

Lee visits Macau, meets Sam, vows joint promotion of GBA development

Tony Wong

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai yesterday met with his Hong Kong counterpart John Lee Ka-chiu during the latter's visit to Macau where they exchanged views on various topics, such as both sides jointly promoting the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA), as well as new opportunities arising from the ongoing second-phase development of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) announced in a statement last night.

In addition to his visit to Macau, Lee also visited Hengqin with the aim of gaining a better understanding of its latest development achievements, before returning to Hong Kong yesterday afternoon.

In his meeting with Lee at Government Headquarters, the statement said, Sam noted that they met again yesterday following their meeting in February this year when he visited Hong Kong. As the nation's two special administrative regions, Sam said, Hong Kong and Macau have, over the years, fully leveraged the unique advantages brought about by the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, making remarkable development achievements that have drawn global attention.

According to the statement, Sam said that he expects the two cities to promote cross-border policy coordination and strengthen internal and external connectivity, with the



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (right) shakes hands with his Hong Kong counterpart John Lee Ka-chiu at Government Headquarters yesterday. — Photo: GCS

aim of jointly contributing to the nation's ongoing high-level opening-up endeavours.

Sam noted that both Hong Kong and Macau are core cities of the GBA and core engines for regional development. Consequently, he said, by continuously elevating their cooperation, particularly in driving the high-quality development in emerging industries and technological innovation, the two cities

can make greater contributions to achieving mutual benefits and shared success among all cities in the GBA.

According to the statement, Sam pointed out that the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is an important platform for Macau's participation in the GBA's integrated development and for promoting Macau's appropriate economic

diversification. Sam noted that the Macau government has, in line with the projected "Macau + Hengqin" development model, set up its Leadership Group for Promoting the Development of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, with the aim of strengthening its support for Hengqin's development in terms of various aspects such as policies, legislation, personnel, and resource allocation.

Sam said that the Macau government welcomes more Hong Kong enterprises to invest in Hengqin so that they can seize the new opportunities brought about by the ongoing second-phase development of the in-depth cooperation zone.

Moreover, according to the statement, Sam also said that Hong Kong and Macau can leverage the opportunities created by the 15th National Games to jointly organise more sporting events in the two cities, with the aim of promoting the collaborative development of sport in the GBA, thereby attracting more diverse sources of visitors to Hong Kong, Macau, and the entire GBA.

Sam also noted that Hong Kong and Macau each possess distinct advantages in their respective tourism industries, adding that the two cities can continue to strengthen transport network connectivity to make it more convenient for residents and visitors to travel between them, while also fully leveraging their respective complementary strengths in tourism to jointly attract more visitors from other places.

Continued on p.5

2 Chinese nationals confirmed dead in Bali fast boat capsizing accident

JAKARTA – The Chinese consulate general in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, confirmed yesterday that two Chinese nationals were killed in a fast boat capsizing accident off Indonesia's Bali Island earlier in the day.

Head of the Denpasar Search and Rescue Office, I Nyoman Sidakarya, said the incident occurred at around 3 p.m. local time, when the fast boat Dolphin II was hit by large waves while traveling from Nusa Penida Port to Sanur Port in Bali Province. The vessel capsized as it neared its destination.

The boat was carrying 75 passengers, including 73 foreign tourists, as well as five crew members at the time. The accident left

two people dead and one missing, while 77 others were rescued, according to Sidakarya.

Following the accident, local search and rescue teams deployed inflatable boats and personnel to conduct rescue operations. Search efforts for the missing person are still underway.

The Chinese consulate said it immediately activated its emergency response mechanism after the accident, maintained close contact with Indonesian authorities, and worked to handle related aftermath matters.

The consulate also reminded Chinese citizens in Indonesia to monitor sea condition information and pay attention to travel safety.

— Xinhua



People and officers use rope to pull the capsized fast boat to the sea shore at Sanur beach in Bali, Indonesia, yesterday. — Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

Nation announces phased implementation of free preschool education

Starting from the autumn semester, mainland China will waive the care and education fees for children in public kindergartens in the year prior to entering primary school, according to a guideline made public by the State Council yesterday. — Story on p. 6

Japanese firm seeks approval for stem cell treatment for Parkinson's

Japanese drugmaker Sumitomo Pharma said yesterday it is seeking approval for a Parkinson's disease treatment that transplants stem cells into a patient's brain, following a successful clinical trial. — Story on p. 7

Trump signals tariffs on pharma, chips as trade war widens

US President Donald Trump signaled yesterday that fresh tariffs on imported pharmaceuticals and semiconductors could be unveiled as soon as the coming week, as he presses on in efforts to reshape global trade. — Story on p. 8

Police bust currency exchange gang, involving HK\$300 million

Ada Lei

Four local men were arrested on Monday for engaging in illegal currency exchange activities that involved a total of HK\$300 million (309 million patacas), Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Un Hong said during a special press conference yesterday.

