

Sam vows to tackle most important issues affecting residents



Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai (centre) addresses yesterday's press conference at Government Headquarters, flanked by the 10 top officials of his incoming administration (from left to right), Leong Man Cheong, Ao leong Seong, Raymond Tam Vai Man, Wong Sio Chak, André Cheong Weng Chon, Tai Kin Ip, O Lam, Chan Tsz King, Elsie Ao leong U, and Adriano Marques Ho. - Photo: Tony Wong

Tony Wong
Addressing yesterday's press conference about his team of top officials, Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai said that his incoming administration will, after taking office, first roll out and implement new measures to tackle issues generally regarded by the population as the most important ones, while also underlining that all his team members, who have been appointed by the central government based on his choices, meet all his requirements for Macau's top officials.

Sam said that his team of top officials is equipped with extensive managerial experience in public administration while also having a good understanding of Macau's current social situation and residents' views in various aspects.

The State Council appointed on Saturday the nine principal officials and the chief public prosecutor of the incoming government of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR), which will be headed by Sam Hou Fai from December 20 (see another story). The central government made the appointments of the 10 top officials based Sam's nominations.

Following their official appointments by the central government on Saturday, Sam formally presented the 10 top officials during the press conference at Government Headquarters yesterday morning.

Sam and his 10 top officials will be sworn 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.

During the press conference, Sam expressed his gratitude to the central government for its confidence and support as it accepted his nominations for the principal officials of his incoming government and the prosecutor-general (the official title of Macau's chief public prosecutor).

During yesterday's press conference, Sam delivered a speech before answering questions from the media, after which the 10 top officials individually delivered their respective speeches and responded to reporters' questions. The press conference lasted two hours in total.

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Plastic pollution talks fail to reach landmark deal

BUSAN – Deeply divided negotiators failed yesterday to reach a landmark global treaty to curb plastic pollution, missing a self-imposed deadline, and agreed to extend their talks.

For a week, delegates from nearly 200 nations meeting in South Korea have wrestled with how to stop millions of tonnes of plastic waste entering the environment each year.

Plastic pollution is so ubiquitous that

microplastics have been found on the highest mountain peak, in the deepest ocean trench and scattered throughout almost every part of the human body.

Two years ago, countries agreed they would find a way to address the crisis by the end of 2024.

But a week of talks in Busan has failed to resolve deep divisions between "high-ambition" countries seeking a globally

binding agreement to limit production and phase out harmful chemicals, and "like-minded", mostly oil-producing nations that want to focus on waste.

A draft text released yesterday afternoon after multiple delays included a wide range of options, reflecting ongoing disagreement.

And chair Luis Vayas Valdivieso acknowledged last night that "a few critical issues still prevent us from

reaching a comprehensive agreement."

"These unresolved issues remain challenging and additional time will be needed to address them effectively," he said.

"There is a general agreement to resume the current session at a later date to conclude our negotiations."

Several nations took to the floor to support the call for more time – but their agreement ended there. -AFP

China boosts AIDS prevention with timely post-exposure care

"Amid a chaotic struggle, a police officer was accidentally scratched by a drug dealer known to be HIV-positive," a university student retold the medical information he had memorized in just 30 seconds.

- Story on p. 7

White House says 'not there yet' on Gaza ceasefire and hostage deal

The White House is working on a ceasefire and hostage release deal in Gaza but is "not there yet," the US National Security Advisor told NBC yesterday.

- Story on p. 11

António Costa: Portuguese dealmaker enters EU lion's den

Former Portuguese prime minister António Costa is hoping to bring his reputation as an affable deal-broker to bear in one of the EU's trickiest gigs – trying to build agreement among the bloc's fractious leaders.

- Story on p. 12

Sam's team pledges solution-focused, people-centred approach



Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai's 10 member-team, which was introduced to the public during a two-hour press conference at Government Headquarters in Nam Van yesterday morning, promised one by one, much to my satisfaction, a solution-focused and people-orientated approach.

This is in line with President Xi Jinping's people-centred development philosophy which has benefited the nation for more than a decade.

It is also in accordance with Sam's election manifesto, which stressed the importance of serving the population by tackling social and economic issues and focusing on solving their problems.

In his speech at the press conference, Sam underlined his team members' proven patriotism, love of Macau, governance capacity, readiness to accept accountability and commitment to team spirit, among other aspects. He also stressed his team's professionalism and hands-on experience gained over many years.

