

Eco bureau denies rumours that 'all waste collected for recycling is incinerated'

Yuki Lei

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) was invited to attend a closed-door meeting of the Taipa and Coloane Community Service Consultative Council yesterday to brief the government-appointed council members on its waste reduction and recycling measures – and Choi Seng Hong, deputy convener of the council, quoted DSPA officials as denying rumours in the community that all the waste collected by the bureau for recycling was being incinerated right away, insisting that “the bureau handles each and every piece of recyclables with care, making sure that they are properly recycled or decomposed into resourceful pieces before moving on to the next stage of the process”.

Choi made the remarks after yesterday’s meeting at the Islands District Public Services Centre at Coloane’s Seac Pai Van public housing estate. The post-meeting press briefing was also addressed by deputy conveners Ng Hong Kei and Wong Leong Kuan.

According to the press briefing, the bureau’s efforts in waste reduction and recycling include the introduction of various solid waste recovery schemes for



Taipa and Coloane Community Service Consultative Council deputy conveners Choi Seng Hong (from left to right), Ng Hong Kei and Wong Leong Kuan look on during yesterday’s post-meeting press briefing at the Islands District Public Services Centre at Coloane’s Seac Pai Van public housing estate. – Photo: Yuki Lei

plastic bottles, aluminium cans and paper, food waste, used household batteries, used home appliances, computers and telecom equipment, glass bottles, light, used clothing, “lai see” envelopes and mooncake containers;

banning the importation of disposable styrofoam tableware and trays, as well as plastic drinking straws, stir sticks, knives, forks, spoons, plates and cups that are non-biodegradable; imposing differentiated

disposal fees for construction waste according to its quantity and quality; and constructing a recycling centre for organic waste.

Organic waste recycling centre project to be completed in 2027

The press briefing noted that under the “important” policy of “Source Reduction and Resource Recycling”, Macau now has more than 4,000 recycling points, while regarding food waste, the bureau indicated during yesterday’s meeting that the construction of a recycling centre for organic waste, which commenced last year, was slated to be completed in 2027, with the capacity in the first phase planned to reach 150 tonnes per day, accounting for 30 to 40 percent of the current amount of local food waste.

“If it is extended to the second phase, the capacity can be increased to 220 tonnes per day, which is 45 to 60 percent of the current amount of food waste in Macau,” Choi quoted DSAP officials as saying.

The press conference also noted that the current waste treatment capacity of the city’s incinerator is 3,000 tonnes per day, which was sufficient for waste treatment over the next 30 years. ■



Rescuers transfer the injured at Zhacun Village of Dingri County in Xigaze, Xizang Autonomous Region, yesterday. A total of 126 people have been confirmed dead and 188 others injured, after a 6.8-magnitude earthquake jolted the region at 9:05 a.m. yesterday. (More on p.7) – Xinhua

Trump to ‘immediately’ reverse Biden’s ban on offshore drilling

WASHINGTON – US President-elect Donald Trump said yesterday that he plans to “immediately” reverse outgoing President Joe Biden’s newly announced ban on offshore drilling.

At a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, Trump said that banning offshore drilling will not stand. “I will reverse it immediately. It’ll be done immediately,” he said.

“We will drill, baby drill. We’re going to be drilling in a lot of other locations, and the energy costs are going to come way down,” said the President-elect.

“Drill, baby, drill” is a political catchphrase that became widely known during the 2008 US presidential election, especially among pro-oil advocates, and was used to promote the growth of fossil fuel extraction and boost energy independence.

Trump referenced the slogan when he accepted the Republican nomination for president at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in July 2024.

Trump’s latest remarks came just one day after Biden announced an executive action that would permanently ban future offshore oil and gas development in parts of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, across 625 million acres of ocean.

“President Biden has determined that the environmental and economic risks and harms that would result from drilling in these areas outweigh their limited fossil fuel resource potential,” according to a White House statement.

At the press conference, Trump also reiterated that he will quickly end Biden administration’s “electric car mandate”.

– Xinhua

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Top planner unveils guideline for building unified national market, driving demand and openness

China’s top economic planner yesterday released a guideline for building a unified national market, breaking down market barriers to boost domestic demand while enhancing openness.

