

Airport's expansion starts, aiming for 2030 completion



Guests such as Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (centre), Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau Director Zheng Xincong (seventh from left), Foreign Ministry Commissioner Liu Xianfa (seventh from right), Macau Legislative Assembly (AL) President Kou Hoi In (sixth from left), Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário (sixth from right), Macau Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) President Pun Wa Kin (fourth from right), Ma Iao Hang (fifth from left), the chairman of CAM's board of directors, and Simon Chan Weng Hong (third from right), the chairman of CAM's executive committee, symbolically break ground on the airport's reclamation and expansion project on Friday. — Photos: Tony Wong

Tony Wong

Macau's land reclamation project to expand its airport, which aims to raise its annual passenger-handling capacity to up to 15 million, has finally got off the ground, marked by a groundbreaking ceremony on the airport's apron on Friday.

The expansion project, with land reclamation covering 129 hectares (1.29 square kilometres), is now expected to be completed in 2030, raising the airport's total area to 325 hectares.

The central government finally greenlighted the local airport's reclamation project in October 2022, after the local government first requested Beijing's permission for reclamation in 2017.

The local government formally granted

local airport operator CAM the necessary land concession early last month enabling the reclamation project to go ahead.

The project will reclaim land in the coastal waters between the airport's runway and its two current taxiways to expand its apron, creating new space for setting up more aircraft stands and various other new ancillary facilities.

Airport operator CAM, Macau International Airport Company Limited, held its airport reclamation and expansion project's groundbreaking ceremony on Friday morning, which was attended by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and other prominent guests such as Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau Director Zheng Xincong, Foreign Ministry Commissioner Liu Xianfa, Macau

Legislative Assembly (AL) President Kou Hoi In, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário, Macau Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) President Pun Wa Kin, Ma Iao Hang, the chairman of CAM's board of directors, and Simon Chan Weng Hong, the chairman of CAM's executive committee.

Delivering a speech during the groundbreaking ceremony, Ma said that the airport's expansion project will be carried out in several phases, with a reclamation area amounting to 129 hectares, adding that the entire project is expected to be completed in 2030, raising the airport's total area to 325 hectares, providing ample space for the airport's future development, Ma said.

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Simon Chan Weng Hong, the chairman of airport operator CAM's executive committee, speaks to reporters after Friday's groundbreaking ceremony. Chan had headed the Macau Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) since 2006 until March last year.

Scientists seek miracle pill to stop methane cow burps

Julie JAMMOT

DAVIS, United States — A scientist guides a long tube into the mouth and down to the stomach of Thing 1, a two-month-old calf that is part of a research project aiming to prevent cows from burping methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Paulo de Meo Filho, a postdoctoral researcher at University of California, Davis, is part of an ambitious experiment aiming to develop a pill to transform cow gut bacteria so it emits less or no methane.

While the fossil fuel industry and some natural sources emit methane, cattle farming

has become a major climate concern due to the sheer volume of the cows' emissions.

"Almost half of the increase in [global] temperature that we've had so far, it's been because of methane," said Ermias Kebreab, an animal science professor at UC Davis.

Methane, the second largest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide, breaks down faster than CO2 but is more potent.

"Methane lives in the atmosphere for about 12 years" unlike carbon dioxide which persists for centuries, Kebreab said.

"If you start reducing methane now, we can actually see the effect on the

temperature very quickly."

Filho uses the tube to extract liquid from Thing 1's rumen — the first stomach compartment containing partially digested food.

Using the rumen liquid samples, the scientists are studying the microbes that convert hydrogen into methane, which is not digested by the cow but instead burped out.

A single cow will burp roughly 100 kilos of the gas annually.

Thing 1 and other calves receive a seaweed-supplemented diet to reduce methane production.

Scientists hope to achieve similar

results by introducing genetically modified microbes that soak up hydrogen, starving methane-producing bacteria at the source.

However, the team proceeds cautiously.

"We can't just simply cut down methane production by removing" methane-making bacteria, as hydrogen could accumulate to the point of harming the animal, warned Matthias Hess, who runs the UC Davis lab.

"Microbes are kind of social critters. They really like to live together," he said.

"The way they interact and affect each other impacts the overall function of the ecosystem." — AFP

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The Macau Post Daily

Xi vows to strengthen ties with Morocco

President Xi Jinping has underscored China's commitment to supporting Morocco in maintaining its national security and stability, and expressed the country's willingness to work with the North African nation on issues concerning their core interests.

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Developing nations slam 'paltry' US\$300 billion climate deal

The international community approved a bitterly negotiated climate deal yesterday but poorer nations most at the mercy of worsening disasters dismissed a US\$300 billion a year pledge from wealthy historic polluters as insultingly low.

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China's top legislator eyes closer practical cooperation with Portugal in official visit

China's top legislator Zhao Leji paid an official goodwill visit from Thursday to Saturday to Portugal, during which Zhao expressed the readiness to expand bilateral cooperation.

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Xi's LatAm trip reaffirms commitment to global community of shared future



President Xi Jinping's 11-day working visit to Latin America, which ended on Saturday, reaffirmed China's commitment to advancing with its goal of helping establish a global community of shared future.

