

Elderly home wants CE's intervention on greyhound issue

Monica Leong

Asilo Vila Madalena retirement home director Sister Ip Pui King said yesterday that she was ready, if necessary, to take the elderly residents with her to go and ask Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On for help to stop Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome from putting about 530 greyhounds on a plot of land just metres away from the old people's dormitories.

Ip made the comments during a press conference at the retirement home in Coloane, when asked if she wanted the Chief Executive to intervene since the issue involves several government bureaus and none seem to want to take responsibility.

"We hope [the CE] can come over to see [the elderly]. If necessary, we can rent a van and take the elderly to go to ask him for help," Ip said, adding, "We need to be considerate to the elderly."

Ip said that it was "unjust" to the old people that Yat Yuen only contacted them after the company

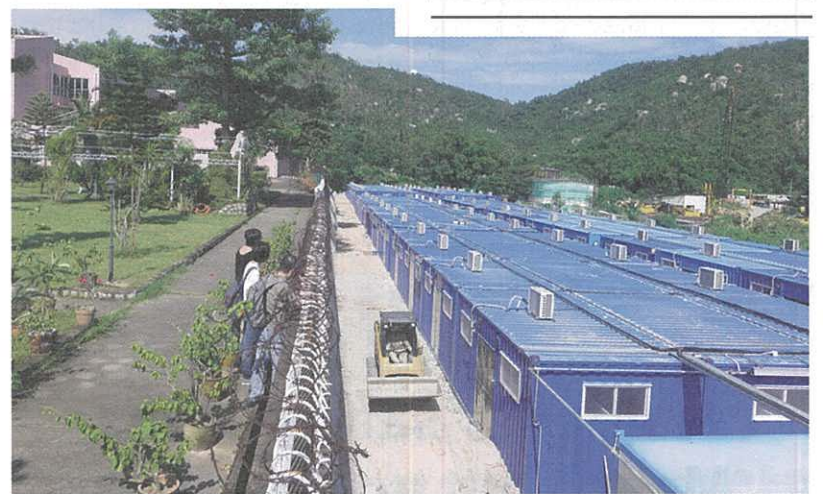


Asilo Vila Madalena retirement home director Sister Ip Pui King (second from right), flanked by family members of elderly living at the home, speaks during yesterday's press conference at the home in Coloane. Photos: Monica Leong

has installed several dozen shipping containers on the plot of land next to the retirement home that would be used as kennels for the roughly 530 greyhounds.

"It's unjust how they treat the old people. It seems we can't have a say," Ip said.

Family members of elderly living at the retirement home said yesterday that the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) have confirmed that it has not granted a construction permit for Yat Yuen to develop the plot of land into a canine kennel and has



This photo taken yesterday shows several dozen shipping containers (right) to be used as kennels installed in proximity to old people's dormitories (pink building on left) at the Asilo Vila Madalena retirement home in Coloane.

ordered the suspension of the project, but construction was still going on yesterday.

According to Ip, when Yat Yuen finally contacted them, the company told them initially that it would be a "temporary greyhound adoption centre" that would last just six months,

but now it would be about a year. "Some greyhounds are old and some are sick, I have doubts that people would adopt them, and if they are not adopted, would that [centre] be their forever home?" Ip questioned.

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Chui vows to put residents' safety 1st as Mangkhut approaches



Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On (centre) presides over yesterday's specially-convened civil protection meeting in preparation for Super Typhoon Mangkhut at the Civil Protection Operations Centre in the Immigration Department Building in Pac On in Taipa. Photo: Government Information Bureau (GCS)

Staff Reporter

Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On pledged yesterday that the government will put residents' safety first in its ongoing disaster prevention and possible disaster relief tasks for Super Typhoon Mangkhut.

Chui made the remarks during a specially-convened meeting yesterday in preparation for Mangkhut which is forecast to be close to Macau on Sunday.

Following a civil protection meeting convened by Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak on Wednesday for Mangkhut, Chui convened another meeting yesterday,

attended by Wong, Unitary Police Service (SPU) Commissioner-General Ma Io Kun, Macau Customs Service Director-General Alex Vong Iao Lek, as well as representatives of all the 29 government entities and private organisations under the government's civil protection structure.

The 29 entities in the civil protection structure included the city's various law enforcement agencies, other government entities including the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) and the public Conde de Sao Januario Hospital Centre, as well as several entities involved in civil protection

power utility CEM, telecom operator CTM, Macau Water, Macau Red Cross, Kiang Wu Hospital, broadcaster TDM, and the company providing management services for Sai Van Bridge.

The meeting took place at the Civil Protection Operations Centre – which is located in the Immigration Department Building in Pac On in Taipa.

Chui said that the government has put great emphasis on disaster prevention and mitigation and carried out a raft of tasks with the aim of improving its ability to tackle typhoons and other disasters.