– Story on p. 6

Meta announces ending fact-checking program in US

Social media giant Meta announced yesterday a significant rollback of its content moderation policies, including the termination of its third-party fact-checking programme in the United States.

– Story on p. 11

Pope names nun to head major Vatican office

Pope Francis has appointed Sister Simona Brambilla to lead a Vatican department, naming the first woman head of the office that oversees the world’s Catholic religious orders and congregations.

– Story on p. 12

MUST PhD students win 1st prize in maths contest in modelling

Rui Pastorin

PhD students Lyu Peilun, Zhu Mingwen, and Li Jiayang from the Macau University of Science and Technology's (MUST) School of Computer Science and Engineering of the Faculty of Innovation Engineering have recently won first prize in the "Huawei Cup" China Postgraduate Mathematical Contest in Modelling (MCM), the private university said in a statement yesterday.

The statement noted that the winning PhD students were guided in their studies by MUST Prof. Cai Zhanchuan.

Modelling in mathematics, according to the Poe chatbot, involves using mathematical concepts and techniques to represent real-world systems or phenomena. This process allows for the analysis, prediction, and understanding of

complex situations in various fields such as physics, biology, finance, engineering, and social sciences.

MUST's master's degree students garnered a 2nd prize, along with three 3rd prizes, the statement said.

A prize-giving ceremony was held at Shandong University on December 8.

The statement said that the recent competition, one of the theme competitions of the "China Postgraduate Innovation Practice Competitions" (CPIPC), is "the largest and most influential national postgraduate discipline competition in China" and is accessible to all postgraduate students across the nation. The statement added that 20,247 teams from 521 postgraduate institutions across the nation, including its two special administrative regions, and the world have participated in it. ■



This undated handout photo provided yesterday by the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) shows PhD students Lyu Peilun (from left to right), Zhu Mingwen, and Li Jiayang displaying their awards.

Police nab 2 men for theft-by-finding

William Chan

A man from the mainland and a local male have separately been apprehended for theft-by-finding, Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Kong Chi Ian said during a regular press conference yesterday.

In the first case, the mainland

suspect, surnamed Lin, a non-resident worker (NRW) in his thirties, works as a chef.

According to Kong, a tourist reported to the police in November that she had left her phone worth 8,000 yuan in a taxi. Subsequently, with the help of CCTV footage in the taxi, police officers identified Lin as the individual who had picked up her phone, leading to his arrest in Taipa on Saturday.

Under questioning, he denied the accusation.

In the second case, the suspect surnamed Wong, who is in his forties, is a casino dealer.

According to Kong, a resident left his smartwatch worth 2,000 patacas in a public toilet in Coloane last month. Later, he went back to search for the watch but it had gone.

Subsequently, police officers identified Wong as the individual who had picked up the watch. He was summoned to a police station for questioning last week.

Wong admitted to the crime and told the police that he had sold the watch in the mainland for 200 yuan (219 patacas).

The two suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing theft-by-finding charges, Kong said. ■



This undated photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows PSP officers escorting the mainland theft-by-finding suspect to a police station in Taipa.

No mediation process needed if family dispute involves domestic violence: Vong

Ginnie Liang

Lawmaker-cum-lawyer Vong Hin Fai, who heads the Legislative Assembly's 3rd Standing Committee, said yesterday that if a family dispute has been confirmed to involve domestic violence, mediators could halt the process and draft a report to allow victims to pursue immediate legal action.

The committee held a closed-door meeting yesterday to review the bill – the outline of which was passed during a plenary session in November –after which Vong said during a media briefing that his committee aims to finish the review of the bill today before sending it to another plenary session for its article-by-article review.

According to the bill, parties must undergo mediation before engaging in judicial proceedings, such as cases involving litigated divorces, the exercise of parental rights, the provision of alimonies, and property divisions.

Vong said that about 200 such cases occur each year.

Vong also said that while the committee members generally support the bill's approach, some have expressed apprehension about the necessity of mandatory mediation, particularly in cases



Lawmaker-cum-lawyer Vong Hin Fai (left), who chairs the legislature's 3rd Standing Committee, and the committee's secretary Leong Sun lok, pose after the committee's closed-door meeting reviewing the government's bill on family disputes mediation yesterday. – Photo: Ginnie Liang

involving domestic violence, where reconciliation may be impossible.