All his team members – nine principal officials and Macau's chief public prosecutor – are public servants who have accumulated considerable experience in the Public Administration, law enforcement and Judiciary. Their age ranges between 40 and 64. The team includes three females, two of whom will head the Macau Special Administrative Region's (MSAR) Commission of Audit (CA) and Commission Against Corruption (CCAC).

The team includes the government's five policy secretaries who, according to Article 8 of the Government Organisation Framework Law, must be permanent residents who have lived habitually at least 15 consecutive years in Macau. Unlike for the chief executive, who must have lived habitually in Macau for at least 20 years and be aged at least 40 at the time of his or her appointment by the State Council, there is no statutory minimum age for the policy secretaries.

The newly appointed officials and the prosecutor general will take office on December 20, coinciding with the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the MSAR.

Unlike in the Hong Kong SAR, the MSAR's principal officials do not include a chief secretary. The portfolios of Macau's secretaries are subject to the policies formally delegated to them by the chief executive, who is assisted by an advisory Executive Council. The policy secretaries are listed in terms of the protocol order of precedence. In terms of political hierarchy, they are equals among equals.

According to Article 4 of Government Organisation Framework Law, the MSAR's principal officials are its secretaries, commissioners against corruption and of audit, and those overseeing Macau's police – the Unitary Police Service – and customs. Its Article 5 lists the government's five secretariats and their order of precedence, namely for Administration and Justice, Economy and Finance, Security, Social Affairs and Culture, and Transport and Public Works.

While the number of secretariats is fixed by law, it is up to the chief executive to determine the bureaus and other public entities that each of them oversees, which may change over the years. For instance, in the past the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) was moved – reasonably so, I think – from the Social Affairs and Culture to the Economy and Finance portfolio. It remains to be seen whether Sam has any such changes in mind for his upcoming administration. He and his nine principal officials as well as Macau's chief public prosecutor will be solemnly sworn in on December 20.

Unlike in Hong Kong, Macau's chief public prosecutor – the Public Prosecutor-General – is not a principle official of the executive but belongs to the Judiciary, according to Section 4 of the Macau Basic Law. Notwithstanding, his or her appointment is proposed by Macau's chief executive to the State Council.

In order words, Macau is not ruled by a Cabinet but by a chief executive assisted by nine principal officials.

This system goes back to Macau's years under temporary

Portuguese administration when the Lisbon-appointed governor was the personification of the local government who was assisted by more than five "secretaries-adjunct", whose number was limited at "no more than seven" by the Macau Organic Statute (EOM), in running the city.

When I asked one of Macau's pre-handover governors how he would define the local government, he said: "Well, in all modesty, that's me". He asked me not to quote him by name. I will keep my promise.

Unlike governments elsewhere, Macau's does not have a Cabinet. The job of the five secretaries and four other principal officials is to assist the chief executive, the "highest leader" of the MSAR, according to Article 2 of the Government Organisation Framework Law (formally known as Law No.2/1999), in implementing his or her policies. Macau has had executive-led political system since prior to the 1999 resumption of the exercise of Chinese sovereignty over the territory (Portugal had unilaterally relinquished its sovereignty shortly after its anti-colonial Carnation Revolution in April 1974, while China until December 20, 1999 had refrained from exercising it). That is to say, the chief executive is Macau's policy setter. His principal officials are his or her policy implementers – nothing more, nothing less but still no mean feat.

Considering the CVs of the 10 officials appointed by the State Council on Saturday, I am convinced that, generally speaking, we can expect them to do well, which is what one would expect from them – executing Sam's policy guidelines in an efficient, transparent and pragmatic way. There are loads of challenges that Macau is facing – its daily road traffic and public transport nightmare fraying the nerves of

residents and visitors alike, public health and hospital services that require further upgrades (even though I do not have any adverse experience myself as far as our public health service is run, each time I am at the public S. Januário Hospital Centre, as a patient or visitor, I can't help but wonder when it will undergo a major renovation, such as its rather uncomfortable waiting areas for patients and their families). The new government also needs, in my view, to speed up, as far as this is possible, Macau's economic diversification, regional integration, talent acquisition and high-tech innovation processes, as well as help civil society develop an entrepreneurial spirit, considering that our economy has traditionally been dominated by merchants buying and selling goods, unlike entrepreneurs who, by taking financial risks, aim to develop new products and launch innovative services. The evolution of a culture of up-to-date entrepreneurship, such as by supporting high-tech startups, remains a major challenge for Macau's future economic development.