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Prominent mainland pastor defiant after church closure

A mainland Protestant pastor is vowing to keep preaching to his flock despite the closure of his prominent underground church in Beijing, defying the government's intensifying pressure on religious groups.

Full story on p. 6

Suu Kyi defends court decision to jail Reuters reporters

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday robustly defended the jailing of two Reuters journalists who were reporting on the Rohingya crisis, as she hit back at global criticism of a trial widely seen as an attempt to muzzle the free press.

Full story on p. 9

Booming electric car sales drive lithium rush in Portugal

Mining firms are racing to open new lithium mines in Portugal, already Europe's biggest producer of the commodity, thanks to the surge in popularity of electric vehicles powered by lithium-ion batteries.

Full story on p. 11

Overall LRT could cost at least 50 billion patacas: auditor

Tony Wong

In a hard-hitting report published yesterday, the Commission of Audit (CA) says that the estimated construction cost for the eight sections of Macau's Light Rail Transit (LRT) system that the government has planned for the short, medium and long terms amounts to at least 50 billion patacas.

The report also says that the Transport Infrastructure Office (GIT), which oversees the city's LRT project, is to blame for the long delays in the construction of the LRT Taipa section. The office was set up in 2007 as a "project team" for the planning of Macau's LRT project and the coordination of its construction.

The estimated construction cost of over 50 billion patacas still does not include the other three planned LRT sections – that the Transport Infrastructure Office could not provide estimated construction costs for or any information which could allow the commission to make an estimate.

The government has repeatedly reaffirmed that the LRT Taipa section is scheduled to be operational next year. The Taipa section, which

includes Cotai, is 9.3 kilometres long and will have 11 stations.

The LRT was first proposed by the government in the early 2000s. However, the main construction – that is, of the Taipa section – only started in 2012.

The report says that the government first expected in 2007 the first phase of the LRT project – consisting of the Taipa section and a section along the east coast of the peninsula – to come into service in late 2011, adding that an enormous delay occurred so that only the Taipa section is now expected to be operational in 2019.

In the first LRT plan announced by the government in 2007, the budget for the first phase of the LRT project was 4.2 billion patacas, according to the audit report. In the construction plan for the LRT first phase announced in 2009, the budget rose to 7.5 billion patacas. In the 2009 plan, the government expected the LRT first phase to come into service in 2014.

The construction of the LRT first phase was initially slated to get off the ground in 2010. However,

the construction was only started in 2012 due to appeals by some construction companies which had submitted bids for its construction.

In 2011, the government expected the LRT first phase to come into operation in 2015 and revised up its budget to 11 billion patacas, the report says. In 2012, the government's budget for the LRT first phase rose to 14.3 billion patacas.

In 2014, the government said that it expected the Taipa section – not including the section along the peninsula's east coast – of the LRT first phase to come into operation first in 2016, according to the report.

Then in late 2015, the government expected the Taipa section to come into operation in 2019, the report says. However, the government does not have a schedule as to when the construction of the section along the peninsula's east coast would get off the ground.

According to the report, the Transport Infrastructure Office drafted in December 2016 a new overall Macau LRT plan consisting of 11 sections – five sections for the short term, three sections for the medium term and three sections for the long term.

According to the report, the five sections for the short term are: 1) the Taipa section (slated to be operational in 2019); 2) the section connecting Taipa to Barra via Sai Van Bridge (expected to be operational in 2024); 3) a sea-crossing LRT section connecting the peninsula's Barrier Gate border checkpoint to the Taipa Ferry Terminal, via the land reclamation area known as Zone A (also known as the "East" section which was expected to be operational in 2026); 4) a section connecting the peninsula to the man-made island for the Macau and Zhuhai landing points of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge via Zone A (expected to be operational in 2026); 5) the section connecting the Taipa section to Coloane's Seac Pai Van (expected to be operational in 2022).

According to the report, the three sections for the medium term are: 1) the peninsula's Inner Harbour section (connecting Barra to the Barrier Gate border checkpoint along the west coast of the peninsula); 2) the southern sub-segment of the penin-



This undated photo taken from the website of the Transport Infrastructure Office (GIT) shows a Light Rail Transit (LRT) train during tests near Ocean Gardens in Taipa in June.

sula's east coast section; 3) the northern sub-segment of the peninsula's east coast section. However, the Transport Infrastructure Office told the Commission of Audit that the government does not have a schedule for their construction.

According to the report, the three sections for the long term are: 1) a section connecting the Lotus Flower Bridge border checkpoint in Cotai to Hengqin Island of Zhuhai; 2) a section connecting Taipa's Ocean Gardens to the land reclamation area known as Zone E off Pac On via the planned land reclamation areas known as Zone C and Zone D off the northern coast of Taipa; 3) a section connecting Seac Pai Van to Coloane Village. Also, the Transport Infrastructure Office told the commission that the government does not have a schedule for their construction.