The bill also specifies that the mediators shall be officials from the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) or registered social workers with relevant professional qualifications, with no monetary compensation for their services. Currently, there are over 1,000 registered social workers in Macau, and the government plans to compile a list of family dispute mediators, ensuring that parties incur no costs for their services, Vong said.

Vong quoted some committee members as saying that they were concerned about the mediators' limited qualifications, asking about the possibility of including more qualified professionals.

Vong noted that as the bill's pre-litigation mediation system is a new initiative, the current focus is on carrying out the mediation process on a trial basis with the existing personnel, adding that with around 200 such cases each year, the need for a larger pool of mediators was not deemed necessary at this stage. ■

Restaurateur falls for fake order scam from 'school'

William Chan

The female owner of a restaurant was defrauded out of HK\$40,000 by a duo consisting of a "teacher" and a "food supplier", Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Kim Fong said at a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Cheong, the owner received a call last week from someone claiming to be a "teacher" of a local school, who requested 400 delivery meals totalling 14,300 patacas. The "teacher" later called back to say they wanted to order 136 servings of a traditional Chinese

dish, known as "big bowl feast" (盤菜 – transliterated as "poon choi" in Cantonese). They claimed that the "school" had had a dispute with the "big bowl feast supplier," preventing them from placing the order directly. The "teacher" even claimed that the meals were intended as a donation to a nursing home.

Cheong noted that the owner agreed to the order and even paid the "supplier" HK\$40,000 in advance for the "school." Afterward, she lost contact with the scammer and subsequently reported the case to the police.



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Kim Fong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. – Photo: William Chan

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Macau Weather

CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY PERIODS. FORCE 2 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 45% AND 85%.



15°C~21°C

Source: SMG

Civic leaders mull enhancing Cotai's open-air performance venue



Civic leaders from Taipa and Coloane Community Service Consultative Council as well as Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) President Chao Wai leng (third from left, facing the camera) attend yesterday's meeting at the Seac Pai Van Community Complex in Coloane. — Photo: Yuki Lei

Yuki Lei

Chaired by newly appointed Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) President Chao Wai leng, the Taipa and Coloane Community Service Consultative Council held its first plenary meeting for 2025 yesterday, during which a number of its members raised their concerns about improving the supporting facilities of the newly-established open-air performance venue in Cotai with a view to promoting the development of Macau's aim of becoming a "City of Performing Arts".

Yesterday's meeting at the Seac Pai Van Community Complex in Coloane was Chao's first public meeting since taking office as IAM president on New Year's Day.

Wong Leong Kuan, deputy convener of the government-appointed council, suggested increasing the number of free public bus routes to and from the city centre and central Taipa; setting up clear traffic signs or deploying additional staff to provide guidance for dispersing concert crowds; and further increasing the frequency of the Light Rail Transit (LRT). She quoted the views received after the trial gig at Cotai's open-air performance venue on December 28 as indicating that the guidelines on temporary traffic arrangements there were "unclear", the capacity of the LRT was insufficient to meet passenger demand, and there was a lack of adequate parking facilities in the surrounding areas.

She also suggested that the government, through its Coordination Group for Large-Scale Performances, coordinate with the integrated resort (IR) operators in the vicinity of the open-air performance venue to jointly provide shuttle bus services for concertgoers, pointing out that "this would help ease the dispersal of crowds and attract customers for

the relevant IR operators".

Fellow member Ha Chon Ieng, who also suggested that the government continue to optimise public transport between the open-air performance venue and various districts, upgrade transport planning and ancillary facilities, as well as improve the provision of additional shuttle bus service, he also urged the government to adopt a "forward-looking" approach in its planning by making use of the four functional zones of the performance venue in a "flexible" manner, such as by providing additional exits and bus stops in each of the four zones.

He also suggested that the government, on the premise of ensuring safety, set up art installations, lighting installations and interactive installations at the performance venue to attract residents and tourists alike to continue to visit the area after the respective performance, so as to achieve the objective of easing the flow of people leaving the area in an orderly manner.

Fellow member Leong Chon Kit said that as the LRT is the main mode of transport for residents and tourists alike when accessing the performance venue, it was necessary for the government to push the operator to accept more payment options at the LRT stations' gates and self-service ticket machines.