As Foreign Minister Wang Yi, one of the world's most well-versed diplomats, has pointed out, Xi's tour was "a journey of friendship across mountains and seas, a journey of solidarity to jointly promote development, and a journey of cooperation to expand partnership," during which the Chinese president attended 40 bilateral and multilateral events and reached more than 60 cooperation accords.

The trip, which began in Lima on November 13, comprised two state visits – to Peru and Brazil – and Xi's participation in the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in the Peruvian capital and the 19th G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's former capital, which continues to be the giant nation's premier cultural and tourism hub and second most important city after São Paulo.

During his state visit to Peru, which has a population of 33 million, including some 1.5 million ethnic Chinese, Xi and Peruvian President Dina Boluarte participated on Thursday by video link in the opening of the 15-berth Chancay deep-water port, about 80 kilometres north of Lima on the Pacific Ocean, a US\$1.3 billion investment by China's Cosco Shipping Ports, and inked an agreement to broaden an existing free trade agreement (FTA). According to Cosco, it is South America's first smart and green port.

Xi described the harbour as the start of the 21st-century maritime Silk Road and part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Beijing's modern revival of the ancient Silk Road trading route.

A Cosco Shipping Chancay Peru spokesperson said last week that plans were already on the drawing board to connect the megaport by a railway to neighbouring Brazil, which would further boost its economic importance for trade between China and South America as a whole, which would, no doubt, not only benefit Peru and Brazil.

Peru has a very diverse economy which includes mining and minerals, copper in particular, coffee (I am an aficionado of his high-quality Arabica) and asparagus (another culinary favourite of mine), fishmeal and tourism (the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Machu Picchu citadel springs to mind).

The first Chinese arrived in Peru in the mid-19th century. The Andean country's sizeable and, generally speaking, thriving Chinese community includes the descendants of the victims of Hong Kong and Macau's nefarious Kuli trade, which involved human trafficking, exploitation and debt bondage. One of my first media colleagues and other friends in Macau in the 1980s were returned overseas Chinese from Peru and their local-born offspring who told me about their families' hardship and hard work to achieve better living conditions. That the Chinese diaspora is an industrious one is globally known.

In his address at the APEC summit in Lima, Xi made three proposals – "First, we need to build an open and interconnected paradigm for Asia-Pacific cooperation; Second, we need to make green innovation a catalyst for the Asia-Pacific; Third, we need to uphold a universally beneficial and inclusive vision for Asia-Pacific development."

He also quoted an ancient Chinese adage according to which "a man of virtue, while establishing himself and pursuing success, also works to help others establish themselves and succeed." Consequently, Xi said, "China welcomes all parties to continue riding the 'express train' of its development and grow together with the Chinese economy so that we can all contribute to the modernisation of all countries featuring peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity".

This, of course, should be the transnational development aim of not just the Global South but also the Global North – in order for both – together – to be able to set up a global community of a shared future. Our planet is beset with too many challenges – poverty, the environment, health, education – to continue to be further victimised by ideologically driven

considerations to the detriment of practical solutions, irrespective of the community of sovereign states' different social, political, cultural, religious and, last but not least, value systems.

On the sidelines of the gathering of the 21 APEC member economies' leaders, Xi and US President Joe Biden held, according to Xinhua News Agency, a "candid, profound and constructive" meeting on Saturday

In their meeting, which took place about two months before Biden's relocation from the White House, Xi listed seven points for both sides to draw inspirations from the China-US relations' experiences in the past four years, and, most importantly, the Fourth Point which clearly defines the "four red lines for China".

The seven crucial points for a workable China-US relationship are, according to Xi: "First, it is important to have a correct strategic perception; Second, it is important to match words with actions; Third, it is important to treat each other as equals; **Fourth, it is important not to challenge red lines and paramount principles. Contradictions and differences between two major countries like China and the United States are unavoidable... The Taiwan question, democracy and human rights, China's path and system, and China's development right are four red lines for China. They must not be challenged. These are the most important guardrails and safety nets for China-US relations.**"

Xi's Fourth Point is, in my view, a paragon of the clear-cut expression of a country's realistic and pragmatic approach towards its foreign relations, both on a bilateral and international level. Other countries and organisations should take this as an example of unambiguously stating their red lines, instead of using wishy-washy talk when referring to them on the global stage. I am convinced that the current Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Hamas-Hezbollah conflicts could have been avoided if red lines would have been respected, such as Russia and Israel's legitimate security interests. And now we have a bloody mess in Eastern Europe and the Middle East...

Xi's three others points for China and the US to draw inspections from are: "Fifth, it is important to conduct more dialogue and cooperation; Sixth, it is important to respond to the expectations of the people; Seventh, it is important to set forward to shoulder the responsibilities of major countries."

Xi underlined one of international relations' most basic facts, i.e., that the China-US relationship is critical to humanity's future, and he urged the US to support China peaceful reunification and the Chinese people's right to development." One can only hope that future US

president Donald Trump and his retinue have got the message... and won't repeat the misjudgements that bedevilled China-US relations between 2017-2021, apart from the fact that Biden failed to rectify them during his outgoing four-year term.

