

Survey reveals high family stress levels among Macau's working population: FAOM

Ginnie Liang

The Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) conducted a survey from June to November, revealing that over 60 percent of the respondents believe that their families have not benefited from the economic recovery.

The survey, which collected 1,110 valid responses, found that nearly 62 percent of the respondents identified economic factors as their primary source of stress, while 57 percent reported high levels of work-related pressure.

During a press conference held yesterday at the FAOM (known as Gung Luen in Cantonese) creche in Mong Ha district, FAOM Vice President Leong Sun Iok, a lawmaker, highlighted that nearly 67 percent of the respondents regard living expenses as their biggest burden, followed by mortgage repayments, at 46 percent, and child-rearing costs, at 43 percent.

According to Leong, the findings underscore a strong call



This screenshot captured from a live broadcast by the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) yesterday shows its press conference by FAOM representatives about a survey on working families' stress levels, including Vice President Leong Sun Iok (second from right), at the organisation's creche in Mong Ha district.

from 80 percent of the respondents for the government to introduce more economic assistance measures to alleviate financial strain on residents.

The survey also revealed that

over 60 percent of the respondents cope with stress by socialising with friends and family, while more than 70 percent expressed a desire for enhanced cultural and recreational activities in their communities.

Leong urged the government and local organisations to bolster mental health services and organise diverse activities to foster social cohesion and strengthen community support networks.

Notably, the survey identified significant stress levels among families with monthly combined incomes below 50,000 patacas, with nearly 60 percent of the respondents reporting substantial pressure, and among those families earning less than 30,000 patacas a month, the proportion facing high stress was particularly pronounced. Furthermore, nearly 59 percent of the respondents aged 35 to 54 reported "significant" stress, with physical labourers and service workers experiencing the highest levels of pressure.

To mitigate stress among workers, Leong recommended increasing wages and establishing a fair wage growth mechanism, improving work environments, and promoting flexible work arrangements. He also emphasised the importance of psychological resilience through targeted training and comprehensive mental health services, including hotlines and one-on-one counselling. ■

Biden's pardon for son angers rivals – and allies

Frankie Taggart

WASHINGTON – Joe Biden's pardon of his son Hunter has antagonised both sides of the US political divide, with Republicans crying hypocrisy and Democrats warning it undermines efforts to rein in Donald Trump.

Biden's announcement shocked Washington, after he entered the White House in 2021 vowing to restore the "integrity" of a justice system that Democrats said had been corrupted by Trump – and because he had specifically vowed not to reprieve his son.

The president instead issued a "full and unconditional" pardon on Sunday, absolving 54-year-old Hunter Biden of any wrongdoing over the last decade, charged or otherwise, just ahead of his looming sentencing over

gun and tax convictions.

Biden argued that his son had been targeted in a politicised prosecution launched under the Trump administration and that "there's no reason to believe it will stop here."

But the backlash from his own side was swift.

"I know that there was a real strong sentiment and wanting to protect Hunter Biden from unfair prosecution," Glenn Ivey, a Democratic congressman in Maryland and an attorney, told CNN.

"But this is going to be used against us when we're fighting the misuses that are coming from the Trump administration."

Biden announced Hunter's pardon in a statement arguing that the charges against his son were

brought in a process infected with "raw politics."

Hunter Biden was convicted by a jury in June of lying about his drug use when he bought a gun and pleaded guilty in a separate tax evasion trial in September.

The president and his team had been adamant that he would not pardon his son, with White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre making the claim as recently as November 7.

Seeking to justify his about-face, Biden said that "Hunter was singled out only because he is my son."

But Republicans argued that the pardon demonstrated that the sitting president, and not his incoming replacement, was politicising the system.

"He's leaving office in



US President Joe Biden (left) and his son Hunter step out of a bookstore while shopping in Nantucket, Massachusetts, on Friday. – AFP

complete and total disgrace. He is a liar and there's no other way to spin this today," conservative

political strategist Scott Jennings, a White House staffer under George W. Bush, told CNN. – AFP

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Xi stresses comprehensively advancing high-quality B&R cooperation

President Xi Jinping yesterday stressed comprehensively advancing high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

– Story on p. 7

Assad says rebel advance a bid to 'redraw' regional map

Syria's President Bashar al-Assad yesterday branded an Islamist-led offensive that has captured swathes of territory a bid to redraw the map of the region in line with US interests.