Cheong identified the suspects as a 30-year-old watch buyer surnamed Chan, two 32-year-old men surnamed Ao and Ieong, and a 30-year-old male surnamed Chong. Ao, Ieong and Chong told the police that they are jobless.

Cheong said that Chan purchased watches on the behalf of other people.

According to Cheong, in November, the police discovered Chan, Ao, Ieong, and Chong engaging in illegal currency exchange activities in Macau. The police noticed that Chan and Ao were key members of the gang who recruited Ieong and Chong to seek clients for currency exchanges.

Beginning in November 2023, Chan and Ao conducted illegal currency exchanges with gamblers in various casinos, hotel guestrooms, or inside their own cars. They also rented a flat in Coloane to hide their funds. Later, Chan and Ao recruited two lower-level members, Ieong and Chong, providing them with illicit cash while instructing them to carry out illegal currency exchanges

with gamblers in local casinos.

Cheong added that there were six witnesses who had previously engaged in currency exchange deals with the gang, three of whom had exchanged currency with the suspects between Friday and Sunday, amounting to over HK\$7 million. Reportedly, the suspects earned HK\$230,000 from these deals.

Cheong said that the gang had been participating in currency exchange activities since November 2023 and shared the profits equally. Since the Law on Combating Illegal Gambling Crimes took effect on 29 October last year, the total amount of illicit exchange transactions conducted by the gang reached HK\$300 million, with estimated illegal profits of HK\$10 million.

Cheong noted that Chan, Ao, Ieong, and Chong were separately arrested on Monday in Taipa and Coloane. The police seized HK\$150,000 in cash, HK\$1.4 million in casino chips, eight POS (Point of Sale) machines, a large number of POS transaction receipts, two computers, and seven mobile phones from their flats and cars. Under questioning, all suspects refused to cooperate.

The four suspects were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, each facing a charge of illegal currency exchange, according to Cheong. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded suspects to a PJ van outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. — Photo: Ada Lei

Year's 1st 'Black Rainstorm' warning signal hoisted yesterday

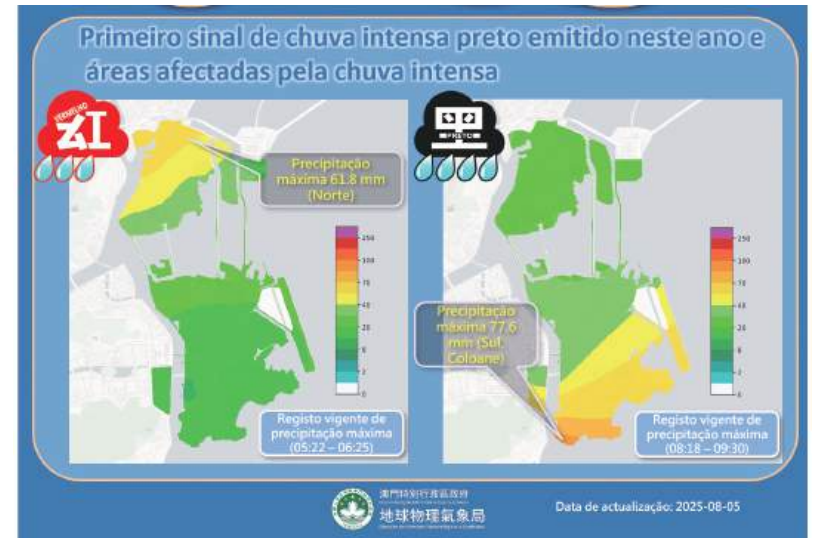
Armindo Neves

The Meteorological and Geophysics Bureau (SMG) issued a Black Rainstorm warning signal yesterday at 08:18 a.m. warning the public to complete all appropriate hazard precautions triggered by heavy rain.

According to the weather station, the maximum rainfall at 08:18 a.m. yesterday recorded 77.6 millimetres. Therefore, the bureau said, it issued this year's first Black Rainstorm warning signal.

