



China's mega-blockbuster 'Ne Zha 2' to premiere in Macau tomorrow

Yuki Lei

China's highest-grossing movie of all times and the first non-Hollywood film to reach the top 9 in the global box office, "Ne Zha 2", has been announced for release in Hong Kong and Macau, with its local premiere at the Emperor Cinema of the Lisboeta Macau integrated resort in Cotai tomorrow – and Macau Artists Association Chairman Ken Sou Io Kuong told the *Post* yesterday he believed that the animated film was already a big success story in Chinese-language cinema and would help export Chinese culture to the international stage, adding that although the film would be released relatively late in Macau, "it's still worth going to see as it is a good entertainment option for Macau residents".

CCTV News reported that, according to data from online platforms, as of yesterday the global box office for "Ne Zha 2" had exceeded 12 billion yuan (13.24 billion patacas), surpassing the records set by "The Lion King" and "Jurassic World," which were released in the US in 2019 and 2015, respectively, making it the ninth highest-grossing film in the world and the first Asian film to

break into the top 10 at the global box office. Currently ranked as one of the top 2 animated films in the world, "Ne Zha 2" is the first film in Chinese cinema and the first in Asia to gross over 10 billion yuan at the box office, setting a record for the highest grossing film in any single market globally.

According to the CCTV News report, the film is expected to overtake last year's US-film "Inside Out 2", which grossed 12.3 billion yuan, to become the highest-grossing animated film at the box office worldwide.

"Ne Zha 2", involving 138 animation companies and more than 4,000 crew members, was released on January 29, the first day of the Chinese New Year, in the mainland. According to CCTV News and Xinhua, it was officially released on Friday by CMC Pictures in Mandarin with English subtitles in more than 770 cinemas in North America cities, with pre-sale ticket sales and film schedules setting a new record for a Chinese-language film in North America over the past 20 years, and box office receipts of US\$3.1 million (24.82 million patacas) on the first day.

Continued on p.2



This photo taken on Thursday shows a poster for the Chinese animated mega-blockbuster "Ne Zha 2" at a cinema in Beijing's Chaoyang District. – Xinhua

Trump envoy says US will not 'impose' deal on Ukraine

BRUSSELS – US envoy Keith Kellogg yesterday said that he would not tell Ukraine to accept whatever deal is negotiated by President Donald Trump to end Russia's war, ahead of a visit to Kyiv.

Kellogg is set to arrive in Ukraine tomorrow for three days of talks that will include a meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky.

His visit to Kyiv will come after top US officials meet Russian negotiators in Saudi Arabia today for the first time since Trump blindsided allies by agreeing to launch peace efforts with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Kellogg said US officials were engaged in parallel efforts to bring Moscow and Kyiv to the negotiating table – with him spearheading the outreach to Ukraine.

Trump's envoy insisted that it would ultimately be up to Zelensky to decide if Ukraine accepts any deal that the US leader brokers.

"The decision by Ukrainians is a Ukrainian decision," Kellogg told journalists after talks with US allies at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

"Zelensky is the elected leader of a sovereign nation and those decisions are his and nobody will impose those on an elected leader of a sovereign nation," Kellogg said.

He insisted that his job was to "facilitate" a deal that would "ensure that there are solid security guarantees that Ukraine is a sovereign nation".

European leaders yesterday met in Paris to try to come up with a strategy as fears swirl that they will be left on the sidelines of any talks.

Kellogg reiterated earlier suggestions that Europeans would not directly participate, but insisted they would have an "input".

"I don't think it's reasonable or feasible to have everybody sitting at the table," he said.

Kellogg said that "everything remains on the table" in the negotiations after US defence secretary Pete Hegseth poured cold water on Ukraine's goals of joining NATO or regaining all its territory.

He did not rule out that broader issues of European and global security would be brought up in negotiations between Washington and Moscow.

"I think what is brought into those discussions are unknowns," he said.

(More on p.11)
– AFP



Students watch the performance of an intelligent robot dog at a middle school in Pengshan District of Meishan City, Sichuan Province, yesterday. With a mixture of nerves and excitement, many students in the Chinese mainland attended yesterday their special first class of the new semester. (More on p.6) – Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

Xi urges healthy, high-quality development of private sector

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, yesterday urged efforts to promote the healthy and high-quality development of the country's private sector.