In Rio de Janeiro, where he attended the 19th G20 Leaders' Summit, Xi underlined China's eight actions for global development – "First, to pursue high-quality Belt and Road (B&R) cooperation; Second, to implement the [China-proposed] Global Development Initiative [which involves US\$20 billion of development funds]; Third, to support the development of Africa; Fourth, to support international cooperation and poverty reduction and food security [personally, this is one of my dearest concerns regarding humanity's future, alongside environmental protection]; Fifth, China, alongside Brazil, South Africa and the African Union, is proposing an Initiative on International Cooperation in Open Science to help the Global South gain better access to global advances in science, technology and innovation; Sixth, to support the G20 in carrying out practical cooperation for the benefit of the Global South and using such outcomes as the Roadmap to Increase Investment in Clean Energy in Developing Countries and the High-Level Principles on Bioeconomy to good effect; Seventh, to implement the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan; Eighth, China is pursuing high-standard opening up, and unilaterally opening its doors wider to the least developed countries (LDCs)."

Editing the many news dispatches for publication in our newspaper for well over a week about Xi's LatAm tip, I am more convinced than ever that China's foreign ministry is one of the world's best qualified and most well prepared.

Apart from France's centrist President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's central-left Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Argentina's ultra-libertarian President Javier Milei, among others, Xi also held "frank, in-depth and fruitful" talks with the driver of the European Union's economic locomotive, centre-left German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whom he urged, in the wake of Brussels' unwise increase in tariffs on China-made, environmentally friendly electric vehicles recently, to resolve differences between China and the EU via dialogue and consultation.

Xi underlined that China regards Germany, the number three among the world's around 200 economies, as an important partner in advancing Chinese modernisation. It remains to be seen whether Scholz will still work in the chancellery in Berlin after Germany's snap election on February 23. China is Germany's main trading partner, ahead of the US, and the EU is China's number-two trading partner in the EU, following the US. The China-

Germany and China-EU economic ties are much too important to be left to political dilettanti and anti-China ideologues in Brussels or Berlin. The victims would be, among others, Europe's consumers, those with thin wallets in particular.

Following the G20 submit in Rio, Xi visited Brasília for a state visit to Latin America's largest country by population (214 million) and size (8.5 million km²) where he met China's old friend, veteran labour-rights activist and poverty reduction champion Luis Inácio Lula da Silva for talks.

Xi and Lula are the world's poverty-alleviation co-champions.

Both presidents decided in Brasília to establish synergies between China's BRI and Brazil's development strategies. Xi also said that China was ready to work with Brazil as "golden partners" for each other's success.

Lula said that "in a world plagued by armed conflicts and political strife, China and Brazil put peace, diplomacy and dialogue first," and he also stressed Brazil's joint effort with China to end the war in Ukraine, which includes a roadmap for peace.

Xi said that China-Brazil relations "are at their best in history", considering the partnership agreement that he and his host entered into during the state visit.

The first Chinese immigrants, both workers and traders, settled in Brazil in the late 19th century. The country's Chinese diaspora is estimated to have grown to 300,000. São Paulo has the country's largest community whose restaurants play an important role in the multicultural megacity's culinary landscape.

Brazil is not only a founding member of the now nine-member BRICS intergovernmental organisation initiated by China but also one of the original members of the Macau-based Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation Between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries (Forum Macao), one more reason for all of us here to pay close attention to the development of relations between China and Brazil.

Summarising Xi's LatAm tour, Foreign Minister Wang said that the visit again "sent a clear message of firmly upholding multilateralism at the crossroads of human history" ... and "demonstrated China's image as a responsible major country with fairness, justice, courage, openness, and inclusiveness".

I am quite sure that most of the leaders of the APEC economies and G20 member states agree with Wang's assessment. I hope that the Global North's leaders will take heed...

As it may be, Xi's two-nation, two-summit tour reaffirmed China's commitment to seeking a global community of a shared future, the key aspects of which are cooperation, sustainability, peace and security, social justice, and cultural exchange.

– Harald Brüning

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Macau Weather

CLOUDY.
PERIODS OF RAIN.
FORCE 3 TO 4 NORTH TO
NORTHEASTERLY WINDS,
OCCASIONALLY FORCE 5 WITH
GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
WILL RANGE
BETWEEN 70%
AND 98%.



17°C~21°C

Source: SMG

Guangdong-HK-Macau road cycle test runs smoothly

William Chan

The 2024 Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau road cycle race and road cycle test event for the 15th National Games were held yesterday morning.

A total of 23 teams from the mainland, Hong Kong, and Macau, comprising 67 professional male cyclists, participated, with three local cyclists in the mix. The race spanned 230 kilometres, including a 13.5-kilometre section in Macau. Setting off at 9 a.m. from Zhuhai Museum, the cyclists reached the Macau-Zhuhai border at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) at 9:23 a.m., accompanied by police vehicles and ambulances.

After traversing the new Macau Bridge linking Macau Peninsula and Taipa Island, the cyclists turned back upon reaching the Taipa Ferry

Terminal in Pac On, returning to the Macau Bridge and then back to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge around 9:41 a.m. They proceeded to Lantau Island in Hong Kong, after which they returned via the HZMB to Zhuhai City where they passed through Hengqin before ending their trip at their starting point, i.e., Zhuhai Museum.