The observatory said, due to the persistent influence from active southwest monsoon winds and upper-air disturbances, unstable weather has continued along the Guangdong coast in recent days. Macau experienced successive torrential rain starting from early yesterday morning, with the first intense downpour concentrated between 5 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. The bureau issued successive Yellow and then Red Rainstorm Warning signals, 61.8 millimetres of rain was recorded in an hour.

The second intense torrential downpour occurred between 7:30 a.m.



and 9:30 a.m., according to the weather station, 77.6 millimetres of rain was recorded in an hour, prompting the observatory to issue this year's first Black Rainstorm warning signal.

The observatory said, as of 5 p.m., multiple weather stations across Macau had recorded cumulative rainfall exceeding 100 millimetres. The highest measurement came from the Dr. Sun Yat Sen Municipal Park, with a total accumulation of 121.8 millimetres.

The observatory forecasts frequent showers and thunderstorms to persist this morning. However, as the subtropical high-pressure system gradually moves towards southern China tomorrow, showers will diminish with increasing sunshine. From late this week onwards, intensely hot weather is expected, with maximum temperatures predicted to rise to around 32 to 33 Celsius. SMG reminds public to take heat precautions and stay hydrated. ■

Entrepreneurship competition injects new momentum into Macau's tech sector

Armindo Neves

The "2025 Macau Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition" successfully concluded its finals yesterday. This competition aimed to inject new momentum into Macau's technology sector."

This contest co-organised by the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Preparation Committee, the Association for the Promotion of Science and Technology of Macau and Da Heng Qin (Macao) Co. Ltd. and implemented by the Macao Young Entrepreneur Incubation Centre (MYEIC).

This year's competition received 171 project submissions. After rigorous evaluation by a 13-member judging panel comprising government representatives, investors, financial experts, and industry leaders, the finals were held yesterday at the Macau Science Centre (MSC). The event featured two categories, "Startup Team Division and Open Enterprise Division" with 12 in each division, a total of 24 shortlisted projects delivering pitch presentations. Final rankings were determined by expert judges and investors.

Economic and Technological Development Bureau Deputy Director Cheang Hio Man said in a speech that the government supports startups through policies such as the Young Entrepreneur Incubation Centre, while leveraging development opportunities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) to provide a favourable environment for youth entrepreneurship. She encouraged young entrepreneurs to seize the opportunities presented by the new



Economic and Technological Development Bureau Deputy Director Cheang Hio Man delivers a speech during the awards ceremony of the "2025 Macau Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition" at the Macao Science Center (MSC). — Photo: Armindo Neves

economy, contributing to Macau's economic diversification and the nation's future development.

Da Heng Qin (Macao) Limitada General Manager Li Haodong said that the competition has become a flagship youth entrepreneurship event in Macau, with 75 percent of this year's participating projects originating locally - highlighting the city's vibrant innovation ecosystem. The shortlisted projects focus on cutting-edge fields such as new materials, hard tech, and low-carbon solutions, aligning closely with Macau's "1+4" strategy, aiming to pool elite talent and propel technological innovation forwards.

Peking University Innovation and Entrepreneurship School Dean Liu Deying who was one of the judges, said that the quality of projects in this year's competition had significantly

improved, with both technological sophistication and market potential reaching new heights. "Focus on core competencies, solidify your foundations before expanding, to thrive in global competition," was his advice to startups.

Zhang Tianran, representing the winning team in the Startup Team Division, stated that their project focuses on developing fully automated blood-drawing robots, which have already been deployed in 31 top-tier hospitals across mainland China and are currently in partnership discussions with Macau healthcare institutions. With secured multi-round funding and ample capital, the team aims to leverage Macau's platform to expand into Portuguese-speaking markets, pioneering a new model for contactless medical diagnostics. ■

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Macau Weather

**MAINLY CLOUDY.
SHOWERS, HEAVY AT FIRST.
A FEW THUNDERSTORMS.
SHOWERS WILL EASE OFF
LATER. FORCE 3 TO 5 SOUTH TO
SOUTHWESTERLY WINDS WITH
GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
WILL RANGE BETWEEN
80% AND 98%.**



24°C~29°C

Source: SMG

UM holds joint meeting to advance Macau-Hengqin integration, int'l talent development

Khalel Vallo

The University of Macau (UM) held the Joint Meeting of the University Assembly (UA) and University Council (UC) (大學議院及校董會聯席會議) on Monday, where Chancellor Sam Hou Fai set forth five key expectations for the university to support Macau's strategy as a global hub for high-calibre talent, according to a UM press release yesterday.