– Story on p. 7

Netanyahu says 'committed' to Trump's Gaza plan

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday he was "committed" to a US proposal to take over Gaza and displace its Palestinian residents, as Washington's top diplomat was in Saudi Arabia to push the plan opposed by Arab states.

– Story on p. 10

Pope's condition 'complex', hospital stay extended: Vatican

Pope Francis, hospitalised for bronchitis five days ago, faces a "complex clinical picture" that will require the 88-year-old to stay longer than originally expected, the Vatican said yesterday.

– Story on p. 12

Macau Int'l Parade to include 50-60 local troupes

Yuki Lei

The Macau International Parade recently launched an open call for local troupes to participate in the annual event – and Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Deland Leong Wai Man has said that the call for the participation has already closed, expecting that there will be 50 to 60 local troupes, along with some non-local performance groups, taking part in the day-long parade.

Organised by the bureau, the “2025 Macao International Parade” has been slated for Sunday March 23, once again setting off from the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St Paul’s and concluding in Praça do Lago Sai Van. This year’s parade will feature opening and closing performances by internationally-renowned artistic teams.

“There are more than 80 to 90 applications, and we will select 50 to 60 local troupes in accordance with the previous assessment criteria,” Leong said on Sunday, adding she hoped that more local schools and groups would contribute to the parade.

According to a previous statement by the bureau, as a “Culture City of East Asia” in 2025, Macau will not only reinforce the spirit of “Love, Peace, and Cultural Integration” through this year’s parade but will also further embrace the principle of “Coexistence, Innovation, and Harmony” as part of the East Asian Cultural Capital initiative.

Govt’s revitalisation programme

The government-initiated revitalisation programme for six local historic quarters – comprising the Barra area in cooperation with MGM, the temporary pedestrianisation of Rua da Felicidade with Wynn, the revitalisation projects of Pier 23 and 25 in the Inner Harbour district as well as the area surrounding Mount Fortress with Melco, Taipa’s Iec Long Firecracker Factory and the Macau peninsula’s Pátio da Eterna Felicidade and Rua das Estalagens with Sands, Coloane’s Lai Chi Yun Shipyards with Galaxy and



A non-local troupe performs during last year's Macau International Parade at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St Paul's landmark. – Photo: Yuki Lei

the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro area with SJM – has been implemented for nearly two years. There are voices in the community calling for the government to extend the revitalisation scope to other old quarters, such as San Kio and Praia do Manduco. In this regard, speaking to the media on Sunday, Leong reaffirmed that the coverage of the six districts would stay unchanged for the time being.

However, Leong was quick to add that through the power of culture and arts, her bureau would join hands with various public entities to launch cooperative projects in local neighbourhoods and the city’s old quarters, aiming to enhance livelihood spaces and support the community economy.

According to Leong, her bureau is currently sorting out the relevant revitalisation work in the

six districts, while gathering public feedback on “slowly” shifting from short-term activities to medium- and long-term development, with a view to benefiting different local arts groups, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as the residents.

Outdoor performance venue

Meanwhile, when asked about the progress of the bureau’s plan to organise concerts in the city’s newly-established outdoor performance venue in Cotai next month and in May, Leong said that the bureau has already received applications for May or even beyond: “However, we need to plan according to the expected audience size ... we may not be able to incorporate all of them into our planning, the relevant work is in progress”, adding that further announcements will be made in due course.

The bureau had earlier announced at a press conference that the audience capacity for the concert in mid to late March will be limited to 20,000. ■

Police nab mainlander for theft-by-finding

William Chan

A man from the mainland has been apprehended for theft-by-finding, Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Lai In Hong said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The suspect surnamed Ruan is in his forties.

According to Lai, when a tourist was visiting a Taipa shopping mall last month, a security guard approached and told him that cash had dropped from his jacket. He picked up the cash but discovered that HK\$12,000 was missing. After searching with no avail, he reported the incident to the police.

The police identified Ruan as the suspect and arrested him when he re-entered Macau through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge checkpoint on Thursday.

Under questioning, he admitted to having picked up the money but claimed that since he could not find the owner at that time, he took the cash to his flat in the mainland and left it there.



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

Ruan has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a theft-by-finding charge, Lei said. ■

Local woman cheated out of 1,838 yuan in concert ticket scam: police

Ada Lei

A local young woman has lost 1,838 yuan (2,023 patacas) in a concert ticket scam, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Sio Keong said in a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Cheong, the victim saw a post on RedNote, a Chinese social networking and e-commerce platform colloquially known as “little red book”, about

selling tickets for a concert in May in the mainland. She was keen to attend the concert and contacted the “seller” to buy a ticket.