Despite encountering light rain and wet roads, all cyclists safely completed the local segment of the race, according to the Preparatory Office for the Organisation of the Macau Competition Zone of the 15th National Games and the 12th National Games for People with Disabilities. They noted that the local race predominantly ran across both bridge sections, leading to the decision not to install spectator stands for the official race next



Cyclists cross the Macau-Zhuhai border at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) yesterday morning. – Photo: William Chan

year. Nevertheless, the preparatory office expressed its enthusiasm for spectators to line the route and support the cyclists next year.

Preparatory Office Director Pun Weng Kun cheered on the cyclists at the Zhuhai-Macau border during the rainy test event. Following

the local part of the race's conclusion, he told reporters that the sports authorities of Guangdong Province, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and local governments together invested efforts in coordinating, inspecting on-site, and overcoming various challenges. He underlined the "smooth" progress of the local race section, meeting anticipated objectives.

Regarding the rain at the start of the race, Pun noted that it was actually ideal for testing, as outdoor events need contingency plans for different weather conditions, which would help accumulate experience for the official race next year.

Macau's cyclists, finished the race in 30th place and 53rd place, while the third did not finish (DNF). ■

26 youngsters receive prizes for Macau tourism short video contest

Rui Pastorin

A total of 26 prizes were awarded to youngsters for their submissions in the "Youth Hospitality Activities - Macao Tourism Courtesy Short Video Contest", which drew over 170 entries, the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) said in a statement on Saturday.

A prize-giving ceremony was held on Saturday for the contest,

which is part of the "Together We Deliver Exceptional Hospitality as Tourism Ambassadors" Training Series launched by MGTO in conjunction with integrated resort operator MGM.

The contest aimed to "bring young people closer to tourism, encourage creative productions and cultivate their sense of belonging towards Macau", while adding that the city

was depicted as a "travel destination of warm hospitality, promoting the Macau Courtesy Campaign and reinforcing Macau's status as a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure" through the short videos.

Among the prizes distributed at the Saturday event, which had 100 attendees, were one gold award, two silver awards, three bronze awards, and 20 merit awards.

Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR (MSAR) Yang Quanzhou and MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, along with five members of the judging panel, were present at the ceremony, the statement said.

The contest was co-launched by MGTO and MGM and coordinated by the Macao New Chinese Youth Association, with the full list of winners available on <https://ep.macaotourism.gov.mo/contest-macao-courtesy-2024/?lang=en> ■



This photo provided by MGTO shows winners posing with guests and judges on the sidelines of Saturday's prize giving ceremony for the "Youth Hospitality Activities - Macao Tourism Courtesy Short Video Contest".

Yan beats Figueiredo at UFC Fight Night Macau



Petr Yan of Russia (left) and Deiveson Figueiredo of Brazil battle it out during UFC Fight Night Macau on Saturday at the Galaxy Arena in Cotai. – Photo: Rui Pastorin

Rui Pastorin

Petr "No Mercy" Yan won Saturday's action-packed bout against Brazil's Deiveson "Deus da Guerra" ("God of War") Figueiredo by unanimous decision, marking the Russian professional mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter's 18th win.

Saturday's "UFC Fight Night Macau" was headlined by Yan and Figueiredo and marked the Ultimate Fighting Championship's (UFC) return to Macau since 2014, being the fourth event held in the city and seventh in the whole of China. It was presented by integrated resort operator Galaxy Macau in partnership with the UFC.

The first round of the match mostly stayed on the floor of the Octagon until right near the end when both fighters were again on their feet, quickly picking up from there. Emotions were high as the main event of the night went on, having many close calls as Yan, who is ranked No.3 in the UFC bantamweight division, and Figueiredo, the division's No.5, traded blows and fought hard for the win, which fans at the packed 16,000 seat Galaxy Arena could not get enough of.

By the end of the five-round bout, Yan took home the win by unanimous decision, with the scores being 50-45, 50-45, 50-45, according to the UFC website, which added that this was Yan's second win of the year.

The co-main event, meanwhile, saw the number 2 in the women's strawweight division Yan Xiaonan from the mainland win against number 10 Tabatha Ricci, aka "Baby Shark" from Brazil, bringing her total wins to 19. Yan, who remained the dominant fighter, also won the evening's three-round match by unanimous decision (30-27, 30-27, 30-27).

The main and co-main events were not the only things that kept the excitement up as there were a number of fights leading up to the main event such as a bout between the mainland's Song Kenan against Muslim Salikhov from Russia, which Salikhov ended with a knockout, and the mainland's Wang Cong vs. Gabriella Fernandes from Brazil, who emerged victorious by technical submission. Fight fans cheered on for their favourite fighters across each intense match. ■

Police nab 2 illegal currency exchange dealers for fraud

William Chan

The Judiciary Police (PJ) have arrested two illegal currency exchange dealers from the mainland for defrauding a gambler, PJ spokesman Lou Chan Fai said during a special press conference on Friday.



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the two hooded fraud suspects to a PJ vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. – Photo courtesy of TDM

The suspects are a 27-year-old man surnamed Li and a 32-year-old man surnamed Kang. Both told the police that they're jobless.

According to Lou, on Wednesday afternoon, a mainland male gambler struck a deal with Li online to exchange 965,000 yuan into HK\$1 million. Later, Kang drove Li to a local casino to carry out the exchange. After the victim transferred the yuan, Li claimed there were issues with the transaction and demanded to see the victim's identification documents. As the victim did not have his ID with him, Li refused to give him the money, prompting the victim to report the case to the police.