The statement highlighted that the joint meeting was attended by O Lam, secretary for social affairs and culture, members of UA and

UC, and representatives from relative departments of UM.

According to the statement, Macau SAR Chief Executive, Chancellor of UM and Chair of the UA Sam emphasised that Macau's higher education sector is experiencing an "unprecedented period of development," and underscored the government's commitment to integrating education, technology, and talent.

The statement noted that Sam's first expectation is for UM to seize opportunities arising from the integration of Macau and Hengqin

by advancing the "Macao-Hengqin international education town project", ensuring oversight of construction, funding, and research-industry synergies.

Secondly, Sam urged the university to enhance its talent attraction and development strategies by aligning academic programmes with national development needs and focusing on industries relevant to Macau's economic diversification.

The third expectation, according to the statement, is to foster in-depth industry-academia collaboration through innovative partnerships with the business sector, aiming to commercialise research outcomes

and contribute to productive forces in Macau and Hengqin.

In the fourth expectation, Sam called for the university to elevate its internationalisation efforts by deepening cooperation with Portuguese-speaking and English-speaking countries and regions as well as Asia, while expanding pragmatic and sustainable student exchange programmes, the statement said.

The fifth expectation, he encouraged UM to closely align with national education strategies and Macau's policy goals, contributing to Chinese mainland's education leadership and Macau's economic transformation, the statement noted.

The statement added that UC Chair Peter Lam Kam Seng highlighted that UM has made progress in governance, curriculum planning, and the establishment of the Hengqin campus. He affirmed the institution's commitment to quality education and national development integration.

Meanwhile, UMRector Yonghua Song (aka Song Yonghua) added that the university is expanding its student intake, strengthening its curriculum, and refining its domestic and global cooperation networks in line with its Five-Year Development Plan, the statement concluded. ■



This handout photo provided by the University of Macau (UM) shows the Joint Meeting of the University Assembly (UA) and University Council (UC) in the Ho Yin Conference Hall on Monday.

UTM students drive innovation through industry projects in culinary heritage, tech, & rural tourism

Khalel Vallo

Undergraduates from Macau University of Tourism (UTM) have completed three hands-on industry collaborations, tackling challenges in heritage food branding, tourism tech innovation, and rural revitalisation, according to a UTM PR statement yesterday.

As part of their final-year capstone, students from UTM's Tourism Business Management and Hotel Management programmes partnered with local and regional stakeholders to deliver impact solutions, the statement said.

The statement highlighted that one project supported Macanese fast-food concept "Siu Saam Baa", where students proposed business models for mainland expansion, addressing digital marketing, franchising, and menu localisation, where the founder, Adelino da Conceição de Assis, commended their "innovative and practical" strategies.

According to Wikipedia, Macanese cuisine is mainly influenced by Chinese cuisine, especially Cantonese and European cuisines, predominantly Portuguese and influences from Southeast Asia and the Lusophone world, due to Macau's past as a Portuguese colony and long

history of being an international tourist gambling centre.

It is an early example of a fusion cuisine and dates to the 16th century.[1]

In a second project, students worked with tech innovator "Cave Giant", identifying applications for its 3D scanning and AI imaging tools in hospitality and education. Proposals included virtual cultural tours and immersive training modules, the statement added.

The statement noted that the third project focused on Taishan City in Guangdong, where students conducted on-site research and developed tourism strategies to enhance local development. Their ideas were presented to the Taishan Youth Association of Macau and aimed at fostering sustainable heritage tourism.

UTM Assistant Prof. Fernando Lourenço said that the projects illustrate how academic research can translate into tangible outcomes, noting that students applied creativity, strategic thinking, and cultural awareness to support business growth and community revitalisation, the statement concluded, adding that their efforts reflect UTM's dedication to fostering meaningful collaboration between education and industry. ■



This undated handout photo provided by Macau University of Tourism (UMT) shows participants attending a session of the "Siu Saam Baa" project in an unverified location.

Macao Green Hotel Award

In order to support the achievement of the national "Dual Carbon" goal, the "Macao Green Hotel Award" has been encouraging the industry to accelerate its green transformation and implement various carbon reduction measures over the years.