– Story on p. 11

Thousands strike at VW plants in Germany

Thousands of Volkswagen (VW) workers went on strike yesterday in an escalating industrial dispute, with trade unions warning that the crisis-hit German auto giant is intent on making mass layoffs and closing factories. – Story on p. 12

A strong and powerful governance team promotes a new development situation

*Statement by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the CPC Central Committee
Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council*

Today [November 30, 2024], the Central People's Government appointed the principal officials and prosecutor-general of the sixth government of the Macao Special Administrative Region in accordance with the law. We would like to express our congratulations on the official formation of the new Macao SAR government governance team.

When Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, President of the State, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, met with the newly elected and appointed sixth Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region, Sam Ho Fai, on November 1, he fully affirmed the Central People's Government's and mainland's strong support of Macao in the 25 years since Macao returned to the motherland. Under the circumstances, the SAR government and all sectors of society have continued to work hard, and the practice of "one country, two systems" with Macao characteristics has achieved world-renowned achievements. The constitutional order of the SAR established in the Constitution and the Macao Basic Law has been firmly established. Macao has made comprehensive progress in various undertakings, and its international influence has been significantly enhanced. President Xi hopes that Sam Ho Fai will lead the new government of the Macao Special Administrative Region to unite all sectors of society to work together, be upright and innovative, be enterprising and do well, continue to create new situations in the practice of "one country, two systems" with Macao characteristics, and make greater contributions to the construction of a strong country and national rejuvenation.

To implement the important instructions and requirements of the President and promote the successful implementation of "one country, two systems" with Macao characteristics to a new level, a strong and powerful governance team must be formed under the leadership of the Chief Executive with both ability and political integrity, and that is united and enterprising. The principal officials and prosecutor-general



of the sixth term of the Macao Special Administrative Region, who were nominated by the Chief Executive and appointed by the Central People's Government, are such an excellent team that meet the requirements: they have a firm political stance of patriotism and love for Macao, and resolutely safeguard the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests and the long-term prosperity and stability of Macao, have a clear-cut stand on major issues of right and wrong, and have withstood the test in major political and legal struggles; they have political experience and professional abilities. Some are principal officials who have been retained in the posts, while others have been transferred from other posts as principal officials, and some of the appointees are current bureau-level officials. All of them are familiar with government work, have professional backgrounds for taking office, have worked in related fields for a long time, and are good at overall coordination and implementation; they have deep feelings for the people and a spirit of responsibility and dedication, and have performed well in their previous positions. They have conscientiously performed his duties, been diligent, pragmatic, sedulous, and achieved outstanding results, which has been widely recognized and fully affirmed by all parties.

After 25 years of continuous struggle, the construction and development of the Macao Special Administrative Region has reached a new historical starting point. The new Macao SAR government governance team that emerged at this important moment has a heavy responsibility and a glorious mission. The central government and Macao society are eagerly anticipating and fully believing that under the leadership of Chief Executive Sam Ho Fai, the new SAR government governance team will adhere to the governance philosophy of "working hard and upholding integrity and

innovation", shouldering heavy responsibilities and taking positive actions to achieve solid results. With practical actions and tangible achievements, they will unite and lead all sectors of society to continuously write a new chapter in the successful implementation of "one country, two systems" with Macao characteristics.

Adhering to the comprehensive and accurate implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy and firmly safeguard the nation's sovereignty, security, and development interests

It is hoped that the new SAR government will fully and deeply implement the principle of "patriots governing Macao" and unequivocally safeguard the constitutional order of the SAR as determined by the Constitution and the Basic Law. We must always keep in mind that safeguarding the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests is the highest principle of the "one country, two systems" policy, adhere to the unity of the central government's overall jurisdiction and guarantee the high degree of autonomy of the special administrative regions, and correctly handle the relationship between the central government and the special administrative regions. Always keep in mind that the glorious tradition of patriotism and love for Macao is the most important reason for the successful implementation of "one country, two systems" in Macao, and to continue to lead Macao society to uphold and promote the core values of patriotism and love for Macao, and continuously build a solid social and political foundation for the successful implementation of "one country, two systems" in Macao.

Striving to improve the governance level of the SAR and continuously enhance its governance efficiency

It is hoped that the new SAR government will actively adapt to the development of the situation and the latest and higher requirements put forward by the public for the governance of the SAR, deepen the reform of the Public Administration and other systems, improve the efficiency of government governance, and promote the modernization of the governance system and governance capabilities. Strengthen the construction and management of public servants and

improve their ability to perform their duties in accordance with the law. We will regard acting in accordance with the law as the basic criterion for the governance of the Special Administrative Region, continue to improve the system of governing Macao according to the law, and strive to create a diligent, honest, efficient and fair government governed by the rule of law.