According to the report, the commission has requested the Transport Infrastructure Office to provide estimated construction costs for the 11 LRT sections.

According to the report, the Transport Infrastructure Office told the commission that the latest budgeted construction costs for the Taipa section was 10.8 billion patacas.

The audit report lists estimated construction costs for seven other sections, based on the information provided by the Transport Infrastructure Office. The estimated construction costs for the five sections for the short term were: 1.5 billion patacas for the Taipa-Barra section, 21 billion patacas for "East" section, 1.78 billion patacas for the "man-made" section, 2.47 billion

patacas for the Seac Pai Van section, according to the report.

There was no estimated construction cost for the peninsula's Inner Harbour section, the report says.

The estimated construction costs for two sections for the medium term were: 1.75 billion patacas to two billion patacas for the northern sub-segment of the peninsula's east coast section, 3.27 billion patacas to 4.2 billion patacas for the southern sub-segment of the peninsula's east coast section, according to the report.

There were no estimated construction costs for the Ocean Gardens-Zone E section or for the Coloane Village section, the report says.

The estimated construction cost for the Hengqin section for the long term was 7.45 billion patacas, the report says.

The estimated construction cost for the eight sections (including the Taipa section) combined is 50.05 billion patacas to 51.23 billion patacas. The combined estimation still does not include the peninsula's Inner Harbour section, the Ocean Gardens-Zone E section and the Coloane Village section.

Some civic leaders and lawmakers have called for the government to cancel its plan to construct any sections on the peninsula.

Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On has repeatedly said that the government has not given up its plan to build the LRT system on the peninsula.

The report can be downloaded from the commission's website <http://www.ca.gov.mo/>, in Chinese and Portuguese language versions. ■

Chui vows to put residents' safety 1st as Mangkhut approaches

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Chui said that the government is determined to ensure the safety of Macau residents and will put their safety as a top priority for its ongoing and upcoming tasks in response to Mangkhut. He added that Macau's disaster prevention and mitigation tasks require the joint effort of the government and members of civil society and residents' trust in the government.

Chui reassured that residents do not need to worry about the upcoming super typhoon too much and urged them to pay attention to information released by the government and act accordingly.

Chui noted that Mangkhut will pose enormous safety threats to the city and urged members under the government's civil protection structure to prepare for the worst in their preparation tasks for Mangkhut.

During the meeting, Tang Iu Man, acting vice-director of the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, said that Mangkhut

is likely to hit the Philippines on Saturday before entering the South China Sea.

Tang said that the latest forecast for Mangkhut's trajectory was a little bit different from the forecast made on Wednesday. He said that Mangkhut was now expected to make landfall around the Leizhou Peninsula – the peninsula in the southernmost part of Guangdong that is north of Hainan province.

Tang said that the latest forecast for Mangkhut's trajectory was relatively further from Macau than Wednesday's forecast.

Tang said that the wind speed at the centre of Mangkhut currently amounted to 240 kilometres per hour, adding that its strength may decrease a little bit after it hit the Philippines. He said that however the wind speed at the centre of Mangkhut was expected to still be around 200 kilometres per hour after it goes across the Philippines. He urged residents to remain highly vigilant. ■

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Macau Weather

THE TEMPERATURE INDEX IS
YELLOW (HOT).
 FINE APART FROM CLOUDY
 PERIODS.
 HAZE IN THE AFTERNOON.
 FORCE 2 TO 4 EAST TO
 NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.
 RELATIVE HUMIDITY
 WILL RANGE
 BETWEEN 55%
 AND 90%.
 26°C~33°C



Source: SMG

Elderly home wants CE's intervention on greyhound issue

Continued from p. 1

She said that noise and hygiene were the main concerns due to the proximity of the kennels to the dormitories of old people who are susceptible to infections.

"The old people here spend all their life activities at the retirement home, they don't get out of the compound, and with the kennels so close to the dormitories and our kitchen, it'll really cause an impact," Ip pointed out.

She urged the Social Welfare Bureau to support the old people and scrap Yat Yuen's greyhound adop-

tion centre there.

"If the Social Welfare Bureau could help us, we would be ever so grateful, because our voice is so small that it's not enough to make an impact. And the old people don't even have a voice," Ip said.

The government ordered the closure of the Canidrome two years ago. When it closed down on July 20, the fate of the greyhounds left behind in its kennels made global headlines.

The government has said that the greyhounds must be moved to another location by September 29 at the latest, following a 60-day exten-

sion granted by the IACM.

Initially, Yat Yuen planned to move the roughly 500 greyhounds awaiting adoption to a vacant factory in Pac On in Taipa. Later, the company proposed to move them to 11 private homes. Anima later proposed to move the canines to a plot in the Concordia Industrial Park in Coloane. None of the former relocation plans got off the ground.

The government plans to redevelop the former racetrack, which had been in business since 1963, into a complex for schools, sports and recreation. ■