Police officers who arrived at the scene discovered that Li and Kang did not have any cash on them, but Li's account did receive the transfer from the victim.

Under questioning, both suspects admitted to cheating the victim as well as engaging in illegal currency exchange deals.

The two suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing fraud and illegal currency exchange charges, Lou said. ■

♥ Pui Ching students give their take on the drawbacks to online dating

In a world that is constantly online, finding love or somebody to go on a date with has also followed suit. Perhaps a partner is out there and all you have to do is push a button, “swipe” right or find the right app to meet them in. But are there any drawbacks? Students Alvina, Jayden and Madison from Pui Ching Middle School argue that while there are advantages, there are reasons to exercise caution, with the students expressing their opinions in the following essays submitted to *The Young Post*.

Navigating the risks of online dating

Madison Lau Hao Ieng (S4A)

Recently, online dating has become prevalent due to the development of social media and technology. While this allows more people with compatible personalities to meet, I believe it is a risky method that we should all be aware of.

To begin with, social media and chatting apps are very convenient methods of communicating with people with the same interests as yours. Even if two people live in different countries or even continents, they can easily spend time and talk with each other via apps such as Discord, Instagram and Twitter. This allows those who are unable to find love in real life to have a chance with more people who might just find their personality attractive. You can also search for specific communities online, making it even easier to find a group of people who relate to your hobbies. These online dating platforms can be a place where you feel at home with your own group of friends or find love.

Online dating is extremely risky. First of all, you don't know if the person is truly who they say they are. Scammers can change their profiles, edit photos, or even change their voice using AI to fool you. In lighter cases, there are people who simply pretend to be good looking or rich to find love easier. However, in serious

cases, scammers can trick you into sending them large amounts of money for things such as “emergencies” or “special gifts”. These scammers tend to act like they are in love with you, be affectionate towards you, talk to you for months or even years, just to get you attached and delete their account when your bank account is empty. There are cases where people have been scammed out of thousands and millions of US dollars by online partners, who aren't even who they think they are. Moreover, criminals can put your life in danger through online dating. After being partners for a long period of time, the criminal will request a meet-up. Trusting their long-term love partner, victims agree to see them in real life. While not all meet-ups result in death or danger, it is possible to hear of cases of victims being kidnapped, sexually harassed, injured, or even murdered by the criminals. They learn about their victims through their relationship, gathering information before planning to harm them according to their strengths and weaknesses.

All in all, while it is simple and fast for people to find love online by searching for related groups, it also puts victims at risk of being catfished, scammed or harmed by unethical criminals on the internet. Online dating is convenient, but people should definitely aim for a real-life relationship if possible as it is a safer method.



Online Dating: Love or Loss?

Jayden Leong Cheng Lok (S4A)

The increasing trend of online dating has not only brought true love and friendship to people, but also the swindling of money from silly users. This essay will argue that although online dating can bring true love and relationships, the disadvantages, including being scammed and the risk of losing money, outweigh the advantages.

Firstly, the major advantage of online dating is that it makes it easier to find partners and lovers. Online dating apps help people find partners that possess similar characteristics and personalities, which provide alternative ways for people to find a lover besides in reality. Furthermore, online dating also provides easy access to meet more people. By clicking onto an app, you can get in touch with fascinating new friends online.

However, there are a lot of fake accounts and scammers to fool users. While scrolling through the apps, many people may end up with scammers who advertise themselves as beautiful girls or handsome boys. Often, innocent users are sucked in by them and give away money. Last year in Macau, a 64-year-old woman gave away 3 million patacas to an unknown “Indian prince” who she met online. Additionally, online dating makes many young people lose faith in true love. People who get scammed on the internet are often disappointed and believe that the whole world is scamming them. A recent survey concluded that 18 percent of teenagers will not get married because of their online experiences.

In conclusion, although online dating provides individuals with the opportunity to find partners and friends, I strongly believe that its disadvantages, such as being scammed and the risk of losing money, clearly outweigh the advantages.

To what extent do the advantages of online dating outweigh the disadvantages?

Alvina Cheong Chi Hun (S4B)

In this era, the rapid development of technology has led to the increasing popularity of online dating. While this trend allows people to interact more conveniently and enhances opportunities to meet someone outside your social circle, the drawbacks, particularly in terms of scams and lack of genuine communication, often outweigh the benefits.

First and foremost, the advantages of online dating include providing people with an immediate method to express their feelings and opportunities to meet others. If people do not have time for a traditional date, they can interact with each other using this method. Additionally, individuals are more likely to make new friends online, especially if they are too introverted to engage in real-life conversations. In other

words, introverts can still find like-minded people to start a romantic relationship.

Yet, the disadvantages of this trend should not be neglected. One major concern is that meeting strangers online can be dangerous, as individuals may not know who is actually behind the screen. It is apparent that people can easily fall victim to scams and eventually face safety issues and financial loss. Another evident issue is that romantic relationships require genuine communication and actions; merely texting online cannot meet peoples' expectations. It is essential for couples to hug, hold hands, and so forth. If a relationship depends solely on online dating, it will undeniably not last long.

In conclusion, the disadvantages of online dating outweigh the advantages because they can lead to severe safety concerns and short-lasting relationships.