Sam and his team will certainly face a raft of issues and challenges on the economic and social development front to get to grips with over the next five years. However, unlike their counterparts elsewhere, they won't, I am quite sure, face political problems domestically. Loving China and Macau is a matter of fact for virtually everyone in Macau – including, as far as I know, the large majority of Macau's expatriate community.

However, the ongoing international turmoil could, we must realistically admit, have an adverse impact on Macau's stability and prosperity even in the short term. Let's see how the Trump administration and Biden legacy, armed conflict in various parts of the world involving major powers and

military alliances, will pan out over the next few years. All this could affect Macau's external trade and tourism flows. That's why national security matters and economic and financial policies must continue to be handled in a particularly prudent manner.

The best that the incoming Sam administration can give Macau is continued stability and prosperity in conjunction with careful planning to further strengthen Macau's integration into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA), including the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

All this will need time to bear fruit. Macau people accustomed to their long-held view that everything must be "convenient" ("fongbihn" in Cantonese), i.e., conveniently close, easy and familiar, still need time to step out of their little comfort zone (33.3 km²) and accept the fact that their city has already become an integral part of a much larger area covering 56,000 km² – the 11-city GBA. Even Hengqin (105 km²) alone is three times larger than Macau.

First and foremost, this is a psychological obstacle that needs to be overcome gradually.

I expect our future chief executive to keep a steady hand on the tiller. I regard strict organisational control and discipline as the sine qua non for successful governance.

Anyhow, I wish our future chief executive and his team all the best. And I also would like to thank the outgoing chief executive, Ho Iat Seng, and his team for their hard work during a particularly difficult term as three of his five years at the helm of the local government included the troublesome (that's almost an understatement) COVID-19 pandemic that, after all, Macau managed to get through relatively unscathed.

– Harald Brüning

Nov generates third lowest casino takings this year, down 11.3 pct month on month

Staff Reporter

Macau's 30 casinos generated gross gaming revenue (GGR) of 18.43 billion patacas last month, a year-on-year growth of 14.9 percent, the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) announced yesterday.

However, GGR in November fell by 11.30 percent month on month, from 20.78 billion patacas in September.

Last month's GGR was the third lowest so far this year, after June's 17.69 billion patacas and September's 17.25 billion patacas.

In the first 10 months of the year, GGR grew by 26.8 percent to 208.58 billion patacas.

The government's GGR aim for this year is 216 billion patacas,

a figure that is just eight billion patacas of the 216-billion pataca target and, therefore, certain to be easily exceeded. In December last year, GGR amounted to 18.5 billion patacas.

Macau's government-concessioned gaming industry is run by six rival integrated resort (IR) operators – Sands, Galaxy, SJM, Melco, Wynn, and MGM. Under their concession agreements with the government, the IR operators are required to strengthen their non-gaming attractions and support Macau's cultural heritage promotion and old quarter renovation projects. The operators pay 35 percent of their GGR as direct gaming tax to the government, aside from an

additional 5.0 percent in levies for funding a range of public causes. However, the gaming law, amended in 2022, allows the government to lower the additional levies (officially termed "contributions") for a raft of reasons, such as for operators expanding their foreign client markets or when they have to cope with unforeseen adverse developments affecting their business operations.

In the first three quarters of the year, according to the latest available official gaming statistics, baccarat generated 85.0 percent of local casinos' GGR, among over a dozen games of chance. Gaming machines produced 5.6 percent of GGR between January and September this year. ■

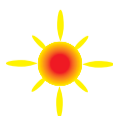
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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

FINE.
FORCE 2 TO 3 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 55% AND 90%.



16°C~24°C

Source: SMG

Russia's Morozova, Ethiopia's Debele win Galaxy Entertainment Macao int'l marathon



Ethiopia's Fikadu Debele wins the men's category of yesterday's 2024 Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon at the Olympic Sports Centre Stadium in Taipa. - Photos: ID

Alexandara Morozova of Russia wins the women's marathon category yesterday.

Rui Pastorin

The 2024 Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon concluded yesterday, with Ethiopia's Fikadu Debele again winning the men's full marathon, while Russia's Alexandra Morozova won the women's category, according to a Sports Bureau (ID) statement.