<p>GOLD 2024</p>	 澳門金沙 MORPHEUS 摩珀斯	 迎：尚	 順居 NUWA CCD
	 美高梅	 澳門大倉酒店	 美高梅
<p>GOLD 2023</p>	 美高梅	 澳門威尼斯人	 FOUR SEASONS HOTEL MACAO
	 澳門巴黎人	 HARBORVIEW HOTEL 維多利亞酒店	 GALAXY HOTEL 銀河酒店
<p>GOLD 2022</p>	 CONRAD MACAO 澳門康萊德酒店	 LONDONER 澳門倫敦人酒店	 SHERATON GRAND MACAO 澳門喜來登大酒店
	 STUDIO CITY MACAO 新濠影滙	 JW MARRIOTT MACAO	 BANYAN TREE MACAO 澳門柏文
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Dolce Voce Choir
Macau

PORTUGAL CONCERT TOUR
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LisBon Music Fest

LISBON
Ruínas do Carmo
August, 2 | 21h30

BATALHA
Mosteiro da Batalha
August, 6 | 21h30

PENICHE
Igreja de São Pedro
August, 7 | 21h30

PORTO
Sé Catedral
August, 9 | 19h

Conductor: Maria Vanessa Leão

Sponsors:
Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau
Fundo de Desenvolvimento da Cultura

BNU
Banco Nacional Ultramarino
大西洋銀行



Dolce Voce members pose at the Macau International Airport before embarking on their Portugal tour.

– Photos provided by Dolce Voce

Dolce Voce brings multicultural harmony to Portugal in 12-day tour

Interview by William Chan

Local choir Dolce Voce is currently captivating Portuguese audiences with a 12-day concert tour across four cities – Lisbon, Batalha, Peniche, and Porto – showcasing a repertoire that bridges Chinese and Portuguese musical traditions, conductor Maria Vanessa Leão told the *Post* yesterday in an online interview.

Founded in 2008, Dolce Voce – which means “sweet voice” in Italian – was established to promote the art of choral singing, enrich Macau’s choral music culture, and provide high-quality performances to the local community. The choir aims to elevate Macau’s cultural and artistic reputation internationally, marking significant milestones for the region’s choral community.

Leão revealed that the tour had been planned as early as 2020 but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After securing sponsorships, she expressed her delight that the tour has finally commenced.

This overseas performance is partially funded by the Cultural Development Fund of Macao and Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU).

Leão mentioned that the choir had meticulously curated a programme of over 20 a cappella works spanning a variety of styles, with distinct repertoires for each venue. The selections include hymns, folk songs, popular music, musical theatre excerpts, contemporary Chinese compositions, Macau Patuá songs, and adaptations of traditional Portuguese fado, performed in nearly 10 languages.

“We hope this diverse repertoire showcases Macau’s multicultural heritage and the choir’s artistic versatility, while fostering cultural exchange between China and Portugal,” Leão emphasised.

The choir departed last Thursday, beginning their tour in Lisbon at the invitation of the Lisbon International Youth Music Festival (Lisbon Music Fest). Dolce Voce delivered their first performance, alongside other international groups, at Ruínas do Carmo on Saturday.

“Out of all the songs, the one in Patuá, Macau Sam Assi [This is Macau], garnered the most interest from the audience, with some even approaching us after the performance for discussions,” Leão noted.

Dolce Voce will host a concert at Mosteiro da Batalha in Batalha today. Tomorrow, they will perform at Igreja de São Pedro in Peniche, and conclude their tour in Porto on Saturday with a performance at Sé Catedral.

Admission to all concerts is free. For schedules, check the poster or visit: <https://lisbonmusicfest.com/>



Maria Vanessa Leão conducts Dolce Voce at Ruínas do Carmo in Lisboa on Saturday.



Portuguese audience gives a standing ovation following Dolce Voce’s performance on Saturday.

Local senior loses 5.19 million patacas in investment scam: police

Ada Lei

An elderly local woman has fallen victim to an investment scam, losing a total of 5.19 million patacas, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Un Hong said during a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Cheong, the victim met a man online through the social media platform “RedNote” (also known as Xiaohongshu) in June. They later communicated via WhatsApp and developed an online friendship. The man encouraged the victim to invest on a website. Following his guidance, she engaged in stock and gold investments on the website, initially having earned HK\$1,000 after investing HK\$20,000. The victim successfully received the HK\$1,000 profit. Trusting the scammer, the victim decided to increase her investment and made multiple transfers to a designated Hong Kong bank account.

Cheong noted that between July 15 and 22, the victim made multiple transfers and handed over HK\$1.4 million to strangers in Hong Kong and Macau, totalling 5.19 million patacas.

However, when the victim



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Un Hong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference.