Mainland duo nabbed for cheating renovators out of HK\$195,000

William Chan

Two men from the mainland have been arrested for cheating five local renovation firms out of a total of HK\$195,000, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Lou Chan Fai said during a special press conference on Friday.

The suspects are a 42-year-old man surnamed Hua and a 34-year-old man surnamed Mei. Both told the police that they're jobless.

According to Lou, earlier this month the police received reports from three of the five victims saying that they had been defrauded by the purported principal of a local school. The "principal" initially called the victims requesting a renovation contract for a school building. Shortly afterwards, the "principal" contacted them again, claiming that the school needed to order mattresses to be donated to a nursing home. Due to a "financial dispute" with the mattress supplier, the "principal" claimed that the school couldn't order the mattresses and requested the victims to assist with the orders.

One of the victims transferred HK\$50,000 to the "principal",

while the other two victims handed over HK\$20,000 and HK\$47,000 respectively to Hua, who claimed to be the driver of the company supposedly supplying the mattresses. Later, the victims lost contact with the "principal". Upon verification with the school, they finally realised that they had been scammed and reported the case to the police.

Hua was arrested while meeting with other potential victims on Wednesday. The police discovered two more victims during the investigation. The five victims were scammed out of a total of HK\$195,000.

Under questioning, Hua told the police that he had given HK\$111,000 to Mei to convert the ill-gotten money into cryptocurrency. Police later apprehended Mei in a guestroom at a Cotai hotel, seizing HK\$1,092,000 in cash from him. Police suspected the money was involved in facilitating illegal currency exchange deals.

The two suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing fraud and illegal currency exchange charges, Lou said. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the two hooded fraud suspects to a PJ vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. – Photo courtesy of TDM

Students admitted with fake certs will have their degrees revoked: UTM rector

Ginnie Liang

Macao University of Tourism (UTM) Rector Fanny Vong Chuk Kwan said on Friday that once the academic qualification of a student has been verified as fraudulent, his or her degree will be revoked even after graduation and the culprit will even be held criminally liable.

Vong made the remarks when addressing a current affairs phone-in programme, Ou Mun Gwong Cheung, hosted by Ou Mun Tin Toi – the Chinese-language radio channel of public broadcaster TDM, which discussed the recent fake certs cases.

Four mainland students were arrested earlier this month for allegedly using fake Hong Kong academic qualifications to enrol in the private Macao University of Science and Technology (MUST), while another 20 students allegedly involved in the suspected fraud have reportedly returned to the mainland.

Vong said that the UTM has a strict admissions procedure and has no tolerance for deception and fake academic qualifications. She said that there are many official channels to verify the academic qualifications of students, whether the students studied in the mainland or abroad.

Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Director Kong Chi Meng said during Friday's programme that academic certificates and transcripts with a higher degree of forgery have recently appeared, and there are also new guidelines that make use of new tactics to prevent them, adding that the bureau will strengthen its cooperation with international examination bodies in the hope that they will provide



Macao University of Tourism (UTM) Rector Fanny Vong Chuk Kwan (left), University of Macau (UM) Acting President Xu Jingwen (second from left), Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Director Kong Chi Meng (second from right), and Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) Acting President Lei Ngan Lin pose on Friday during the current affairs phone-in programme, Ou Mun Gwong Cheung, hosted by Ou Mun Tin Toi – the Chinese-language radio channel of public broadcaster TDM. – Photo courtesy of TDM

official verification channels, or that the bodies will send student results directly to local universities to further intercept the falsification of academic qualifications.

Acting President of the University of Macau (UM) Xu Jingwen said on Friday that in some cases, the biggest problem are the intermediaries, and the students are victims to a certain extent, and he called on parents of students applying for admission to local universities not to believe in the intermediaries' claims of "guaranteed admission", and emphasised the fairness and impartiality of the UM's admission procedures.

Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) Acting President Lei Ngan Lin said that MPU attaches importance to the quality and gate-keeping of enrolment, stressing that

the university has not commissioned any organisation or individual to act as enrolment agents.

Kong added that the bureau has always disallowed students and universities to enrol and recruit students through intermediaries, and that a number of local universities have already confirmed fake cert incidents, and that they do not rule out the possibility of discovering more false academic qualifications.

Kong said that once a fake academic qualification is discovered, the bureau will "certainly" cancel the students' registration, degree and hold them legally responsible, and will also notify each culprit's place of origin, which he described as "a heavy price to pay", adding that students and parents should not believe that intermediaries provide one-stop services for admission. ■

'Happy Family Months' holds over 400 activities in May-Nov: IAS

Ginnie Liang

Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) Deputy Director Daniel Tang Iok Wa said yesterday that this year's Happy Family Months programme, with the objective of promoting the integration of the young and the old, supporting the participation of senior citizens and enhancing families' parenting function, had launched more than 400 family-themed activities from May to November.

Tang made the remarks an exhibition event at the Macau Science Centre (MSC) yesterday showcasing the achievements of the raft of activities on the promotion of family and community service, with the attendance of representatives from more than 40 social service agencies and over 80 family groups, totalling 800 attendees.

Yesterday's event featured parent-child immersive interactive theatre, game booths, a display of artwork on family education and the premiere of a microfilm.