Accelerating the moderate diversification of Macao's economy and achieving new breakthroughs

It is hoped that the new SAR government will gain a deep understanding that appropriate economic diversification is the only way to maintain Macao's long-term prosperity and stability. The original mission of Hengqin's development and construction is to open up new space and inject new impetus for the moderate diversification of Macao's economy; it is hoped that there will be a deep understanding that Hengqin is a "Special Economic Zone in China" that should demonstrate the advantages of "one country", make full use of the benefits of "two systems", give full play to the role of the experimental field of "two constructions", and build a demonstration site for further comprehensively deepening reforms and promoting high-level opening up to the outside world, as well as boldly innovate in important areas and create key links in the construction of the In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, and continuously improve the level of integrated development of Hengqin and Macao, especially to promote a high degree of economic coordination between the In-depth Cooperation Zone and Macao, intensify the integration of rules, and increase the efficient cross-border flow of various elements. Convenience will guide more Macao funds to invest and start businesses in Hengqin, more Macao companies to innovate and start businesses in Hengqin, and more Macao residents to live and work in peace and contentment in Hengqin.

Consolidating and developing Macao's unique status and advantages, and constantly polishing Macao's "golden business card" as an international metropolis

It is hoped that the new SAR government will cherish Macao's extraordinary achievements in

becoming a truly international metropolis, comprehensively promote the construction of "one center, one platform and one base", fully tap into Macao's rich cultural tourism resources, and make good use of Macao's integration of Chinese and Western cultures, use its advantages and build a world center of tourism and leisure with high quality; actively leverage the advantages of Macao's free port and separate customs territory, continue to optimize the business environment, attract international funds and talents, and create a high-end international talent gathering place; deepen and expand Macao's external exchanges and enhance trade with Portuguese-speaking countries and strengthen the cooperation service platform function to promote broader and pragmatic cooperation between the nation and Portuguese-speaking countries, and support high-quality joint construction of the "Belt and Road".

Focusing on meeting citizens' expectations for a better life and continue to enhance the happiness, gain, and security of Macao residents

It is hoped that the new SAR government will vigorously protect and improve people's livelihoods and continuously improve citizens' living standards as an inevitable requirement of the fundamental purpose of "one country, two systems" and the starting point and foothold of government governance, as well as take the expectations of the whole society, especially ordinary citizens, as the biggest priority in governance, and pursue and take bolder and more effective measures to overcome difficulties, and strive to solve the outstanding problems that citizens are anxious about, as well as strengthen the construction of public infrastructure, improve citizens' living environment and enhance their quality of life.

We believe that with the strong leadership of the central government and the full support of the Chinese mainland, and under the united leadership of Chief Executive Sam Ho Fai and the new SAR government, all sectors of Macao society will be able to work together and make persistent efforts to promote the continuous progress of various undertakings in Macao and continue to move forward. The world has demonstrated the vitality and superiority of "one country, two systems" which has made new and greater contributions to the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation!

N.B. Translation of the unabridged statement arranged by the Post

Published since Aug 2004

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- Chief Graphic Designer – Simon Wang
- Graphic Designer – Colin Zhong
- Administrative Assistants – Ester Mak, Carl Leong
- Printed by Tipografia Welfare Lda., 82-86 Rua dos Pescadores
- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua

MACAU POST

Macau Weather

**FINE APART FROM CLOUDY PERIODS.
FORCE 2 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 50% AND 90%.**



17°C~25°C

Source: SMG

Sands China hosts Classics Reimagined: Golden Hour Harmonies



A masterclass delivered by the Jánoska Ensemble takes place on Sunday at the Macau Cultural Centre Plaza in Nape as part of Sands China's "Classics Reimagined: Golden Hour Harmonies". – Photos: Rui Pastorin

Rui Pastorin

The two-day outdoor concert series "Classics Reimagined: Golden Hour Harmonies" was presented by the Sands China Performing Arts Programme at the Macau Cultural Centre Plaza in Nape over the weekend.

The first concert was by the family quartet the "Janoska Ensemble", which marked their return to Macau after performing at the Parisian Theatre in Cotai last year, again bringing with them their signature "Janoska Style", according to information about the event provided by Sands China on Sunday.

The ensemble comprises brothers Ondrej, Roman and František Janoska from Bratislava,

along with their Constance-born brother-in-law Julius Darvas. Both Ondrej and Roman are on violin, while František and Darvas play piano and double bass respectively. The concert, entitled "Highlights from Janoska Ensemble 10 Years Concert" and held on Saturday, also had Arpad (Luis) Janoska, the eldest of the four Janoska brothers, as a guest performer.