Apart from suggesting that the government further streamline its transport planning before another large-scale performances there, Un Su Kei, another fellow member, also suggested that the government consider allowing small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) operators to run their business at the open-air performance venue in a "pop-up mode" similar to Macau's traditional "street-stall economy". ■

MGM int'l regatta to kick off today

Rui Pastorin

The five-day 2025 MGM Macao International Regatta kicks off this morning, with the event featuring 270 top sailors from 22 countries and regions competing.

This year's competitions comprise the "World Match Racing Tour - Macao Match Cup", which starts today and is the opening event of the 2025 season; the Lotus Cup Regatta (IRC category) and the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area [GBA] Cup Regatta" (IRC category). Both the Lotus and GBA cups will kick off tomorrow.

According to yesterday's press conference at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau hotel in Nape, a total of 32 teams are competing, with 12 in the World Match Racing Tour, which was founded 25 years ago; nine in the Lotus Cup Regatta; and 11 in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cup Regatta.

With the World Match Racing Tour (WMRT) introduced to Macau for the first time, MGM China Holdings Limited President and Executive Director Kenneth Feng Xiaofeng remarked: "This upgrade not only demonstrates the international sailing industry's strong recognition of Macau's capabilities in hosting world-class events, but also fosters exchanges between Macau, the mainland,

and the global sailing community, while elevating the future development of Macau's sailing".

Among the top sailors from around the world competing in the World Match Racing Tour is Ian Williams, who, according to yesterday's Sports Bureau (ID) statement about the competition, is the most successful skipper in the tour's 25-year history and has recently claimed his eighth WMRT world championship title.

Williams, from the United Kingdom, told reporters on the sidelines of yesterday's press conference that this is the first time that he will be sailing in Macau, with the team looking forward to the regatta, aiming to do their best to try and win the competition. "We have a good record in these boats. We feel that we sail them quite fast, and so, for sure, we're here to win," he said.

Moreover, the Lotus Cup category will see the Big Boys Sailing Team and the Canados Sailing Team, the Macao International Regatta's Beneteau First 40.7 One-Design category champions in 2023 and 2024 respectively, competing, along with the mainland's Team Ningbo One, which will make its debut in the competition and is led by 2012 London Olympics Laser Radial gold medallist Xu Lijia.



UK skipper Ian Williams poses after yesterday's press conference at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau.

Aside from the competitions, fleet parades tomorrow and on Sunday and a "Family Fun Day" this weekend are to be hosted by the organisers, along with a photography competition.

Ursa Major Sailing Event Management Chairman Ma Man Wai also told reporters yesterday that their primary goal is to become a good platform for events and then promote Macau to people all over the world through this event and the city in one more direction.

More details are available on the bureau's social media pages or by visiting www.macaoregatta.com. ■



Guests and competing sailors pose for a group photo during yesterday's press conference at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau hotel in Nape. — Photos: Rui Pastorin



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Tsang Tseng Tseng delivers a speech during yesterday evening's opening ceremony at the Rui Cunha Foundation (FRC) on Avenida da Praia Grande.

- Photos: William Chan



Tsang Tseng Tseng presents

'Chinese Ink Rhythms of Saint Paul's Church'

William Chan

Local artist Tsang Tseng Tseng (曾貞貞) is showcasing her art exhibition titled "Chinese Ink Rhythms of Saint Paul's Church" (三巴墨韻國畫展) at the Rui Cunha Foundation (FRC). The opening ceremony took place yesterday evening.

Co-organised by the FRC, the Macau Youth Art Association (澳門青年美術協會), and the Macau Artists Society (澳門美術協會), the exhibition features approximately 40 Chinese ink paintings of various sizes, ranging from large-scale pieces to intricately detailed small compositions.

Tsang, also known by her pseudonym Three Zan (三真)*, is currently pursuing her doctoral studies at the China Academy of Art, focusing on the renowned Qing Dynasty painter Wu Li (吳歷).

