan said that Macau's National Security Law places equal emphasis on both substantive and procedural laws, striking the right balance between the protection of national security and the protection of individuals' rights, which was in line with the actual needs of the country as a whole and local society.

Fan said that Macau should give full play to the role of national security education in shaping young people's correct values and sense of national identity at local tertiary education institutions, urging the institutions to establish a regular mechanism for national security education, and closely integrate national security education with tertiary education for the cultivation of talents, so as to lay a solid foundation for the cultivation of new talents who have gained an international outlook, who love the motherland and love Macau, and who will take up the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.

The seminar's closing session will be held on November 17. ■

HK fishing vessel hits old bridge, no injuries: DSAMA



This handout photo provided by the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) yesterday shows the Hong Kong-registered fishing boat, which hit the protective railing of the old Macau-Taipa bridge, run aground off Macau Tower.

Ginnie Liang

A Hong Kong-registered fishing vessel, named "深蛇XXXX," ran aground early yesterday morning after colliding with the protective rail of the Governor Nobre de Carvalho Bridge (informally known as the city's "old bridge"), the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) said in a statement yesterday.

No injuries were reported, and the incident did not impact navigation safety, the statement said.

At around 9 a.m. yesterday, Macau Customs Service (SA) officers detected a fishing boat deviating from its course via its maritime intelligence monitoring system, the statement said, adding that the vessel was found listing and stranded in the waters off Macau Tower.

Customs officers notified the bureau, and both dispatched rescue boats to the scene, the statement said, adding that four crew members aboard the fishing vessel, all of them mainlanders, were rescued by customs officers.

After checking its smart maritime system and offshore surveillance footage, the Marine and Water Bureau confirmed the vessel's navigational track and

verified the collision with the bridge's protective rail.

According to the statement, the bureau is investigating the cause of the incident, interviewing the crew, and assessing the damage to the bridge's infrastructure.

The incident resulted in a small amount of oil being released from the fishing vessel, because of which the bureau activated its emergency response plan, including setting up containment booms and absorbent materials around the vessel to prevent the further spread of oil, as well as cleanup operations.

To ensure the safety of navigation, temporary warning signs have been placed in the area, and navigational alerts have been broadcast to passing vessels, the statement said.

The bureau urged all ships entering and exiting Macau waters to strictly adhere to navigation regulations, follow buoy instructions, and pay attention to tidal information to ensure a safe passage.

The bureau also emphasised its commitment to strengthening waterway oversight and maritime traffic management, pledging to take legal action against vessels that violate navigation rules. ■



Association for the Promotion of Public Legal Services Chief Supervisor Ivan Fong In Long delivers a speech during yesterday's fourth-session seminar at Nam Tung Commercial Building. — Photo: Yuki Lei

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Macau Weather

SLIGHT FLOODING MAY OCCUR IN INNER HARBOUR AREA FROM 9 PM ~ 0 AM DUE TO ASTRONOMICAL TIDE. CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS. LIGHT RAIN AT FIRST. FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 55% AND 90%.



23°C~29°C

Source: SMG

MUST English Debate Team wins Guangdong Int'l Speech & Debate Tournament

Ginnie Liang

The Macau University of Science and Technology's (MUST) English Debate Team achieved a remarkable victory at the open final of the 2024 Guangdong International Speech and Debate Tournament, held from October 19 to 20 at Shantou University, according to a recent MUST statement.

Organised by the Great Debater Project in collaboration with Shantou University, the competition attracted numerous prestigious teams from institutions such as Peking University (PKU), the University of Macau (UM), City University of Hong Kong (CityU), and Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU), highlighting its significance in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA).

MUST English Debate Team members told the *Post* about their victory on Friday.

Zhou Yang, one of the four-member team that won the open group championship, explained their collaborative approach during the competition, noting that the competition was held in the format of British Parliamentary (BP) style, with 15 minutes of preparation time for each round for the team to brainstorm and discuss strategies. Another member of the team, Xu Ke, took the lead to open the debate with initial statements, while Zhou focused on rebuttals and reinforcing their position.