The following day also saw a masterclass at the plaza with the ensemble, which offered useful and insightful tips and advice to young musicians from Hong Kong and Macau. It was Macau's first ever outdoor masterclass open for public viewing, the Sands statement added,

The masterclass was followed by the Gordon Lee Harmonica Concert and Niu Niu "Lifetime" Piano Recital.

The concert saw famous pianist Niu Niu (the stage name of Zhang Shengliang) from Xiamen, as he delivered his first solo concert in Macau. The 27-year-old made his recital debut at just aged six and has various achievements such as being the youngest pianist ever signed to an international classical label (EMI) at the age of just nine, while his career also features many milestones.

Meanwhile, harmonica player Gordon Lee (李俊樂) was the winner of the 2017 "World Harmonica Festival" in Germany, among other awards, and has performed as a

recording artist and solo guest performer with Hong Kong superstars. He has also performed solo and in orchestras. The statement said that Lee is "recognised as one of the foremost harmonica players in the world".

The two-day event was presented by the Sands China Performing Arts Programme for the dual celebrations, the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) as well as Macau's designation as a Culture City of Asia 2025. The plaza, the statement added, is one of the integrated resort operator's community revitalisation areas. ■

3 more local firms scammed by fake schools

William Chan

Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Ho Wai Lok said during a regular press conference yesterday that two furniture shops and a shipping company have been deceived into ordering bed frames for a "school."

According to Ho, earlier this month the police were notified by representatives of these companies that they had been swindled by an individual posing as a teacher from a local school. The "teacher" claimed that the "school" planned to buy bed frames to be donated to a nursing home and a school, promising the companies "commission" of over HK\$100 per bed frame.

Upon paying a deposit to the "bed frame supplier" following the instructions of the "teacher," the companies discovered that the screenshots of the transactions provided by the "teacher" had been fabricated. Subsequently, they contacted the police, reporting a total loss of HK\$129,000.

Additionally, an event-planning company reported a similar incident last week but managed to avoid falling victim to the scam. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Ho Wai Lok looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. – Photo: William Chan

Winners of 1st week of Macau Int'l Kart Grand Prix named



This handout photo provided by the organisers shows racers posing with guests and other attendees after Sunday's 2024 ROK Cup Macau Invitational Race.

Rui Pastorin

The finals of the 2024 ROK Cup Macau Invitational and the AAMC Karting Championship Round 8 featured in the first week of the 2024 Macau International Kart Grand Prix, took place on Sunday at the Coloane Karting Track, with the winning young drivers from all over the world in different race classes having received their awards.

According to a Sunday statement from the organisers, Australian Jay Rhett Kostecki won the Mini ROK Class in the Macau International Kart Grand Prix and the ROK Cup Macau Invitational Race.

In the ROK Junior Class, the mainland's Jiang Houzai emerged victorious in the Macau International Kart Grand Prix and ROK Cup Macau Invitational Race, while in the ROK

Senior Class Terashima Tomoki from Japan was first in both categories, according to the statement.

Singaporean Chock Kejun took home the top prizes in the ROK Expert Class for the Macau International Kart Grand Prix and ROK Cup Macau Invitational Race, while local racer Cheong Man Hei won in the KZ Class for the Macau International Kart Grand Prix.

KZ, Wikipedia notes, is for drivers aged 15 and over, sanctioned by the CIK-FIA, adding that it is the primary gearbox class in FIA championships.

The Mini ROK Class and ROK Junior Class of the AAMC Karting Championship Round 8, meanwhile, were won respectively by locals Tam Cheuk Yin and Vernice Lao Si Lun.

Moreover, Cheong Man Hei also emerged

on top in the AAMC Karting Championship (Round 8) KZ Class, while the KZ Veteran category saw local Cheong Pang as its winner.

Lastly, the Sands Cup and Coca-Cola Cup, which according to a previous AAMC statement are special events, were respectively won by locals Loi Chun Ngok and Yeung Hou Sam.

Taking place over a span of two weeks, the second week of the kart races kicks off with qualifying sessions on Friday, with finals set for Sunday, December 8. The races will again feature racers and teams from different parts of the world. According to a previous statement from the organisers, the races to be featured are the IAME Asia Final, the AAMC Karting Championship Round 8 (X30 Junior and Senior) and the KZ Invitational.

Members of the public can watch the races for free, the statement said. ■

ABOUT The Young Post

The Macau Post Daily's The Young Post will be published every Monday to present and discuss topical issues that may interest not only the younger but also all the other generations.