The marathon was entitled "Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and the

25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Macao Special Administrative Region - 2024 Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon".

The statement said that Debele, last year's winner, finished with a time of 2:12:16, while Morozova completed the marathon at 2:34:22. According to the event website, the prize money for the winners of the full marathon is US\$40,000 each.

The second and third place winners in the men's category were Anderson Seroi from Kenya and Ethiopian Mesfin Bekele respectively, while Kenyans Rodah Tanui and Tecla Kirongo took second and third place in the women's category, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, in the Macao athlete category, the statement said that the top three in the men's category were Wang Kun, Fong Ieng Wai and Leong Kin Kei, while

the top three in the women's category were Wu Yangyang, Chio Tong Tong and Xu Zhonghuang.

The statement added that Wang broke the Macao record with a time of 2:24:35.

Race results and the winners of other categories can be found on www.macaomarathon.com, while one can download photos and certificates on www.marathon-photos.com starting from December 13, the statement said. ■

29/11
2024

2/3
2025

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Sam vows to tackle most important issues affecting residents



Secretary for Administration and Justice (reappointed)
André Cheong Weng Chon



Secretary for Economy and Finance-designate
Tai Kin Ip



Secretary for Security (reappointed)
Wong Sio Chak



Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture-designate
O Lam



Secretary for Transport and Public Works-designate
Raymond Tam Vai Man



Commissioner Against Corruption-designate
Ao Ieong Seong



Commissioner of Audit-designate
Elsie Ao Ieong U



Unitary Police Service Commissioner-General (reappointed)
Leong Man Cheong



Macau Customs Service Director-General-designate
Adriano Marques Ho



Prosecutor-General-designate
Chan Tsz King

– Photo: GCS

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In his speech, Sam underlined that the 10 top officials fully meet the requirements he previously mentioned as necessary for those serving the positions, including patriotism and love for Macau; holding a holistic view of the nation's overall development; a commitment to serving the population; team spirit; and governance capability and a sense of shouldering responsibilities, he said.

Sam noted that all his team members come from the public administration, with some of them being principal officials of the current government, while one of them, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak, has even been a principal official since the previous government term which ran between December 2014 and December 2019.

Sam noted that the newcomers to the incoming government's principal officials are all top officials of bureaus or similar entities, adding that they have a strong professional background, have served civil society for many years in their capacity of various positions, and have gained extensive managerial experience in public administration. Consequently, Sam said, they are all familiar with government operations and have a good understanding of Macau's current social situation and public sentiment, which he said will help ensuring a smooth transition from the outgoing to the incoming administration.

Sam also underlined that after taking office, his administration will first roll out and implement new measures to tackle issues generally regarded by the population as the most important ones, while also pushing ahead with its key tasks aiming to promote Macau's long-term development, such

as the improvements in the well-being of Macau's population, appropriate economic diversification, enhancing governance capability, safeguarding national security, and the participation in the development of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Sam pledged that his administration will strengthen research studies with the aim of gaining a better understanding of Macau's social situation, and collect residents' opinions more extensively.

Sam said that his team was determined to resolve the deep-rooted problems that are hindering Macau's development.

Replying to media questions, Sam said that the composition of his team, i.e., which includes five newcomers to the rank of principal officials, will enable his incoming administration to push ahead with new governance while also continuing with the current measures and policies launched by the current government.

Sam also underlined that the professionalism and characters of his administration's top officials are widely recognised in civil society.

During the press conference, the officials expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Central People's Government for their appointments. They also thanked the Chief Executive-designate, for the trust shown in them. They spoke one after another during the press conference.

Reappointed Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon said that in the new government, he would work in line with the philosophy of "Striving Together, Upholding Integrity and Innovating", in

order to refine the MSAR's legal system for safeguarding national security, as well as enhance the quality of public governance capabilities and governance standards through administrative reforms.

Secretary for Economy and Finance-designate Tai Kin Ip said that he would spare no effort in using his experience and knowledge accumulated over the years in the financial and economic fields to serve the nation and Macau.