This year's Happy Family Months series of activities, under the theme of "Family Joy•Love Transmission", focused on the relationship between family members of different generations, Tang said.

The activities included community carnivals, parent-child workshops, cooking activities for couples, online games, community tours and visits, which attracted more than 100,000 participants, according to Tang.

Tang underlined that with the changes in the family structure and Macau's socio-economic conditions, the needs of families for social services are becoming more diversified.

Tang said the bureau would continue to cooperate with various public entities, social organisations and private enterprises to develop more diversified and innovative social services, so as to promote the ideal living conditions for happy families and the establishment of a "Happy Macau".

In addition, the bureau and social service organisations will launch a number of promotional activities on family sex education as well as

a resource kit to support parents in acquiring basic knowledge and skills to teach sex education within the family.

Members of the public are welcome to visit the "Macau Family Life Education Information" website at macaufamilylife.com. ■



Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) Deputy Director Daniel Tang Iok Wa (front, fourth from left) and other government officials, representatives from more than 40 social service agencies and more than 80 family groups, pose for a group photo during the bureau's family and community services achievements showcase activity at the Macau Science Centre (MSC) yesterday. – Photo: IAS

Macau's value of retail sales drops 16.0 pct in Jan-Oct

Staff Reporter

Macau's Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) announced last week that the value of retail sales decreased by 16.9 percent year-on-year to 53.48 billion patacas in the first three quarters of the year, corresponding to 95 percent of the level in the same period in pre-pandemic 2019. In the third quarter, the value of retail sales totalled 16.59 billion patacas, up by 2.5 percent as compared with the revised figure (16.19 billion patacas) in the second quarter but down by 15.5 percent year-on-year.

According to a DSEC statement on Thursday, the value of retail sales for the first three quarters dropped by 16.9 percent year-on-year; sales values of Watches, Clocks & Jewellery, Leather Goods and Communication Equipment fell by 26.6, 24.4 and 24.3 percent respectively, while the sales value of Motor Vehicles increased by 14.4 percent. Meanwhile, the average sales volume index for the first three quarters went down by 21.2 percent year-on-year after removing the effect of price changes; the indices of Watches, Clocks & Jewellery (-35.3 pct), Leather Goods (-26.6 pct) and Communication Equipment (-24.1 pct) saw significant year-on-year drop, whereas the index of Motor Vehicles rose by 15 percent.

In the third quarter, the value of retail sales fell by 15.5 percent year-on-year, with decreases in the



A pedestrian walks past a shop popular with tourists in the city centre on Friday. — Photo: Carl Leong

sales values of Watches, Clocks & Jewellery (-30.9 pct), Leather Goods (-26.5 pct) and Cosmetics & Sanitary Articles (-23.7 pct); on the other hand, sales values of Motor Vehicles (+37.6 pct) and Communication Equipment (+21.7 pct) increased. Meanwhile, the sales volume index for the third quarter dropped by 19.1 pct year-on-year; the indices of Watches, Clocks & Jewellery (-42.8 pct), Leather Goods (-27.1 pct) and Cosmetics & Sanitary Articles (-25.2 pct) showed a notable fall, whereas the indices of Motor Vehicles (+38.3 pct) and Communication Equipment (+21.6 pct) registered growth.

In respect of retailers' comments, 45.3 pct of the retailers anticipated a year-on-year decrease in sales volume in the fourth quarter of 2024, 39.5 pct expected the sales volume to stay stable and 15.2 pct forecast an increase. Meanwhile, 68.8 pct of the retailers predicted

that the retail prices would remain steady year-on-year in the fourth quarter, 22.2 pct foresaw a decrease and 9 pct expected an increase. As compared with the third quarter of 2024, about 40.4 pct of the retailers expected stable business performance in the fourth quarter, 38.6 pct envisaged a slowdown and 21 pct anticipated a favourable outlook.

N.B. Sales value refers to the total monetary amount generated from sales. It is calculated by multiplying the selling price of each unit by the number of units sold. Sales volume refers to the total number of units sold within a specific period. It focuses on the quantity rather than the monetary value. Sales value is often used to assess profitability and revenue trends, while sales volume is useful for understanding market demand and inventory management. — Source: Poe ■

Non-gaming industries account for 61.7 pct of Macau's Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2023: DSEC

Staff Reporter

Macau's Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) announced on Friday that the Gross Value Added (GVA)* of the city's tertiary sector, i.e., its service sector, such as wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and similar activities, financial activities and gaming, rose by 76.4 percent year on year in real terms in 2023, driven by a 395 percent growth in the number of visitor arrivals.

Its relative importance in the industrial structure, according to a DSEC statement, grew by 3.6 percentage points to 94.4 percent. GVA of the secondary sector, e.g., industrial production, manufacturing and construction, rose by 6.8 percent in real terms, while its relative importance in the industrial structure dropped by 3.6 percentage points to 5.6 percent. Analysed by economic activity, GVA of non-gaming industries increased by 20.7 percent year on year in real terms to 220.7 billion patacas, which accounted for 61.7 percent of Macau's total GVA, up by 12.9 percentage points compared to 2019.