MASDAW enables one to experience walking a dog



Interview by Rui Pastorin

The metal gate opens on a Sunday afternoon at the Macau Association For Stray Dogs and Animal Welfare's (MASDAW) shelter on Estrada de Dona Maria II, which houses over 130 stray and abandoned dogs.

Several excited barks are heard, and Shelby, a friendly dog used to people, is among them. She is brought out to greet the people registered to volunteer to take her and other dogs out on a walk as part of the association's free dog walking programme.

Though people have volunteered to walk the dogs from the shelter before, the programme was officially born during the turbulent COVID-19 pandemic, the association's founder and President Fátima Galvão has told *The Young Post* during a recent interview. The pandemic was a time when many had lost their jobs. Some, Galvão said, started coming to MASDAW to volunteer and the association started organising community dog walks. As time went by, the word spread and many volunteers just started showing up and registering to walk the dogs without MASDAW needing to organise them, according to Galvão.

The programme now has many volunteers. Among them are many students from the mainland who love dogs but cannot have their beloved pets with them while studying here, along with local dog lovers who cannot have one at home for various reasons. "Somehow, our dogs are also their dogs", noted Galvão.

Sometimes, private groups also set up community walks and even fundraising for the association and, according to one of the caretakers at the shelter, some schools have also taken part in the programme.

Galvão highlighted something special that she found in the programme, which was how she witnessed that it paved the way for strong and long-lasting friendships created among volunteers, with many meeting each other through walking the dogs. It was also during the programme that the hashtag "#masdawislove" was born as Galvão started to see people in very difficult periods in their lives coming to give their time and love to the dogs at MASDAW, which gave them love and affection back in return. "It was like helping each other", Galvão said.

However, Galvão also mentioned that the programme is not without its challenges, as she recalled an incident where someone had volunteered to walk an 11-year-old dog named Argo and ended up abandoning him and not contacting the shelter. The situation caused the association a very stressful few days and was not helped by the registrant not clearly providing the necessary information. Though Argo was eventually found, changes to the registration policy had to be made. "We exist to protect them, not to put them in danger. And so that's why we decided to change the policy in terms of registration of the volunteers".

Moreover, compared to the association's previous shelters, Galvão mentioned the area for walking dogs is not as spacious. Also, when compared to the previous shelter in Coloane, there are not many green areas, while they have met people in situations who are not so dog friendly at the nearby reservoir, such as when walking together in groups. The shelter is also "collapsing financially", Galvão said. But despite these issues, the programme and passion to help the dogs remains.

Meanwhile, for those considering owning a dog, Galvão emphasises that to those who love dogs and cannot have them at home for various reasons and issues or are unsure if they are willing to make the commitment, Galvão said that it's better not

to buy or to adopt just yet, while people should also open their hearts to mixed breeds.

She pointed out that those considering opening their hearts to the dogs can come to MASDAW and walk its dogs, noting that no pressure is put on anyone to adopt them. "We are very happy to have everyone coming and walking our dogs".

"We are here, they are here, seven days a week". Galvão emphasised, with MASDAW being open from 11:30 to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., sometimes till 7 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. "They are here just waiting to receive love and some attention".

Many dogs & cats euthanised this year

Galvão also commented that 2024 has been a "shameful and very frustrating" year, as many dogs and cats have been euthanised.

This, according to Galvão, is also due to Macau having no programmes to "really solve the problem of strays" in the city. "It's not by killing. It's already proven that it's not by killing that you can eradicate stray animals. This Trap Neuter Release (TNR) should be really a very concrete and effective policy in terms of catching and saving their lives", she pointed out.



MASDAW President Fátima Galvão poses with puppies that the association has recently rescued.
- Photos: Rui Pastorin

Shelby looks on.



Cheong Lap Cheong seeks rematch after controversial fight scores



Cheong Lap Cheong (left) faces the media after his fight in Shangluo, Shaanxi Province, on Saturday night. — Photo courtesy of Janno Cheong

Lesley Wells

Local pugilist Cheong Lap Cheong's fight in Shangluo City, Shaanxi Province, on Saturday night for two titles, the World Boxing Council's (WBC) Far East Super Fly belt, which he won in May against the South Korea's Han Sol Lee, and the WBC Asian Super Fly belt of his opponent Cao Jiangtao ended in controversy when the Chinese, Australian and Philippine judges gave the scores 95:95, 95:97, 95:95 respectively.

Cheong's camp say that they want a rematch in Macau.