— Photo: Ada Lei

attempted to withdraw her funds again, the website's customer service claimed that her account had been frozen and requested an “unfreezing fee.” The victim complied but was again informed that her account was suspected of “money laundering” and was asked for further payments. Suspecting she had been scammed, she reported her total loss of 5.192 million patacas to the police on Friday. ■

Govt to set up 2 mock polling stations for legislative elections

Tony Wong

The Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) said yesterday that it will set up two mock polling stations for the upcoming direct and indirect legislative elections, one more than in the elections four years ago.

The 2025 direct and indirect legislative elections will take place on September 14.

CAEAL President Seng Ioi Man made the remarks while speaking to reporters yesterday after chairing a regular closed-door meeting of the commission at the Public Administration Building on Rua do Campo.

For the direct and indirect legislative elections four years ago, which took place on September 12, 2021, a mock polling station was set up in Tap Seac Multisport Pavilion, operating for five days between September 6 and 10.

Seng said yesterday that this time, two mock polling stations will be set up, one in Tap Seac Multisport Pavilion and the other in the Macau



Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) President Seng Ioi Man (3rd from right) addresses yesterday's press briefing at the Public Administration Building, flanked by fellow commission members (from left to right) Louie Wong Lok I, Mak Kim Meng, Lai U Hou, Ng Wai Han, and Daisy Ho In Mui.

— Photo: GCS

Forum complex in Zape, which will be operated for seven days between September 6 and 12, two more days than in four years ago.

The mock polling stations are to enable voters to familiarise themselves with the voting process in advance.

Seng also said that different to four years ago, this time the opening time of the two mock polling

stations will include a Saturday and Sunday, which will make it more convenient for voters wishing to use mock polling stations to arrange their schedules.

Seng said that the mock polling stations will be particularly useful for young, first-time voters to familiarise themselves with the voting process. ■

Lee visits Macau, meets Sam, vows joint promotion of GBA development

Continued from p.1

HK gov't's statement

Meanwhile, according to a statement by the Hong Kong government last night, Lee said during his meeting with Sam yesterday that the development of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is the nation's key strategic planning to enrich the implementation of the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, contributing to Macau's long-term prosperity and stability and its integration into the nation's overall development.

According to the statement, Lee noted that both Hong Kong and Macau are special administrative regions of the nation, enjoying unique advantages brought about by the implementation of the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, adding that the two cities enjoy close geographical ties, with frequent people-to-people and cultural exchanges, alongside solid

economic and trade relations, while the two sides have been working closely in areas such as economy, cross-border infrastructure, tourism, and culture.

Lee pointed out that Hong Kong and Macau are both parts of the GBA, pledging that Hong Kong will continue to promote the GBA's development in collaboration with Macau. By firmly upholding the principle of “One Country” and leveraging the benefits of “Two Systems”, Lee said, Hong Kong and Macau will achieve complementary strengths, pledging that Hong Kong will continue to strengthen cooperation with Macau, with the aim of together making greater contributions to the high-quality development of the GBA.

Lee visits Hengqin

Meanwhile, the statement by the Hong Kong government also said that Lee and members of his delegation also visited Hengqin yesterday. They visited

the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park of Cooperation between Guangdong and Macau, where they went to the Traditional Chinese Medicine Cultural Experience Centre, with the aim of gaining an understanding of the integration of traditional Chinese medicine and the cultural tourism industry in Hengqin.

Afterwards, the statement said, Lee and members of his delegation headed to the exhibition hall showcasing Hengqin's urban planning, where Lee exchanged views with other officials on the in-depth cooperation zone's management, development models and achievements.

The GCS statement did not mention Lee's visit to Hengqin yesterday.

Members of Lee's delegation visiting Macau yesterday included Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po, Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau, Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan, and Lee's chief-of-cabinet Carol Yip Man-kuen.

Macau officials who attended Sam's meeting with Lee yesterday included Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon, Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raymond Tam Vai Man, Sam's chief-of-cabinet Chan Kak, and Policy Research and Regional Development Bureau (DSEPRD) Director Cheong Chok Man. ■

HK hit by flooding after flurry of rainstorm warnings

HONG KONG – Parts of Hong Kong were brought to a standstill by flooding caused by heavy rains yesterday, after the highest-tier rainstorm warning was issued for the fourth time in eight days.

The city logged its highest daily rainfall in August since records began in 1884, at just over 355 millimetres recorded at the Hong Kong weather observatory's headquarters at 2 p.m..

The financial hub has suspended school classes and opened temporary shelters, and some hospital services such as outpatient clinics have also been affected.