An exhibition statement, quoting Lok Hei, president of the Macau Artists Society, highlighted Wu Li as a significant artist from the late Ming to early Qing dynasties with notable cultural and artistic ties to Macau. The statement also added that Tsang's Chinese paintings are rooted in tradition while incorporating innovative elements, blending classical elegance with a contemporary flair. "Through a focus on brush and ink, she aims to convey a sense of peace and freedom amidst the chaos of the modern world," Lok said.

In her opening ceremony speech, Tsang mentioned that the exhibition is a continuation of her previous show, "San-pa chi" (三巴集)**, held at the 10 Fantasia gallery in 2023. She expressed the view that the current exhibition intends to foster an artistic dialogue connecting artists with Macau.

In a past interview with the *Post* regarding her previous exhibition, Tsang shared insights into her artistic style and the influence she drew from Wu Li.***

The exhibition will run until next Saturday, January 18, with free admission.

The exhibition is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Friday, from 9 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, and is closed on Sunday. Visitors can also pick up postcards featuring Tsang's artworks at the exhibition.

*"Three Genuines"

***Saint Paul's Ruins collection*

***<https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/19810>



Big Taipa Hill Tunnel to cost up to 1.55 billion patacas: govt

Tony Wong

The government's Big Taipa Hill Tunnel project will cost up to 1.55 billion patacas in total, according to calculations based on its announcements released yesterday and previously.

The tunnel project will be carried out in two phases, based on separate tenders. The first phase will consist of the construction of a 600-metre-long tunnel under Big Taipa Hill and two flyovers with a total length of 400 metres, leading to Avenida Wai Long (偉龍馬路) and Avenida do Aeroporto (機場大馬路) on its south side, while the second phase will build an 890-metre-long flyover linking the tunnel's north side in Pac On district with the sea-crossing Macau Bridge.

The Public Works Bureau (DSOP) launched a limited tender on May 29 last year when it requested construction companies to submit their intentions to bid for the tunnel project's first phase, i.e., the tunnel and the two flyovers on its south side, with the top five qualified companies, decided by score calculations, to be eligible to submit their quotations.

A total of eight construction companies had submitted their intentions to bid for the tunnel project's first phase, which were assessed by DSOP officials based on four criteria, namely their respective general ability to carry out construction projects (accounting for 40 percent of the scores), construction techniques and experience (accounting for 30 percent), human resources (accounting for 20 percent), and interview results with officials (accounting for 10 percent).

The bureau announced the five companies with the highest scores in the Official Gazette (BO) on



The artist's rendition downloaded from the Public Works Bureau's (DSOP) website yesterday shows the future Big Taipa Hill Tunnel's flyovers on its south side.

October 23, according to which they were required to submit their quotations by January 6. All five companies submitted their bids by Monday's deadline, which were unsealed by DSOP officials yesterday. All bids were accepted.

The winning bidder will be required to carry out the final design of the project's first phase before starting the construction.

1st phase to cost b/w 790 million & 1.11 billion patacas

A DSOP statement yesterday announced that the quotations for the tunnel project's first phase (final design plus construction) proposed by the five bidders range from 790 million patacas to 1.11 billion patacas.

The limited tender has set a maximum period of 1,165 working days for the completion of the project's first phase, with the first

150 working days earmarked for the completion of its final design.

Yesterday's statement announced that the final design and construction periods proposed by the five bidders are 1,048 or 1,049 working days.

The bureau launched a public tender in October last year for the tunnel project's second phase, i.e., the flyover on the tunnel's north side, for which a total of 11 construction companies submitted their bids, which were unsealed by DSOP officials last month. All bids were accepted. The public tender also comprises final design plus construction.

2nd phase to cost b/w 413 million & 438 million patacas

According to last month's DSOP announcements, the quotations for the tunnel project's second phase (final design plus

construction) proposed by the 11 bidders range from 413 to 438 million patacas.

The public tender has set a maximum period of 600 working days for the completion of the project's second phase, with the first 100 working days earmarked for the completion of its final design. According to last month's DSOP announcements, the final design and construction periods proposed by the 11 bidders are identical, 540 working days.

Consequently, according to calculations based on the quotations submitted for the limited tender, which were unsealed yesterday, and those submitted for the public tender, which were unsealed last month, the Big Taipa Hill Tunnel project will cost between 1.2 and 1.55 billion patacas in total.