In a message to the *Post* on a social media messaging platform early Sunday morning after the fight, Janno Cheong, no relation, one of Lap Cheong's trainers, said, "The result was a draw, but the fight was obviously won by Lap Cheong. Even the local audience thought Lap Cheong had won. It's an obviously unfair result."

Lap Cheong (11-0-0), 28, was fighting southpaw Cao (10-4-1), 25, for both belts and kept his World Boxing Council's (WBC) Far East Super Fly belt, which he had gone into the fight to defend.

Janno said in the message to the *Post*, "Lap Cheong was crying after he left the ring as Lap Cheong actually had the whole advantage during the whole fight."

In a post on the social media platform, translated from Chinese into English and edited for publication, Janno wrote, "Even though the result of the final was 'a

draw"! Support from local offline viewers, both from Macau and the mainland, and viewers watching the fight online! We already have the answer!"

"In the small city of Macau, there is a person who goes from the street to the international tournament, and then can fight for the WBC World Boxing Council title and world rankings in the international competition, with sacrifices a lot of times, perseverance and efforts to get to this point, it is not easy.

"Let the international [community] see that Macau athletes can also stand on the world stage and shine; he is "Long Lap Cheong!"

"Sometimes, because of some factors, hard work may not get the desired result! But we always believe that persistence can still be seen! Because we still keep the "first heart"!"

"Thank you to all the team members who came to support us this time! Thank you to all the viewers in Macau and elsewhere who supported Lap Cheong online!"

Janno said in the message to the *Post*, "Actually we want a rematch; hopefully we could gain some sponsorship from the government and private companies to support organising a pro-boxing event in Macau. So that we can invite Lap Cheong's opponent to come to Macau and do the rematch." ■

Song Man Lei appointed chief judge

Tony Wong

Outgoing Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has appointed Song Man Lei president of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) effective from yesterday.

Ho made the appointment in an executive order published in the Official Gazette (BO) yesterday. Ho signed the order on Friday last week.

According to the order, Song's appointment lasts three years.

Since the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) on December 20, 1999, the Court of Final Appeal had been headed for nearly 25 years by Sam Hou Fai until late August this year when he resigned as the MSAR's top judge so that he could run in the election of the MSAR's sixth-term chief executive, which was held on October 13 when he, the sole candidate, was elected by garnering 98.99 percent of the 398 votes cast by the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee.

Including Sam, the Court of Final Appeal had three judges until Sam's resignation in late August, with the other two being Song Man Lei and José Maria Dias Azedo.

Currently, following Sam's resignation in late August, the Court of Final Appeal only comprises two judges – Song and Dias Azedo.

Including its president, the Court of Final Appeal shall comprise three judges in its organisational



This file photo shows Song Man Lei, then acting president of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI), addressing the opening ceremony of the new judicial year 2024/2025 at the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) in Nape on October 17. Song has been formally appointed as Macau's chief judge effective from yesterday. — Photo: GCS

structure, according to the Judicial Organisation Framework Law.

Since Sam's resignation, Song, owing to her seniority over Dias Azedo in the Court of Final Appeal, had been the court's acting president.

Yesterday's executive order means that Song has been formally appointed as the Court of Final Appeal's president, filling the vacancy of the MSAR's chief judge left by Sam's resignation.

According to Article 88 of the MSAR Basic Law, the president of the Court of Final Appeal shall be a Chinese citizen who is a permanent resident of the MSAR.

According to the Judicial Organisation Framework Law, the Court of Final Appeal's president must be chosen from among its three-judge bench.

Judges in the MSAR, including heads of the top court and of all other courts, are formally appointed by the chief executive.

According to the Judicial Organisation Framework Law, each term of the Court of Final Appeal's president lasts three years, and can be renewed.

Song has been a judge of the Court of Final Appeal since January 1, 2012. Previously, she was an assistant prosecutor-general. ■

Advocates urge better barrier-free environment for disabled

Ginnie Liang

Macau Deaf Association (MDA) Director Nerissa Lau Sut Man underlined yesterday that the government's Ten-Year Plan for Rehabilitation Services 2016-2025 has launched the barrier-free building design guidelines, and she suggested that the government involve various sectors of civil society concerning the construction of a barrier-free environment in the next ten-year plan.

Lau made the remarks on the sidelines of a seminar held by seven local organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to discuss the possibility of a barrier-free society in Macau, on the eve of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) today, held annually on December 3, with the participation of experts and scholars from various fields, social service co-workers, social work students and family members of service users, totalling more than 100 participants.