Reappointed Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak expressed his commitment to continuing to implement a people-first modern policing model established over the past five years. He also said that he would continue to uphold, in a proactive manner, the holistic view of national security, along with social order and public safety, adding that over the next five years, he would be guided by the principles of "Striving Together, Upholding Integrity and Innovating", reviewing shortcomings, being vigilant, and taking responsibility.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture-designate O Lam pointed out that work in the social and cultural sector is closely related to people's livelihoods. The incoming chief executive placed great emphasis on this sector in his policy agenda, demonstrating his high degree of focus. She also said her goal was to achieve a vibrant Macau, a Macau of culture, and a happy Macau, so that the city can achieve high-quality development under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

Secretary for Transport and Public Works-designate Raymond Tam Wai Man stressed that the work in the transportation and public works field covers various aspects of civil

society and people's livelihoods. He said he would uphold scientific and innovative thinking, professionalism, and a pragmatic attitude.

Prosecutor-General-designate Chan Tsz King said that he would prioritise upholding national sovereignty, security, and development interests as the highest principles. He would do everything in his power to lead a group of judicial officers to enforce the law rigorously and fairly, ensuring justice.

Commissioner Against Corruption-designate Ao Ieong Seong said that she and her staff would fully cooperate with Sam's governance philosophy of building a clean, just, efficient, and fair rule-of-law society, and enhance the building of integrity.

Commissioner of Audit-designate Elsie Ao Ieong U said that there was a higher expectation from the general public regarding audit work, especially in terms of performance audits. In the future, she would lead her team with a professional, independent, responsible, and objective attitude, to complete its work.

Reappointed Commissioner General of the Unitary Police Service (UPS) Leong Man Cheong said that he would live up to his mission, strive together with his team, have the courage to shoulder responsibilities, and resolutely fulfil statutory duties.

Macau Customs Service Director-General-designate Adriano Marques Ho vowed to safeguard national security, prevent terrorist activities; combat smuggling; enhance customs clearance capabilities, assist Macau in better integrating into the nation's overall development; and promote the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. ■

Beijing appoints Sam's 9 top officials, chief prosecutor

2 policy secretaries, police head reappointed

Tony Wong

The State Council has appointed the nine principal officials and the chief public prosecutor of the incoming government of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR), which will be headed by Sam Hou Fai from December 20, with only three reappointed, among them two of the government's five policy secretaries.

The three reappointed officials are Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak, and Unitary Police Service (SPU) Commissioner-General Leong Man Cheong.

The central government made the appointments of the 10 top officials on Saturday based on their nomination by Chief Executive-designate Sam Hou Fai.

Xinhua released a dispatch about the central government's appointments of the 10 top officials on Saturday afternoon, shortly after which the local government issued a statement about the appointments via the Government Information Bureau (GCS), which later also published a separate statement about the 10 officials' CVs.

The new team comprises seven males and three females – the future secretary for social affairs and culture, the commissioner against corruption, and the commissioner of audit.

Sam, 62, will become the MSAR's sixth-term and fourth chief executive on December 20, the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland.

In the sixth-term MSAR government, André Cheong Weng Chon, 58, has been reappointed as the secretary for administration and justice.

Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) Director Tai Kin Ip, 56, will replace Lei Wai Nong as the secretary for economy and finance.

Wong Sio Chak, 56, has been reappointed as the secretary for security.

Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) Vice President O Lam, 50, will replace Elsie Ao Ieong U as the secretary for social affairs and culture.

O is one of the current two IAM vice-presidents.

Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) Director Raymond Tam Vai Man, 64, will replace Raimundo do Rosário as the secretary for transport and public works.

Ao Ieong Seong, 40, one of the current two assistant, i.e., deputy, commissioners against corruption, has been promoted to the commissioner, replacing Chan Tsz King.

Ao Ieong Seong is the youngest among the 10 top officials of Sam's incoming administration.

Elsie Ao Ieong U, 56, the current secretary for social affairs and culture, will replace Ho Veng On as the commissioner of audit.

Leong Man Cheong, 60, has been reappointed as the commissioner-general of the Unitary Police Service (SPU).

Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) Director Adriano Marques Ho, aka Ho Hou Hon, 57, will replace Vong Man Chong as the director-general of the Macau Customs Service.

Chan Tsz King, 54, the current commissioner against corruption, will replace Ip Son Sang as the prosecutor-general (chief public prosecutor) of the Public Prosecutions Office (MP).

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



Journalists attend yesterday's press conference when Sam presented the 10 top officials of his incoming administration. – Photo: GCS

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

According to the MSAR Basic Law's Article 50 and the current structure of the local government, the MSAR'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.