The bureau also said yesterday that the construction of the tunnel and the two flyovers on its south

side was now expected to get off the ground in the third quarter of this year, a change from last year's DSOP announcement which said that the construction was expected to start in the second quarter of 2025.

The bureau said last month that the construction of the flyover linking the tunnel's north side at Pac On district with the sea-crossing Macau Bridge was expected to get off the ground in the second quarter of 2025.

The future Big Taipa Hill Tunnel will enable drivers to travel directly between Macau Bridge and Cotai.

The sea-crossing Macau Bridge, which opened in October last year, connects Taipa island's Pac On district and the Macau peninsula's Zone A land reclamation area and its adjacent man-made island where the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) Macau checkpoint is located.

The DSOP website notes that "a straight traffic line" between Rotunda do Aeroporto (飛機場圓形地) near Cotai and Pac On where Macau Bridge lands is currently blocked by Big Taipa Hill, known as Taipa Grande in Portuguese and "Tai Tam San" in Cantonese.

Rotunda do Aeroporto is located outside the University Hospital of the private Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST).

Currently, without a tunnel under Big Taipa Hill, vehicles travelling between Macau Bridge and Cotai have to use the very busy Estrada de Pac On (北安大馬路) and Avenida Wai Long where the airport and the Taipa Ferry Terminal are located.

The future Big Taipa Hill Tunnel will provide drivers with a direct link between Macau Bridge and Cotai. ■

2 more critical flu cases: 38-year-old woman & 57-year-old man

Ginnie Liang

The Health Bureau (SSM) announced in a statement last night that two more critical cases of influenza were reported yesterday, a 38-year-old woman and a 57-year-old local man, with the latter suffering from chronic diseases.

According to last night's statement, the 38-year-old local woman came down with a fever and cough last Sunday and sought treatment at a private medical

institution where she was diagnosed with Influenza B virus.

On Monday, she was admitted to the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre after suffering from shortness of breath, the statement said, adding that a chest X-ray at the public hospital showed that she was suffering from Influenza B combined with pneumonia, because of which she was taken to undergo treatment in its intensive care unit (ICU) yesterday.

The second case is a 57-year-old

local man with a history of chronic illness, who developed a fever, cough and difficulty breathing on Monday evening. He was immediately taken to the private Kiang Wu Hospital for treatment and was diagnosed with Influenza A combined with pneumonia.

The statement last night said that both patients were in a critical condition and on ventilators yesterday, adding that neither had received the seasonal influenza jab for this year, while their family members, as of yesterday, had not come down with any flu symptoms.

Meanwhile, last night's statement also announced that two flu-like cluster cases were reported yesterday, involving a total of 12 schoolchildren.

According to the bureau, the influenza virus in Macau is now active, exceeding the alert level and has entered its peak. Residents are urged to pay more attention to the threat, the statement said, adding that residents who have not received

the influenza vaccine, especially pregnant women, young children, the elderly and the chronically ill, are more prone to serious

complications or even death after being infected with the influenza virus and should get their flu jab as soon as possible. ■