Tertiary sector's GVA showed a real growth of 76 percent, rising to 95 pct

GVA of all economic activities expanded by 70.0 percent year on year in real terms, underpinned by the resumption of local economic activities. GVA of the tertiary sector soared by 76.4 percent in real terms on account of the revival of tourism activity, with GVA of most of the economic activities recording year-on-year growth. A notable rise was recorded in the GVA of tourism-related industries such as Gaming (+354.8 pct), Restaurants & Similar Activities (+112.5 pct), Hotels & Similar Activities (+88.1 pct) and Wholesale & Retail Trade (+79.4 pct). Meanwhile, GVA of the secondary sector increased by 6.8 percent in real terms, with that of the Manufacturing sector, the Electricity,

Gas & Water Supply sector and the Construction sector rising by 42.7 pct, 8.1 pct and 1.6 pct respectively.

As regards industrial structure, the relative importance of the tertiary sector expanded by 3.6 percentage points year on year to 94.4 percent due to a relatively large growth in GVA, whereas the relative importance of the secondary sector decreased by 3.6 percentage points to 5.6 percent. With respect to the structure of economic activities, the share of the Gaming sector (38.3 percent) rebounded by 23.5 percentage points; meanwhile, the share of the non-gaming industries receded to 61.7 percent, which represented an increase of 12.9 percentage points when compared to 2019. The proportions of Hotels & Similar Activities (5.9 pct) and Restaurants & Similar Activities (2.1 pct), which are under the tertiary sector, grew by 3.5 percentage points and 0.4 percentage points respectively year-on-year. On the other hand, the proportions of the Construction sector (4.0 pct), the Electricity, Gas & Water Supply sector (0.9 pct) and the Manufacturing sector (0.8 pct), which are in the secondary sector, decreased by 2.9 percentage points, 0.5 percentage points and 0.1 percentage point respectively.

**Gross Value Added (GVA) is an economic measure that represents the value of goods and services produced in an area, sector, or economy, minus the value of goods and services used in production.*

GVA can be calculated using the formula: GVA = Gross Output - Intermediate Consumption, where Gross Output includes the total value of production, and Intermediate Consumption comprises the costs of materials and services consumed in the production process. GVA is closely related to Gross Domestic Product (GDP); GDP can be derived from GVA by adding taxes and subtracting subsidies on products. — Source: Poe ■

Airport's expansion starts, aiming for 2030 completion

Continued from p.1

Ma also said that after the completion of the reclamation project, the airport's passenger-handling capacity, in the first phase, will increase to 13 million per year.

During the ceremony, Chan delivered a presentation about the airport's reclamation and expansion project.

Chan said that the reclamation project will expand the airport's apron and build two new taxiways, which are expected to be completed in 2028, after which the two current taxiways will be demolished.

Chan noted that new aircraft stands and various other new ancillary facilities will be built on the newly expanded apron.

Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, Chan noted that the airport's expansion project will ultimately enable its annual passenger-handling capacity to increase to up to 15 million.

Chan said that after the reclamation and expansion project's scheduled completion in 2030, the airport will not immediately make use of all the newly available space generated by the reclamation, because of which, he said, the airport's annual passenger-handling capacity is expected to increase to 13 million in the first phase after the reclamation and expansion project's completion, only after which the airport will build more facilities on the newly available space in

due course in line with its business development and Macau's economic development, which will ultimately raise its annual passenger-handling capacity to up to 15 million.

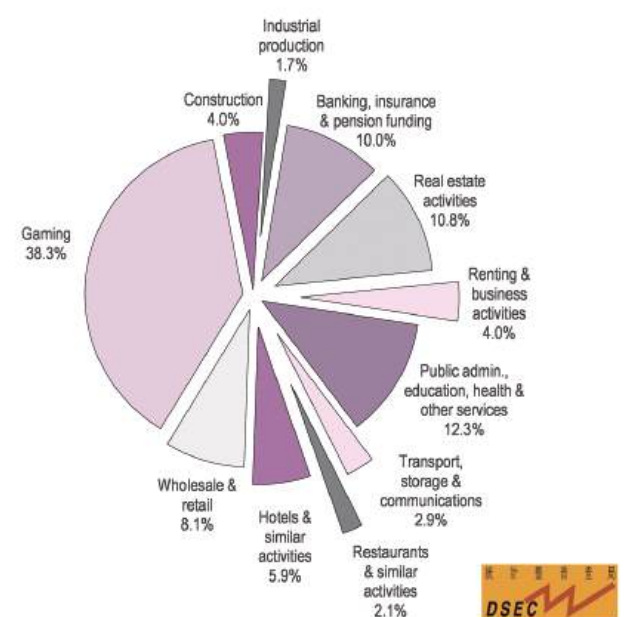
Chan noted that the airport's current annual passenger-handling capacity stands at 10 million.

The airport's designed maximum capacity had been six million passengers per year since it started operating in November 1995, before its passenger terminal building was expanded in 2018 when the maximum capacity was raised to 7.8 million passengers per year. The terminal building underwent another expansion in 2020 and it was completed in 2022, raising the capacity to 10 million. ■



An Air China Airbus A330 aircraft arrives at the local airport on Friday from Hangzhou. The wide-body aeroplane has been leased to Air Macau since earlier this year for operating its regular passenger flights between Macau and Hangzhou and between Macau and Beijing. — Photo: Tony Wong

Structure of economic activities at current producers' prices by the production approach in 2023



Note: Due to rounding, total may not correspond to the sum of partial figures.