The MSAR's first chief executive, Edmund Ho Hau Wah, served the city for two consecutive five-year terms between December 20, 1999 and December 19, 2009, while his predecessor, Fernando Chui Sai On, also served two consecutive five-year terms, between December 20, 2009 and December 19, 2019. Current Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, who has been serving the MSAR since December 20, 2019, announced in August that for health reasons he had decided not to seek a second five-year terms. According to the MSAR Basic Law, Macau's chief executive can serve no more than two consecutive five-year terms.

The MSAR was established by the People's Republic of China (PRC) on December 20, 1999.

André Cheong Weng Chon – reappointed administration & justice secretary

Cheong, born in Beijing, had been the director of the Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ) since 2000 until December 20, 2014 when he became the commissioner against corruption for Chui's second-term administration. He was appointed as the secretary for administration and justice for the current administration headed by Ho Iat Seng. Cheong, who on Saturday was reappointed for Sam's incoming administration, holds a bachelor's degree in Portuguese Language Studies from Beijing Foreign Studies University and a bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from the University of Macau (UM).

Tai Kin Ip – new economy & finance secretary

Tai, born in Macau, began working for the Economic Services Bureau (DSE), the predecessor of the current Economic and Technological Development Bureau

(DSEDT), in 1995 where he was an acting deputy director between 2000 and 2009, when he was appointed as a deputy director, a position which he held until 2016 when he became the bureau's director. Tai holds a bachelor's degree in Economics from the Catholic University of Portugal and a master's degree in Government Studies from Macau's Catholic University of Saint Joseph (USJ).

Wong Sio Chak – reappointed security secretary

Wong, born in Guangdong Province, began working in the Judiciary Police (PJ) in 1994 and became a prosecutor in 1997. He became a deputy PJ director in 1998. Wong became an assistant prosecutor-general in March 2000. He was appointed as the director of the Judiciary Police in November 2000 while holding the rank of an assistant prosecutor-general. He was appointed as the secretary for security for Chui's second-term administration which started almost a decade ago, before he was reappointed for Ho's current administration. This time is his second reappointment as the secretary for security. Wong holds a doctoral degree in Legal Studies from Peking University.

O Lam – new social affairs & culture secretary

O, born in Guangdong Province, worked at the Sports Bureau between 2000 and 2009 where she was promoted to a vice-president, before working as an advisor to the chief executive office during Chui's first-term administration from December 2009 to December 2014. During Chui's second-term administration she was his chief-of-cabinet, after which she became an IAM vice-president on December 20, 2019 when Ho's current administration started. She holds a bachelor's degree in International Finance and Economics from Jinan University in Guangzhou and a master's degree in Business Administration from the American Graduate School of Business in Switzerland.

Raymond Tam Vai Man – new transport & public works secretary

Tam, born in Macau, joined the public administration in 1988 when he started to work for the then temporary Portuguese administration's Municipal Council, which was later converted into the now-defunct Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) after the establishment of the MSAR in December 1999. IACM was replaced by the current Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) in 2019.

Tam, a civil engineer by profession, headed the then IACM between 2007 and 2014, after which he has headed the

Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) since March 2016. He also concurrently headed the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG), the city's weather station, between September 2017 and September 2018.

Tam holds two master's degrees, one in Legal Studies from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou and one in Civil Engineering from the University of Macau (UM).

Ao Ieong Seong – new anti-graft commissioner

Ao Ieong Seong, the youngest in Sam's team, has been an assistant commissioner against corruption since December 20, 2019 when Ho's current administration started.

Ao Ieong Seong, born in Macau, holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Legal Studies from the University of Macau (UM). She worked as an investigator for the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) between July and September 2007, after which she had worked as an instructor for the UM until 2011. She became a prosecutor in 2013 and had worked for the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) until December 2019.

Elsie Ao Ieong U – new audit commissioner

Elsie Ao Ieong U, born in Guangdong Province, had headed the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) since December 2014 before her appointment as the secretary for social affairs and culture for Ho's current administration started almost five years ago.

She, who holds master's degrees in Computer Science and Comparative Legal Studies, joined the public administration in 1994 when she started to work in the Judiciary Police (PJ) before starting to work for the Identification Services Bureau in 2000.

Leong Man Cheong – reappointed Unitary Police Service head

Leong, born in Macau, joined the Public Security Police (PSP) in 1988, which he had headed since December 2014, before his appointment as the commissioner-general of the Unitary Police Service (SPU) for Ho's current administration started on December 20, 2019.