The other two team members were Qian Liying and Xu Huaihong.

According to Zhou, the debate topics covered a wide range of

issues, including the video game industry, artificial intelligence (AI) and environmental protection. Zhou highlighted a pivotal moment when he pointed out a critical logical flaw in the opposing team's argument about the investments in China's video game industry, while Xu Ke successfully addressed another topic regarding poverty, demonstrating that governments should adopt a welfare rather than a self-sufficiency approach to the poverty crisis.

Reflecting on their growth, the team noted significant improvements in their debating skills, particularly in logical reasoning and teamwork. They actively sought feedback from judges after each round, which helped them refine their strategies and maintain composure against strong opposition. The preparation process included extensive practice sessions and case analysis, which contributed to their confidence during the competition.

They underlined that their victory holds special significance for the team, as they not only represented MUST but also showcased Macau's image on an international stage.

"We want to express gratitude to MUST for their support, as well as our coaches and teammates, and we also particularly thanked our captain Shen Beiyi for his guidance and encouragement throughout the competition. This achievement has bolstered our confidence and motivated us to strive for even greater success in future debates," the team said. ■



Macau University of Science and Technology's (MUST) English Debate Team member Zhou Yang (second from left), Xu Ke (second from right), team captain Shen Beiyi (right) and the person in charge of the 2024 Guangdong International Speech and Debate Tournament pose for a photo on the sidelines of the event at Shantou University on October 20. – Photo: MUST

Local runner's world record still not recognised, sports chief: 'We have done our best to help'

Yuki Lei

A local runner broke the then world record for the hearing impaired at last year's Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) Macau International Marathon, but the record has still not been recognised by the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) as her confirmation certificate was not signed in time by all those involved – and in response to the predicament, Sports Bureau (ID) President Luís Gomes said on Saturday that the bureau had meanwhile intervened and explained the situation to the ICSD: "We have done our best to help".

According to a news report by Chinese-language *Macau Sports Weekly* on Thursday, Hoi Long, a local amateur triathlete who won the bronze medal in the women's triathlon at the 18th Asian Games in Indonesia in 2018, broke the then world record for the hearing impaired of 1 hour, 27 minutes and 25 seconds at the GEG Macau International Marathon on December 3 last year with a 1 hour, 24 minutes and 34 seconds run. In April this year, she requested the assistance of the General Association of Athletics of Macau (AAMC) to have her half-marathon result signed by the persons in charge of the event at the time – such as race officials, in accordance with the ICSD rules and requirements.

As reported by *Macau Sports Weekly*, the general association



Sports Bureau (ID) President Luís Gomes speaks to reporters on the sidelines of Saturday's opening ceremony of the "71st Macau Grand Prix Family Carnival" in Tap Seac. – Photo courtesy of TDM

had yet to return to Hoi her signed confirmation certificate as of last Monday, when the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf announced that it would no longer accept applications for world records submitted 30 days after the end of the competition date.

When asked by reporters when addressing Saturday's opening ceremony of the "71st Macau Grand Prix Family Carnival" in Praça do Tap Seac, Gomes said that after the publication of the news report, the bureau immediately intervened in the case and got in touch with the relevant association and race

officials on Friday night to sign and verify Hoi's results, in the hope of "helping the athlete to the best of its ability", adding that the incident can be regarded as a lesson learnt by the bureau, in which it had intervened and dealt with the incident as soon as it was aware of it.

According to Gomes, in addition to assisting the relevant association to submit the record application to the ICSD, his bureau has its explanations and interpretations already prepared to be sent to the committee, in the hope that the application will eventually be accepted.