With the theme of amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future, this year's IDPD aims to underscore the importance of leveraging the leadership of persons with disabilities to ensure disability-inclusive and sustainable



Macau Deaf Association (MDA) Director Nerissa Lau Sut Man talks to reporters on the sidelines of a seminar held by seven local organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) yesterday held at the centre of Fuhong Society of Macau (FHS) in Patane. — Photo: Ginnie Liang

peace and development for all, according to the press conference.

Lau also said that her association received reports from disabled people that even though they are holding Disability Assessment Registration Cards issued by the government, their documents were not recognised when applying for tax relief, and they were asked to undergo a medical check-up again.

Therefore, Lau said, she hoped that the government will review the

existing regulations to see if there is any inconvenience for persons with disabilities.

According to the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), the number of disabled people holding a valid Disability Assessment Registration Card stood at 18,500, or 2.7 percent of the population, as of September 30, of which over 5,800 were physically disabled and more than 1,200 were multi-disabled, Fuhong Society of Macau (FHS) Director Jennifer Chau Wai I said.

In the five years from 2019 to 2023, the number of people aged 65 and above increased by more than 20,000, representing an increase of 27 percent, which indicated that Macau is now facing the challenge of an ageing population, Chau said.

Chau said she believes that a barrier-free environment is not only conducive to the free mobility and self-care of people with disabilities, but also benefits senior citizens, the sick and the injured, as well as all groups of people who may face temporary or long-term mobility difficulties, which, she noted, is related to the well-being of every citizen, and enhances the overall quality of living in the city to ensure that everyone can enjoy a fair, dignified and free living environment. ■

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.65 pct higher

HONG KONG — Hong Kong stock market ended higher yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index up 0.65 percent to close at 19,550.29 points. The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index gained 0.9 percent to end at 7,009.05 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index climbed 1.2 percent to end at 4,405.95 points. — Xinhua

LRT Hengqin Line opens to enthusiastic crowd

Tony Wong

The Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Hengqin Line started its service early yesterday afternoon after it was inaugurated by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng in the morning.

Ho and Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário unveiled the inaugural plate of the LRT Hengqin Line at its Lotus Station at 11 a.m. yesterday.

The LRT Hengqin Line connects the Cotai entertainment precinct and the Macau-side zone of the Hengqin joint checkpoint.

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

The line's first – crowded – train departed from Lotus Station on time at 1:11 p.m. yesterday as scheduled.

The *Post* also took the first departing train and noted that a one-way ride on the line takes less than two minutes.

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

Delivering a speech during yesterday's inauguration ceremony, Ho Cheong Kei, who heads Macau Light Rapid Transit Corporation Limited (MLM), the government-owned LRT operator, said that the Hengqin Line's opening now enables the connection of rail services between Macau and the mainland, strengthening Macau's integration into the "one-hour living circle" of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The mainland side of the Hengqin joint checkpoint is served by Zhuhai City's railway network.

Ho Cheong Kei also said that the Hengqin Line provides residents



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (second from right) and Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário (second from left) unveil the inaugural plate of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Hengqin Line at its Lotus Station yesterday morning, flanked by Ho Cheong Kei (first from right), who heads the LRT system's operator, and Public Works Bureau (DSOP) Director Lam Wai Hou. – Photo: Tony Wong

and visitors with a convenient and quick option to travel to the Hengqin checkpoint, also enabling Macau's LRT system to play a greater role in improving the city's public transport.

Ho Cheong Kei pledged that the LRT operator will always ensure the Hengqin Line's smooth operation and constantly improve its service quality.

According to the MLM website, a one-way ride on the Hengqin Line takes about two minutes, at a frequency of about six minutes.

The same as the Taipa Line and the Seac Pai Van Line, LRT trains on the Hengqin Line operate between 6:30 a.m. and 11:15 p.m. from Mondays to Thursdays, and between 6:30 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

The Cotai-side station of the two-station LRT Hengqin Line is

connected to the adjacent Lotus Station on the Taipa Line through an indoor corridor. After yesterday's opening of the Hengqin Line, Lotus Station is now a station of both the Taipa Line and the Hengqin Line, serving as a cross-platform interchange between the two lines, enabling passengers to transfer between the two lines.

The Hengqin checkpoint is a Macau-mainland joint checkpoint, where the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) exercises jurisdiction over a part of the checkpoint on Zhuhai's Hengqin island, i.e., the Macau-side checkpoint zone of the Hengqin joint checkpoint.

The MSAR also exercises jurisdiction over the Macau-side checkpoint zone's adjoining areas such as the Lotus Flower Bridge across the Cotai-Hengqin waterway as well as the new LRT Cotai-Hengqin section.