Adriano Marques Ho – new customs chief

Ho has headed the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) since June 2020. He holds a bachelor's degree in Law from the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST), and started to work for the Judiciary Police (PJ) as a criminal investigator in 1988, where he was promoted to a department chief in 2010. He worked as an advisor to Wong Sio Chak's office between December 2014 and June 2020.

Chan Tsz King – new chief prosecutor

Chan, born in Hong Kong, was first appointed as the commissioner against corruption for Ho's current administration which started almost five years ago, but now he has been appointed as the prosecutor-general of the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for Sam's incoming administration, returning to where he previously worked.

Chan became a prosecutor in 1997, before being appointed as an assistant prosecutor-general in 2000. Chan holds a bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from Portugal's Autonomous University of Lisbon. ■

NIA expands multi-entry permits to HK, Macau for neighbouring city residents

Ginnie Liang

The central government announced on Friday new policies enabling residents of Shenzhen and Zhuhai to make more frequent visits to the neighbouring special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau according to a statement issued by the National Immigration Administration (NIA) on Friday.

Starting on January 1, permanent residents of Zhuhai City will be able to apply for a "one trip per week" permit for Macau. Under the policy, they can visit Macau once per calendar week, with a maximum stay of seven days per trip, the statement said.

Also starting on January 1, permanent residents and residence permit holders in the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin will be eligible to apply for multi-entry permits to Macau, enabling unrestricted visits for up to seven days per stay within a one-year validity period, the statement said.

Meanwhile, starting yesterday, permanent residents of Shenzhen and holders of residence permits in the city will be eligible to apply for multi-entry permits to Hong Kong. The permits allow unlimited visits to the city within a year, with each stay capped at seven days, the statement said.

The measures are seen as the central government's latest efforts to enhance mobility and foster deeper



This undated pixelated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) recently shows a traveller passing through the e-channels at Macau's Barrier Gate checkpoint, the main land border checkpoint between the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) and Zhuhai City's Gongbei Port (checkpoint).

integration within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA), the statement said.

Macau's Public Security Police (PSP) expressed their gratitude to the central government for the new policy in a statement released on Friday, adding that the force will maintain a close liaison with the National Immigration Administration and keep a close watch on various border checkpoints, while continuing to enhance the efficiency of immigration clearance and to ensure that the new policy will be implemented in a satisfactory manner.

The Public Security Police also said in the statement that the

measures would solidify Macau's status as a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure while promoting regional integration.

The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) said in separate statement on Friday that it will make good use of the various measures that benefit Macau, continue to deepen the cross-border integration of "Tourism +" attractions, do a good job in publicity and promotion activities, promote the "Macau Courtesy Campaign", enhance the competitiveness of Macau's tourism, continue to expand visitor sources, and promote the diversified and sustainable development of Macau's tourism industry. ■

Mainlander nabbed for burglary of local woman's flat

Ginnie Liang

A suspected burglar from the mainland was arrested on Thursday, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said during a press conference on Friday.

The suspect is a 33-year-old man surnamed Mo who told the police that he is a farmer, while an alleged accomplice was still at large at the time of the press conference.

According to the spokesperson, the Judiciary Police received a report in mid-April from the local female victim saying that 1,300 patacas in cash had disappeared from her handbag which she had left in the living room of her home, which is a low-floor flat in a residential building near Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida (荷蘭園大馬路).

PJ officers identified Mo and his accomplice through the victim's home surveillance system, and found

that the two had been watching old tenement buildings in Areia Preta district (黑沙環), on Avenida do Ouvidor Arriaga (雅廉訪大馬路) and also the area where April's case occurred, on several occasions before, the spokesperson said, adding that PJ officers believe that in the April burglary it was Mo's job to unlock the door and keep watch, while his accomplice entered the home and stole valuables there, and that the two left Macau after committing the crime.

Mo re-entered Macau on Thursday through the Barrier Gate checkpoint where he was intercepted by PJ officers who found on him items such as black gloves, metal implements and screwdrivers, i.e., suspected burglary tools.

Under questioning, Mo refused to cooperate, and was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing aggravated theft charges, the spokesperson said. ■



Evidence seized from the mainland burglary suspect including burglary tools is displayed during Friday's press conference at the Judiciary Police (PJ) headquarters. - Photo courtesy of TDM

Woman loses HK\$12,000 in online dating with 'singer'

Ginnie Liang

A local woman fell for an online dating scam, where a "local singer", whom she had met online last month, asked her to buy his "fans cards" for HK\$12,000, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said in a press conference on Friday.