Gomes also indicated to the media that the delay in the application for official recognition of the world record was due to complicated administrative procedures, which involve many "technical" aspects, including the need for athletes to undergo repeated drug tests for confirmation, waiting for the respective report from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and the need for "technical" representatives from competitions in different parts of the world to sign the confirmation procedures.

Gomes pledged that in order to ensure that local athletes can have their results recognised after achieving outstanding results, the bureau would strengthen its guideline procedures for Macau's general associations representing the sports sector. ■

'Walk for a Million' slated for Dec 8, no more 'online' walk

Yuki Lei

The Charity Fund from the Readers of Macao Daily News announced on Friday that its annual "Walk for a Million in Macau" will be held on December 8, starting from the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre on Avenida Dr Sun Yat-Sen (孫逸仙大馬路) and ending at Largo do Pagode da Barra (媽閣廟前地).

As in previous years, the about three-kilometre route goes along Praça do Lago Sai Van (西灣湖景大馬路) and Rua de S. Tiago da Barra (媽閣上街), and the organisers anticipate that it will take the participants walking slowly about one hour to finish the activity.

Civic leader Tina Ho Teng Iat, president of the Charity Fund from

the Readers of Macao Daily News, said in a speech: "This year, for the Walk for a Million, we will only focus on organising its offline campaign, with its routes staying basically unchanged as well as the way for the public to participate in it".

As cited by the Chinese-language *Macao Daily News* – Macau's top-selling newspaper, Ho noted that the annual charity event has gained the enthusiastic response and support of the local community, regardless of nationality, race, social class, occupation, religious beliefs and age.

The entry fee for the walkers is the same as in previous years, i.e., 10 patacas for students and 50 patacas for individuals, as well

as 2,000 patacas for up to 40 participants from social organisations and public entities and 3,000 patacas for up to 30 participants from sponsors, plus 50 patacas for each participant if their group exceeds the fixed number of participants respectively.

For the first time after the three-year COVID-19 pandemic, the charity walk will no longer be held "online". Individual participants should take their passes to the Avenida Dr Sun Yat-Sen starting point before 9:30 a.m. that day, while group participants are advised to enter the starting point before 9:15 a.m. Those aged under 12 should be accompanied by their parent or guardian. ■



Representatives of the the Charity Fund from the Readers of Macao Daily News, including its President Tina Ho Teng Iat (fourth from left), host Friday's press conference at Restaurante Ka Nin Wa about the 41st Macau Walk for a Million in Macau on December 8. – Photo courtesy of TDM

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Centre aims to help youngsters learn about robotics, AI

Interview by Rui Pastorin

In Nape, a centre called “Macau Artificial Intelligence Education Centre” is striving to prepare youngsters for the future, as well as help diversify Macau’s economy.

Focused on robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) education for kids, mainly aged between four and 16, the centre was launched right around the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, and was “kind of started to improve on what Macau could offer”, said instructor, co-founder and director Charles Hugentobler (姚查理), along with instructor and director Gary Lai Ho-yin, in a recent interview with the *Post*.

Hugentobler, who is of mixed European and Chinese descent, lived and studied in Macau from 1999 to 2007, and moved around quite a lot. He returned in 2018 and together with Lai, who was born and raised in the UK and had previously worked in Hong Kong, started to put the centre together.

The mainland is “pushing a lot of robotics and AI right now, so I think it’s only natural that in a small city like Macau thinks about developing this area as well”, Lai added.

The centre initially began with offering courses on robotics, Hugentobler said, which is fun and combines a range of skills such as robot building and designing, along with teamwork. Eventually, other courses in related fields such as 3D printing and even foundational courses in programming were added. Most recently, they introduced formal courses in mathematics.

The centre offers no specific timetable for students to follow and students can come as they like, being likened to a subscription. They are recommended to take one lesson or module per week, which will help them master the fundamentals. And as long as they finish that given module, they’re free to decide what they actually want to do, according to Hugentobler.