Symptoms of Influenza

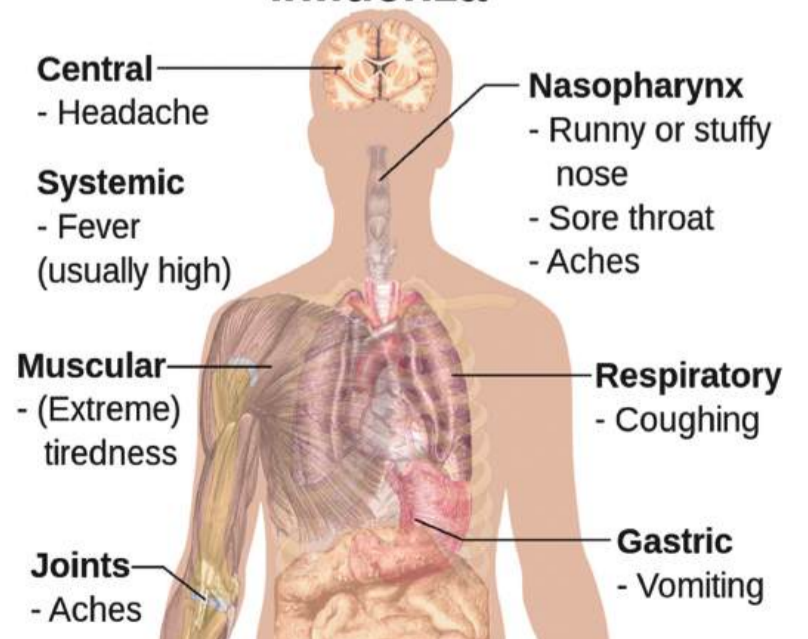


Image courtesy of Dr Mikael Häggström/Wikimedia Commons

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 1.22 pct lower

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 1.22 percent to close at 19,447.58 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index dropped 1.2 percent to end at 7,049.71 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index fell 0.92 percent to 4,354.8 points. —Xinhua

3 tenants of Plot P seniors' rental housing want to move due to stench: govt

Staff Reporter

Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) President Wilson Hon Wai said yesterday that three tenants living in the government's high-rise rental residential building for senior citizens on Plot P in Areia Preta district have requested that their lease be cancelled due to the stench affecting the area near the building, or for "other personal reasons".

Hon made the remarks while speaking to reporters after attending a committee meeting in the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Hon's remarks came after the government said on Monday that the ongoing cleaning of sewer pipes under the site of the newly completed temporary housing project, located next to the rental residential building for seniors, has been identified as one of the sources of the ongoing stench affecting the neighbourhood near the peninsula's northern waterfront.

The government also said on Monday that the sewer cleaning work is expected to

be completed by the end of this week.

Plot P is a large plot near the peninsula's northern coast, where the rental residential building for seniors is located and where the government's temporary housing project was completed at the end of last year. The newly completed temporary housing estate comprising eight towers is earmarked for property owners affected by urban renewal projects to rent temporarily during the redevelopment of their former homes.

Tenants have gradually moved into their flats in batches since mid-October last year after the rental housing estate for seniors, the first of its kind in the government's housing programme, was inaugurated in late September.

The high-rise has a total of 1,815 studio-style units. Its podium levels are now equipped with various facilities such as a clubhouse, a health facility and a restaurant.

Hon acknowledged yesterday that the government has recently received

complaints from tenants of 10 units about being affected by the foul odour.

According to Hon, the findings of an investigation showed that in some of the 10 flats, the stench was emanating from outside, while in the other flats, the reek was merely due to the respective tenants' failure to pour water into the toilet trap.

Among the 10 tenants, according to Hon, three have requested that their lease be cancelled due to the stench, or for "other personal reasons".

Hon did not mention whether the three tenants' leases have actually been cancelled.

The other seven have requested that they be allowed to move to other flats in the high-rise, Hon said.

Concerning the seven tenants' request, Hon said, the government was studying the extent to which different flats in the building are being affected by the stench, before "making proper arrangements accordingly". ■



Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) President Wilson Hon Wai talks to reporters in the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday.

— Photo: Ginnie Liang

NDRC unveils guideline for building unified national market, driving demand and openness

BEIJING — China's top economic planner yesterday released a guideline for building a unified national market, breaking down market barriers to boost domestic demand while enhancing openness.

The guideline, issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), aims to encourage all localities and government departments to accelerate their integration into the unified national market and actively support its development.

Key measures outlined in the guideline include unifying the underlying institutions and rules of the market, improving the high-standard market infrastructure connectivity, building a unified market for factors and resources, advancing the high-standard integration of goods and services markets, enhancing fair and unified regulation, and curbing unfair market competition and improper intervention.

ADDRESSING BOTTLENECKS FOR SMOOTH CIRCULATION

The concept of a unified market is not new in China. As early as 2013, the country introduced a work plan to remove regional blockades and establish an open market system. The push gained momentum in March 2022 when central authorities issued guidelines calling for accelerated progress.

Most recently, the tone-setting Central Economic Work Conference held last month identified the formulation of a guideline for building a unified national market as a key task for 2025.

Liu Rihong, an official from the Research Office of the State Council, noted that the relatively weak domestic demand, especially in consumption, is a vital bottleneck for economic circulation.

Liu emphasized that building a unified national market is essential to unleashing domestic demand potential, facilitating the efficient flow of goods and factors, improving resource allocation, and fully harnessing the market's industrial and demand advantages.