The spokesperson did not reveal the age of the female victim, but merely said she is a senior citizen.

The police said that the woman in the case reported that she had met on the internet on November 12 a male

friend who claimed to be a "Macau singer", and both hit it off immediately, with the "singer" frequently expressing his love for the victim, asking her to buy his "fans cards".

The "singer" continued his sweet-talk and flattery, the spokesperson said, adding that as she believed him, she transferred HK\$12,000 to a designated Hong Kong account on November 19.

However, the police said, the "singer" continued to ask the victim for money by persuading

her to join a "tour group", which required a payment of hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong dollars. On November 25, the victim finally grew suspicious and notified the police to follow up on the case.

The woman reported a total loss of HK\$12,000 patacas for the purchase of the "fans cards".

The spokesperson said that the police were still investigating the case and that at the time of Friday's press conference the suspect had still not been arrested. ■

12 million guests check into Macau's 146 hotels in Jan-Oct

Staff Reporter

Macau's 146 hotels with 44,000 guestrooms recorded 12.07 million guests in the first 10 months of the year, a year-on-year growth of 9.3 percent, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a DSEC statement last week, compared with the same 10-month period of last year, guests' average length of stay remained at 1.7 nights.

Last month, the number of

hotel guests dropped by 5.8 percent year on year to 1.17 million, which recovered to the pre-pandemic October 2019 level (99.9 percent).

In October, hotels' average occupancy rate rose by 4.5 percentage points year on year to 87.3 percent.

Mainland Chinese and Hongkongers made up the bulk of Macau's hotel guests last month. South Koreans continued to be Macau's top foreign hotel guest segment, rising by 51.2 percent

year on year to 30,000 in October, when 4,000 US citizens checked into local hotels.

Meanwhile, the bureau has also announced that 1.69 million package tour members visited Macau between January and October, a year-on-year growth of 84.9 percent. Package tour members from mainland China rose by 76.1 percent year on year to 1.5 million in the 10-month period, accounting for 89 percent of all package tour visitors. ■

LRT Hengqin Line opens today

Tony Wong

The Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Hengqin Line will come into operation today, with its first train departing at 1:11 p.m., connecting the Cotai entertainment precinct and the Macau-side zone of the Hengqin joint checkpoint.

Macau Light Rapid Transit Corporation Limited (MLM) made the announcement in a statement on Saturday.

The 2.2-kilometre-long LRT Cotai-Hengqin section includes a 900-metre-long underwater tunnel.

The LRT Cotai-Hengqin section project got off the ground in March 2021. Its construction, which had a price tag of 3.46 billion patacas, was fully completed on the last day of September, when the Public Works Bureau (DSOP), the public entity tasked with organising and overseeing public construction projects, transferred the line to Macau Light Rapid Transit Corporation Limited (MLM), the government-owned LRT operator, which then started the section's internal trial operations.

The Cotai-side station of the two-station LRT Hengqin Line is connected to the adjacent Lotus Station on the current Taipa Line through an indoor corridor, enabling passengers to transfer between the Taipa Line and the Hengqin Line.

The Hengqin Line gradually

descends from the elevated segment in Cotai and crosses the Cotai-Hengqin waterway via an underwater tunnel before arriving at the underground station at the Macau-side checkpoint zone of the Hengqin joint checkpoint, right next to the pedestrian immigration building.

The Hengqin-side station of the line is officially known as Hengqin Station.

With the Hengqin Line to open this afternoon, the statement noted that after leaving the underground Hengqin Station via lifts or escalators, LRT passengers can then "easily" walk to the checkpoint building's departure hall.

After today's opening of the Hengqin Line, its Cotai-side station will be part of the Taipa Line's Lotus Station as they are connected through an indoor corridor, meaning that Lotus Station will also be a station of the Hengqin Line, serving as a cross-platform interchange between the two lines.

According to Saturday's statement, the first train will depart from the Hengqin Line's Lotus Station at 1:11 p.m. today.

A one-way ride on the Hengqin Line will take about two minutes, at a frequency of about six minutes, the statement said.

The LRT operator will hold an inauguration ceremony for the Hengqin Line this morning. ■