Hugentobler said that some kids may be organising robot battles, others might be working on maths problems and games, while some might be playing with 3D software or even using it to print their own models. “We leave it up to the students to decide what kind of thing they gravitate towards. We find that this is our best way of helping students find their passion”, believing that each kid is naturally gifted at something.

“Each child is unique and has something special to bring to the table, he. Our role as educators, as mentors here, is to help them discover that special something and to help bring out that potential”.

Moreover, gathering their experiences and finding out what they are inclined to or are passionate about may also help them find a study or career path that they might be interested in, Lai noted, who added: “There’s so many things that a kid can do... If there’s an area that a kid wants to focus on then they can totally do that. And then once they figure out what they want to do, they’ll probably say to their parents ‘yeah, I want to study that at university’”.

Lai also mentioned that some students ask to stay at the centre longer – compared to spending time on other extracurricular activities – as they like its learning environment a lot.

The centre also has a competition team of around 10 to 15 kids, and Lai, who is also the lead coach and mentor, apart from helping to design and build robots, elaborated: “They do a lot of training, and then when we send them out to competitions around [mainland] China or Thailand or Japan, they’re fully prepared because the kids have to do everything by themselves”, everything from programming to writing their engineering notebooks.

Both interviewees noted that they want to push students to take part in as many competitions as possible to get into competitive robotics, with having a chance to win being able to help put Macau in the spotlight.

Lai also remarked on how intelligent kids are right now, being able to build robots by themselves at around 10 or 11 years old, knowing the mechanical concepts and different programming involved, among others. “They’re really far ahead compared to 20 to 30 years ago”.

“It’s good to start early right now, because we strongly believe that robotics and AI are going to play a very important part in our daily lives”, Lai pointed out, adding that he believes the earlier these are introduced to kids, the better. “I think robotics and AI have to be part of our diet, especially for the younger kids now.”

Everything the centre has been offering mainly revolves around AI and robotics, seeing this as an opportunity to prepare kids for future careers in these fields and build companies in these fields in Macau, according to Hugentobler. They also try to help fill in the gaps for Macau to nurture the necessary talents to be able to diversify its economy.

“The results aren’t obvious, but I do sincerely believe that into the farther future, we are making an impact, the most significant one. We are filling in those gaps that cannot really be filled in by other entities in society. And I think that if that’s what we can do, then we are really serving a real purpose,” Hugentobler concluded.

More details about the centre can be found on its Facebook page or on <https://www.maiec.ai/>



Instructor, co-founder and director Charles Hugentobler (left) and instructor and director Gary Lai Ho-yin pose in front of a banner at their “Macau Artificial Intelligence Education Centre” in Nape.
– Photos taken recently by Rui Pastorin



Swimming season ends, no lifeguards on beaches until next year: DSAMA

Ginnie Liang

This year's open-water swimming season ended on Thursday, with the lifeguards no longer on duty at the city's two beaches – Cheoc Van (Bamboo Bay) and Hac Sa (Black Sand) – until May next year, the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) said in a statement on Friday.

The open-water swimming season in Macau starts on May 1 and ends on October 31.

The statement said that the bureau reminded members of the public to exercise extra caution when swimming or engaging in water activities at beaches when there are no lifeguards on duty, as the bureau will remove the swimming

buoys from the swimming area of the two beaches soon.

The bureau said that during the open-water swimming season, lifeguards and paramedics had been deployed as usual at the two beaches, and the bureau had provided 122 emergency services during the period.

The statement said the bureau will continue to inspect the two beaches, urging beachgoers to avoid water activities during inclement weather for personal safety.

The statement stressed that lighting fires, camping and riding bicycles or driving motor vehicles on the beaches are strictly prohibited to avoid affecting other beachgoers. ■



This photo provided by the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) on Friday shows beachgoers and a lifeguard at Hac Sa Beach.

China, PSCs film-fest to kick off soon

Rui Pastorin

The "China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries Film Festival" is set to take place from November 22 to December 13, themed "Creating an Interesting Contrast", with tickets now on sale, according to a statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) on Friday.