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.

The LRT Hengqin Line 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 this year. ■



The first passenger gestures after passing a ticket gate at the LRT Hengqin Line's Lotus Station, shortly before the line's first train departed at 1:11 p.m. yesterday as scheduled. – Photo: Tony Wong

Woman loses 1.84 million patacas in online 'futures' love scam

William Chan

A local woman lost 1.84 million patacas in an investment scam after her online "boyfriend" persuaded her to invest in futures, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Ho Wai Lok said during a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Ho, the middle-age female victim met a male netizen on a social media platform in late October, and they quickly became an online couple. During

their virtual relationship, the male persuaded the victim to invest online through a website, Ho said, adding that the victim deposited last month a total of 1.84 million patacas in "futures contracts" into the website's bank account.

Ho said the victim noted on Wednesday that her "investment" had grown to 9.4 million patacas and attempted to withdraw the money. However, the website told her that there was an error and

denied her withdrawal. Finally realising that she might have been cheated, the victim reported the case to the Judiciary Police on Thursday.

The term "futures" generally refers to financial contracts that obligate the buyer to purchase, and the seller to sell, an asset at a predetermined future date and price. This type of contract is commonly used in commodities, currencies, and financial instruments. ■

2 women nabbed for fake employment deal: police

William Chan

A woman from the mainland and a local woman have been arrested for their alleged involvement in a fake employment deal, Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Kong Chi Ian said at a regular press conference yesterday.

The suspects, both in their 40s, were identified by Kong as Gu and Lo. Lo, working as a shopkeeper, had hired Gu to work as her domestic helper.

According to Kong, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) recently alerted the Public Security Police regarding Gu's employment as a non-resident worker (NRW) for Lo. Gu was apprehended in the Lao Hon district and brought in for questioning.

Gu told the police that since March last year, she had been frequently coming to Macau to purchase skincare products and handbags and reselling them in the mainland. To facilitate her frequent visits to Macau, she asked Lo to employ her so she could obtain non-resident worker



Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Kong Chi Ian looks on during yesterday's a regular press conference. – Photo: William Chan

status. Gu acquired her "blue card" (non-resident worker's permit) in March this year, and had paid 18,600 patacas to Lo for her "assistance".

Under questioning, Lo refused to cooperate.

The duo have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing document forgery charges, according to Kong. ■

What drives the trend of de-dollarization?

BEIJING – US President-elect Donald Trump recently threatened 100 percent tariffs on BRICS nations if they "move away" from the US dollar.

Such threats are emblematic of deeper American anxiety over the declining global trust in the dollar-based world financial system, as well as Washington's unwillingness to adapt to the changing global order and its attempt to maintain dominance through coercive means.

For decades, the dollar has granted Washington unparalleled advantages, from lower borrowing costs to the leverage to influence other countries through the Bretton Woods Institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

However, the tide is turning as nations, particularly in the Global South, increasingly question the fairness and sustainability of a dollar-dominated system.

Political polarization and recurrent brinkmanship over the federal debt ceiling have cast serious doubts about the stability of American governance. Since World War II, Washington has raised its debt ceiling over 100 times, a glaring signal of fiscal mismanagement that unsettles global markets.

In fact, it is terrible news for a world economy still struggling to recover, because the US chronic debt problem creates tremendous uncertainties in the global market.

As noted by a Bloomberg opinion piece, "America's sway over the world economy is being eroded by self-inflicted policy wounds, with a dangerous standoff

over the debt ceiling putting renewed scrutiny on the dollar's preeminent status in global trade and finance."

Adding to the erosion of trust is Washington's reckless use of economic sanctions. By weaponizing the dollar, as well as the dollar-based global financial system, Washington has pushed countries to diversify their reserves.

Washington's bullying has already sparked a global backlash, with many nations striving to build financial systems immune to US interference. More and more countries are seeking alternatives to SWIFT, establishing bilateral currency swap lines through which they can bypass the dollar for direct transactions between their own currencies.

Rather than engaging in meaningful dialogue and fixing a flawed system, Washington has responded with threats and intimidation as it has done in other sectors such as trade and high-tech. In fact, Trump's blatant threat to the Global South would only let more countries realize the risks of exercising their legitimate economic sovereignty in an increasingly shaky dollar-based global financial system.

With multipolarity being the world's wave of the future, the United States should choose to work with other countries in improving the global financial system, rather than pursuing its sheer self-interests at the cost of the rest.

In the end, it is Washington itself who is to blame for the greenback's declining credibility.

– Xinhua