The guideline aims to tackle these challenges by drawing firm "red lines" to eliminate local protectionism, regional barriers, and unfair practices in market access, bidding and government procurement, NDRC official Wang Shancheng told a press conference yesterday.

Local authorities are prohibited from using administrative or penal measures to intervene in economic disputes or infringe on business rights illegally, the guideline said, adding that unlawful

cross-jurisdictional law enforcement or administration are also banned.

It stated that the cross-regional flow of goods and factors must not be restricted, and bidding and government procurement should avoid limiting or designating specific patents, trademarks, brands, parts, origins or suppliers.

The document also calls for establishing a unified national social security public service platform, allowing people to access social security in the locality where they work even if they do not hold local residency.

Wang said work is underway to revise and publish a new negative list for market access to further optimize market access management.

FOSTERING OPENNESS, FAIR COMPETITION

"Far from being closed-door or isolated, the unified national market is a global-facing and highly open market," said Li Weizheng, an official with the Ministry of Commerce, at the press conference.

Efforts are being made to streamline foreign investment market access. Notably, the 2024 national negative list for foreign investment eliminated all market access restrictions for foreign investors in the manufacturing sector. This was a groundbreaking move for global manufacturers entering the Chinese economy.

In addition to reducing barriers, efforts are underway to improve the business environment by ensuring national treatment for foreign-funded enterprises in terms of access to factors of production, license application, standards setting, and government procurement.

Li noted that since the beginning of 2024, the Ministry of Commerce has held 15 foreign enterprise roundtables, resolving over 370 issues raised by foreign firms to ensure their success in the Chinese market.

Li particularly highlighted that in the automobile trade-in program, new cars from foreign brands account for over 35 percent of sales, driving rapid sales growth for foreign-funded automakers.

Looking ahead, the country will continue to expand high-level opening-up to attract global resources through a smooth domestic circulation and provide a broader platform for various business entities, Wang added.

— Xinhua

Washington's 'national security' farce undermines global trade and its own interests

Commentary

BEIJING — Washington, once an architect of the global economic order, now seems intent on dismantling it, one "national security" excuse at a time.

For US politicians, foreign investment and economic competition have been conveniently labeled as "threats" to national security. That is how the White House recently justified its blocking of Japan's Nippon Steel from acquiring US Steel.

While the US protectionist tactics against Chinese companies stem from framing China as a "primary strategic competitor," the blockage of the US Steel merger is more rooted in domestic politics. The Democrats promised to kill the transaction — a sensitive political issue — in the 2024 US presidential campaign.

Regardless of the motivations — whether domestic political calculations or an attempt to reinforce US economic hegemony, the message is clear: Washington has no qualms about resorting to protectionism.

This obstinate adoption of protectionist policies not only jeopardizes the future of the US economy, but also strikes a serious blow to the stability of the global trade system.

History is replete with examples of Washington chanting "free trade" in sectors where America dominates, but wielding protectionist sticks on the pretext of national security where it does not.

From using coercive tactics such as the 1985 Plaza Accord to counter Japan's economic influence, to implementing measures like extraterritorial jurisdiction to dismantle iconic French manufacturing company Alstom, and continually finding pretexts to hurt competitive Chinese high-tech enterprises, Washington has long been indulging in dressed-up protectionism, for which national security is repeatedly used as a handy excuse.

For Washington, tariffs, sanctions, and unilateral measures have replaced cooperation. This is not just detrimental for other countries; it is disastrous for the United States itself.

As Nippon Steel and US Steel pointed out, the blockage of the deal sent "a chilling message to any company based in a US allied country contemplating significant investment in the United States." *The New York Times* also argued that the decision is "a departure from America's long-established culture of open investment, one that could have wide-ranging implications for the US economy."

By closing the door on foreign investments and rejecting economic and technological competition, the United States risks isolating itself from the global marketplace, undermining its competitiveness, and stalling the very innovation and capital influx that have historically fueled its economic strength.

Blocking foreign investments and rejecting competition will not revive American industry; it will only cripple it. Washington must stop using "national security" as a blanket excuse to stifle competition.

Protectionism is a dangerous game of economic self-sabotage. In the end, it is American consumers and workers who will pay the price.

— Xinhua