The film-fest, which is being held for three weeks this year, is part of the "6th Encounter in Macao – Arts and Cultural Festival between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries" and is organised by the bureau in conjunction with integrated resort operator Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG).

Nearly 30 films, animations and short films from China and Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs)

and regions will be presented, the statement said. It features five sections: "Dual Screening Delight I.–Director in Focus: Guan Hu X Miguel Gomes", "Dual Screening Delight II. –A Tale of Two Cities", "Premiere of Chinese and Lusophone Films", "Chinese-Portuguese Short Films", and "Outdoor Screening–New Visual Forces in Macau".

The statement said that the festival will open with Chinese comedy sci-fi film "Escape from the 21st Century", which will be screened at Galaxy Cinemas, and will close with "Grand Tour" directed by Miguel Gomes, which won the "Best Director Award" at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Moreover, the "Outdoor Screening–New Visual Forces in Macau" is slated for December 7 at the Lai Chi Vun Shipyards, featuring four short films from this year's "Local View Power", the statement added. A number of outreach activities will also be held such as the "Kidz Fun: Parent-child Experience Session at Galaxy Cinemas" and a Portuguese Tile Painting Workshop hosted by Cinematheque•Passion.

One can apply for the outdoor screenings and the Kidz Fun: Parent-child Experience Session at Galaxy Cinemas via Macao One Account, while registration for seminars, lectures and the "Portuguese Tile Painting Workshop" is available on the Cinematheque•Passion website, the statement said.

More details can be found on www.icm.gov.mo/FCP or www.cinematheque-passion.mo. ■



This poster provided by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) on Friday promotes the opening film "Escape from the 21st Century" of the "China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries Film Festival".

Xi meets Sam in Beijing, says 'central authorities have full trust in you'

Staff Reporter

President Xi Jinping met on Friday afternoon with Sam Hou Fai, who was elected chief executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) by a 400-member election committee on October 13 and appointed by the Central People's Government on October 25. The meeting took place at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Witnessed by Xi, Premier Li Qiang presented Sam with a decree of the State Council appointing the latter as the sixth-term chief executive of the MSAR. Sam is scheduled to be sworn in on December 20 in Macau, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the MSAR.

Xi congratulated Sam, 62, on his appointment, and commended him for holding a firm stance of loving the country and Macao, conscientiously fulfilling his duties, and making contributions to Macao's prosperity and stability during his long tenure as the



President Xi Jinping (right) shakes hands with Macau's Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing Friday afternoon. – Xinhua

president of Macau's Court of Final Appeal (TUI). "In the election, you were nominated and elected by an overwhelming majority, which demonstrates the broad recognition and support from Macau's society. The central authorities fully acknowledge this and have full trust in you," Xi said. – Xinhua, MPD

Macau enjoys central authorities' 'wholehearted support': HKMAO

Staff Reporter

BEIJING—President Xi Jinping's meeting in Beijing with Sam Hou Fai, the incoming chief executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR), fully demonstrates the central authorities' wholehearted support for Macau's development, a spokesperson for the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office (HKMAO) of the State Council said on Friday.

Friday's meeting also reflects the central authorities' earnest expectation for Macau to continuously advance the

successful practice of "One Country, Two Systems," said the spokesperson. The sound environment of Macau today is a vivid testament to the great vitality and strength of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, the spokesperson said.