The observatory said the “black” rainstorm warning – meaning downpours exceeding 70 millimetres in an hour – would remain in force at least until 5 p.m.. It was hoisted late on Monday and again in the pre-dawn hours.

More than 9,600 cloud-to-ground lightning strikes were recorded between 5 a.m. and noon, according to the observatory.

The weather service warned yesterday afternoon that “persistent rain will cause serious road flooding and traffic congestion”.

An AFP reporter saw some small boats had capsized off the coast of the eastern Tseung Kwan O district.

Cars were seen nearly submerged at an outdoor parking lot nearby.

The city's number two official Eric Chan urged the public to stay alert and said employers should consider flexible working arrangements that prioritise employee safety.

Emergency room service at the Queen Mary Hospital was affected for around two hours due to “severe flooding” on some roads, health authorities said.

Public transport slowed to a crawl in some districts and a handful of subway station exits were closed.

Hong Kong's airport saw delays to around 100 flights as of yesterday morning, with one departure and one arrival flight cancelled, according to the airport authority.

The Drainage Services Department said it identified 25 cases of flooding as of yesterday afternoon.

Neighbouring tech hub Shenzhen issued a “red” rainstorm warning earlier in the day, the first time since 2018, according to media reports.

Yesterday's “black” rainstorm warning in Hong Kong was the fourth in the span of just over a week, beating the previous record of three such warnings in a year.

Scientists warn the intensity and frequency of global extreme weather events will increase as the planet continues to heat up because of fossil fuel emissions.

— AFP



This photo provided by the Hong Kong government yesterday shows Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu (centre) looking at an urban development model for Hengqin while visiting the island's urban planning exhibition hall yesterday.

Nation announces phased implementation of free preschool education

BEIJING – Starting from the autumn semester, mainland China will waive the care and education fees for children in public kindergartens in the year prior to entering primary school, according to a guideline made public by the State Council yesterday.

The move aims to effectively lower education costs and improve the country's public education services, according to the document issued by the General Office of the State Council.

For children enrolled in private kindergartens, their care and education fees will also be reduced in accordance with the amount exempted at local public kindergartens, according to the document.

Meanwhile, fiscal departments will provide subsidies to kindergartens to address their loss of income due to the policy.

The guideline also encourages local authorities to further consolidate supportive policies in line with local conditions for groups such as children from financially disadvantaged families, orphans, and children with disabilities.

Fiscal and education authorities at all levels should enhance fund management and allocate funds promptly and in full to ensure the normal operation of kindergartens,

according to the document.

Mainland will make improvements to the free preschool education policy at an appropriate time, considering factors such as changes in the school-age population, the guideline said.

“The phased introduction of free preschool education is not only an important step to respond proactively to public concerns and reduce the costs of child care and education for families, but also an essential task in advancing the country's high-quality education system,” said Hong Xiumin, head of the Institute of Early Childhood Education at Beijing Normal University.

Gao Bingcheng, an associate researcher at the China National Academy of Educational Sciences, noted that the move will contribute to the promotion of educational equity as well as the reduction of preschool education expenses and the overall cost of raising children for eligible families.

In March, the country's annual government work report outlined groundbreaking efforts to “promote free preschool education in a phased way.”

These efforts were put forward among mainland's broader work to ease the burden Chinese families

face in raising and nurturing children amid the country's mounting demographic challenges.

As one of the world's most populous countries, the country is facing a dual demographic challenge: a shrinking number of newborns and a rapidly aging population.

In response, the country has been steadily loosening its family planning policies over the past decade and taken concrete steps to construct a birth-friendly society with improved hospitals, child education and care institutions and workplaces, and with appropriate financial and policy support for families with children.

Last week, mainland introduced a nationwide child care subsidy program slated to begin in this year, which will provide families with an annual subsidy of 3,600 yuan for each child under the age of 3.

These subsidies will be exempt from individual income tax and will not be counted as household or individual income in the determination of eligibility for welfare assistance, such as subsistence allowances or allowances for people living in extreme difficulty.

The policy is expected to benefit more than 20 million families each year. – Xinhua

Xizang's regional GDP expected to exceed 300 billion yuan this year

BEIJING – Xizang Autonomous Region has seen steady economic growth, with its regional gross domestic product (GDP) projected to surpass 300 billion yuan (about US\$42 billion) this year, according to a press conference held yesterday.

The region's GDP reached 276.5 billion yuan in last year, 155 times that of 1965 – when the autonomous region was established – reaching an average annual growth rate of 8.9 percent, Wang Junzheng, secretary of the Communist Party of China Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee, told the press conference on the 60th founding anniversary of Xizang Autonomous Region.