During the meeting, President Xi reiterated that the central authorities will stay committed to fully and faithfully implementing the "One Country, Two Systems" principle under which the people of Macau administer Macau with

a high degree of autonomy, noted the spokesperson, adding that this constitutes the greatest source of confidence for securing steady and continued success of "One Country, Two Systems" in Macau. The spokesperson also expressed the belief that the new chief executive and government of the MSAR will unite all sectors of Macau's society and continuously break new ground in the practice of "One Country, Two Systems" with Macau characteristics. – Xinhua, MPD



Witnessed by President Xi Jinping (third from right, seated), Premier Li Qiang (right) presents Sam Hou Fai (second from right) with a decree of the State Council appointing him as the sixth-term chief executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR), at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Friday. – Xinhua

Macau's exports rise, imports fall in Jan-Sept, resulting in 85.2 billion pataca trade deficit

Staff Reporter

Macau's exports rose but its imports dropped in the first three quarters of the year, resulting in an external merchandise trade deficit to 85.2 billion patacas, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a DSEC statement last week, total exports rose by 5.0 percent to 9.98 billion patacas, of which re-exports accounted for 88.7 percent.

Imports fell by 9.6 percent to 95.21 billion patacas. Food and beverage imports – Macau's top import items – decreased by 11.5 percent to 16.07 billion patacas. Construction material imports fell by 29.3 percent to 1.58 billion patacas, mobile phone imports dropped by 28.9 percent to 2.59 billion patacas, and gold jewellery import declined by 27.2 percent to 7.69 billion patacas.

Most imports originated from the Chinese mainland (29.8 percent), France (13.1 percent) and Italy (12.1 percent). Some 70.1 percent of Macau exports went to Hong Kong.

Macau, which is a founder member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), is a free port and separate customs territory of the People's Republic of China (PRC). ■

Enthusiastic crowd welcomes LRT Seac Pai Van Line opening

Tony Wong

The Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Seac Pai Van Line started its service in the early afternoon on Friday after it was inaugurated by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng in the morning.

Ho and Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário unveiled the inaugural plate of the LRT Seac Pai Van Line at its Union Hospital Station at 10 a.m. on Friday.

The 1.6-kilometre-long Seac Pai Van Line connects the Macao Union Hospital in south Cotai and Coloane's sprawling Seac Pai Van public housing neighbourhood. The line consists of two stations – one next to the public-private Macao Union Hospital complex and the other one near the Seac Pai Van public housing community, officially known as Union Hospital Station and Seac Pai Van Station respectively.

The line's first – crowded – train departed from Seac Pai Van Station on time at 1:11 p.m. on Friday as scheduled. Friday's operational start of the Seac Pai



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (second from right) and Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário (left) unveils the inaugural plate of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Seac Pai Van Line at its Union Hospital Station on Friday morning. Ho Cheong Kei (first from right), who heads the LRT system's operator, made a speech during the line's inauguration ceremony. – Photo: Tony Wong

Van Line enables LRT passengers to transfer between different lines for the first time, between the Taipa Line and the Seac Pai Van Line, at Union Hospital Station which serves as the cross-platform interchange between the two lines.

The Taipa Line, which also serves Cotai, extended to the peninsula's Barra Station at its south-western tip in December last year.

The light rail system now has a total of 14 stations, with a total length of 14.1 kilometres.

The new line's first departing train was packed with LRT enthusiasts.

The *Post* also took the line's first departing train, seeing that a one-way ride on the line takes less than one minute and 30 seconds. ■

Macau's 144 hotels log 10.89 million guests in Jan-Sept, up 11.2 pct

Staff Reporter

Macau 144 hotels with a total of 44,000 rooms recorded 10.89 million guests in the first three quarters of the year, a year-on-year growth of 11.2 percent, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a DSEC statement last week, foreign guests rose by 86.8 percent to 779,000 between January and September, accounting to 7.1 percent of the total number of guests. The remainder comprised compatriots from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Guests from South Korea increased by 143.5 percent to 229,000, making up Macau hotels' top foreign guest segment. The number of guests from Japan (60,000), Malaysia (57,000), Thailand (47,000) and Singapore (43,000) rose by 80.8 percent, 85.2 percent, 61.2 percent and 47.7 percent respectively.

In September, hotels' average occupancy rate grew by 6.4 percentage points year on year to 84.7 percent. However, the number of guests dipped by 2.1 percent to 1.1 million year on year, while their average length of stay remained unchanged at 1.6 nights. ■

Sam to report his choice of top officials to Beijing this month, outlines 7 criteria for them

Continued from p.1

Sam was elected the MSAR's sixth-term chief executive on October 13, after which the State Council appointed him on October 25 as Macau's next chief executive, before he received his appointment certificate, officially known as State Council Decree No. 794, from Li on Friday afternoon last week during his three-day visit to the nation's capital between Thursday and Saturday last week.

The nation's news agency Xinhua reported Friday's meeting between Xi and Sam on Friday night.

Sam is now Macau's chief executive-designate until his swearing-in by one of the top leaders of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on December 20, coinciding

with the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the MSAR.

Xi's instructions

During Saturday's press briefing, Sam was asked what expectations and instructions Xi had given him during Friday afternoon's meeting in Beijing for his administration, which will start on December 20, 2024.

Sam noted that his meeting with President Xi at the Great Hall of the People was also attended by Premier Li as well as two other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, Cai Qi and Ding Xuexiang, who is also the first-ranked vice premier.

The Political Bureau of the

CPC Central Committee comprises 24 members, seven of whom are members of its standing committee, headed by Xi in his capacity as the general secretary of the CPC Central Committee. The standing committee's seven members include Li, Cai and Ding.

According to Friday's Xinhua report, in addition to Li, Cai and Ding, Xi's meeting with Sam was also attended by Shi Taifeng and Chen Wenqing, both members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, as well as Xia Baolong, the director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO).

Sam went on to say that this meant that he was met by a "very strong" composition of top leadership members of the central authorities, where "everybody" witnessed Premier Li presenting him with a State Council decree appointing him as the MSAR's sixth-term chief executive.

Sam said that the meeting's arrangements show the central authorities' care for the MSAR's population and also vividly highlight Xi and the central authorities' determination to continue with the comprehensive implementation of the principles of "One Country, Two Systems", "Macau people governing Macau", and the MSAR's high degree of autonomy, ensuring their implementation without being distorted.

Sam said that after briefing Xi on his future governance philosophy, Xi gave him many instructions, such

as requiring him to possess a sense of shouldering responsibilities, to show determination to assume his upcoming role as the MSAR's head, and to work with various segments of Macau's civil society to consolidate the achievements made through the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle with Macau characteristics over the past 25 years.

During Friday's meeting, according to Sam, Xi said he requires Macau to continue to comprehensively, accurately and unwaveringly implement the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

Sam said that the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle requires a very important measure, which is the local government's determination to safeguard the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests, adding that his future administration will have to improve Macau's system for ensuring their safeguarding.

Economic diversification

According to Sam, Xi and the central authorities also pay very close attention to Macau's economic diversification, adding that his future government must create favourable conditions aiming to promote the city's economic diversification. Sam pledged that his future administration will give full play to the local government's "One Centre, One Platform, One Base" development concept, which refers to Macau developing itself

into a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure, a commercial and trade cooperation service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs), and an exchange and cooperation base with Chinese culture as its mainstream and co-existence of different cultures.

Sam said that Macau will continue to actively participate in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA), adding that it will be very important for his future government to start implementing the second-phase development goals of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Improvements in people's well-being

Moreover, Sam said, Xi also pays very close attention to the improvements in the well-being of Macau's population, adding that Xi has a very good understanding of Macau's current social situation in various aspects. According to Sam, Xi requires his future government to place strong emphasis on working on fields such as senior citizens' retirement, healthcare, transport, and supporting parents in raising their children, adding that Xi even mentioned Macau's urban renewal campaign.

Sam said that his future administration will roll out new measures to improve the city's social welfare in a way that will be fair and targeted and aims to help those in need more accurately. ■



Media workers take photos of Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai during Saturday's 30-minute press briefing at a pressroom in the airport. – Photo: Tony Wong