Wang noted that while it took the region 50 years to achieve its first 100 billion yuan in GDP, the second 100 billion yuan milestone was reached in just six years.

Since 2021, sustained efforts have further expanded Xizang's economy while improving the quality and efficiency of growth.

Modern industries, including clean energy, cultural tourism and plateau light industry, are laying the foundation for a modern industrial system. The region continues to enhance its self-sustaining development capacity, with key economic indicators consistently ranking among the highest growth rates in the country for several consecutive years, Wang said.

Remarkable progress

Over the past six decades, Xizang, under the leadership of the CPC, has established a socialist system and people's democratic governance, implemented reform and opening-up, and achieved moderate prosperity in all respects. The region has undergone a historic transformation – from darkness to light, backwardness to progress, poverty to prosperity, autocracy to democracy, and isolation to openness, Wang said.

The region has achieved the historic feat of eliminating absolute poverty, implemented a 15-year publicly funded education program from kindergarten to senior high school, and increased the average life expectancy to 72.5 years, he added.

In 2024, the per capita disposable income of urban residents reached 55,444 yuan, 121 times that of 1965, while rural residents' per

capita disposable income rose by nearly 200 times to 21,578 yuan. The average annual growth rates of the incomes reached 8.5 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively, according to the figures released at the press conference.

The region received 63.89 million domestic and international visitors in last year, a 15.8 percent year-on-year increase, with inbound tourists skyrocketing 188.2 percent. Growth momentum continued in the first half of this year, as the region welcomed 32.18 million visitors, up 11.7 percent year on year, said Gama Cedain, chairman of the regional government.

By the end of last year, Xizang's total operational road length reached 124,900 kilometer, while its railway length stood at 1,359 kilometer. Additionally, the number of domestic and international air routes reached 183.

Since 2021, over 400 billion yuan has been spent on major projects, including the construction of the Sichuan-Xizang Railway and the launch of a hydropower project in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, according to Wang.

Ecology prioritized

Addressing a question about Xizang's ecology and green development, Wang said the region always prioritizes ecology, with more than half of its land area under strict ecological protection.

The region strictly enforces the law on ecological protection of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, firmly prohibiting all pollution-prone projects on the plateau, Wang added.

An afforestation project has added over 66,000 hectares of trees in and around the regional capital Lhasa in recent years, bringing Xizang's forest coverage to 12.31 percent.

The region is also promoting low-carbon development, leading China in clean energy with over 99 percent clean power generation in last year, according to Wang.

From 2021 to 2024, 13.68 billion yuan in grassland conservation subsidies were distributed to 2.26 million farmers and herders to protect grassland from overgrazing.

“Xizang is still among the world's regions with the best ecological environment,” Wang said. – Xinhua



An aerial drone photo taken on yesterday shows the construction site of a cable-stayed bridge across the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal in Yangzhou, east province of Jiangsu, yesterday. The main tower of the bridge witnessed its topping-out yesterday. The bridge, with a total length of 564.3 meters, is a key project along the Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu High-speed Railway. – Xinhua

Former chairman of Chinese aviation industry corporation indicted

BEIJING – Tan Ruisong, former board chairman of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China, Ltd., has been indicted for suspected bribery, insider trading and disclosing inside information, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) said yesterday.

Upon the SPP's designation, a procuratorate in the city of Dalian, Liaoning Province, filed the prosecution after investigations

by the National Commission of Supervision and the police department of Chaoyang, Liaoning.

Tan is accused of abusing his various positions to embezzle public assets, seek illicit gains for others and accept significant bribes in return, both involving particularly large sums, according to the SPP.

While in possession of non-public information, Tan repeatedly engaged in securities trading during

sensitive periods and disclosed such information to others for related trading activities, the SPP said.

Prosecutors had informed the defendant of his litigation rights, interrogated him and listened to the lawyers' opinions, according to the statement.

The case has been filed at the intermediate people's court of Dalian.

– Xinhua

China Coast Guard fleet patrols around Diaoyu Dao

BEIJING – A China Coast Guard (CCG) fleet yesterday patrolled the territorial waters of China's Diaoyu Dao.

The patrol was carried out to safeguard China's rights in accordance with the law, the CCG said in a statement.

Previously on Monday, a CCG spokesperson said a Japanese fishing vessel had been expelled after illegally entering the territorial waters of China's Diaoyu Dao from Friday to Monday.

– Xinhua