The “seller” told the victim that the “ticket” costs 1,838 yuan. The victim transferred 1,838 yuan to the “seller” and received a screenshot of the “concert ticket” from the “seller”. The victim discovered that the details on the “ticket” were

incorrect and contacted the “seller” again. However, the victim could no longer reach the “seller”.

As the victim had received a screenshot of the fake ticket and had lost contact with the “seller”, she suspected that she had been scammed and reported the case to the police on Sunday.

Macau has recently been hit by a wave of concert ticket online scams. ■

China’s mega-blockbuster ‘Ne Zha 2’ to premiere in Macau tomorrow

Continued from p.1

On Friday, Beijing Enlight Media and Hong Kong-based Mandarin Motion Pictures announced the release of “Ne Zha 2” in cinemas under the Cinema City, MCL, Cine-Art House and Emperor Cinemas chains in Hong Kong and Macau.

According to Hong Kong media, the Hong Kong premiere of “Ne Zha 2” will be held tonight at Jade & Pearl Plaza in Causeway Bay. The *Post* contacted Emperor Cinema through the integrated resort operator Lisboa yesterday and learnt that “Ne Zha 2” will premiere at the cinema tomorrow night.

In a phone interview with the *Post*, Sou said that the film excelled in screenwriting, special effects and plot, making it an excellent choice for family viewing. He added that it serves as an inspiration for local film and television creators to learn and grow, highlighting that “the director, who is not a graduate of his field, was able to capture the audience’s favourite things and create such a remarkable work,”

which underscores the significance of hard work and creativity.

Sou pointed out that the animated film’s huge success was largely due to positive word of mouth, demonstrating the general public’s ability to appreciate quality works. It was also a positive sign for Macau, Sou said, adding that the “local film and television industry has always been slower than its neighbours, and the market is not yet mature”, but as long as the quality of the work was high enough, it could still be a success, even without the involvement of a celebrity, which was an encouragement to local creators and showed that the influence of Chinese works on the international stage was gradually increasing.

Regarding the late release of the film in Hong Kong and Macau compared to the Chinese mainland and even North America, Sou pointed out Macau’s uniqueness in the film market, saying that compared to the mainland, Macau has easier access to foreign

language blockbusters, which gives audiences more choices. He strongly encouraged those who haven’t seen the film to support it in Macau, as “it is worth enjoying it”: “If Hong Kong and Macau are able to release the film, I think everyone who buys a ticket and supports the film will be recognising their own [Chinese] ethnicity, and will have the opportunity to appreciate the excellent work”.

Concerning the status quo and challenges of the local film industry, Sou pointed out that Macau’s film industry is relatively small and primarily relies on imported works, resulting in a weak local production force, suggesting that by leveraging the success of “Ne Zha,” Macau could produce voice-overs or subtitles that reflect local culture to attract audiences in Portuguese-speaking countries: “This will not only promote elements of Chinese culture but also enhance Macau’s status in cultural exchanges and expand its market influence”. ■

(More on p.6)

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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

FINE APART FROM CLOUDY PERIODS.
FORCE 3 TO 5 EASTERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 50% AND 95%.



16°C~22°C

Source: SMG

SJM dragon boat races slated for May, standard race to feature mixed category 1st time

Rui Pastorin

The 2025 SJM Macao International Dragon Boat Races are slated to be hosted in May at the Nam Van Lake Nautical Centre, with this year's Macao Standard Dragon Boat Race to also include for the first time the introduction of a mixed category.

Details of the upcoming races were announced during yesterday's press conference at Grand Lisboa Palace (GLP) in Cotai.

This year's event will kick off with small dragon boat local races on May 24, while the Macao Standard Dragon Boat Race will be held on the following day and see the return of the Open Category and Women's Category, along with the new mixed (male-female) category, which will have 18 teams.

The races will then be followed up by The Macao International Invitation Standard Dragon Boat Race and the Macao University Student Invitation Standard Dragon Boat Race, both to be held on the day of the Duanwu Festival* (aka Dragonboat Festival), which falls on May 31 this year.

Dragon Boat Association of Macao, China President Vong Ka Hou told reporters on the sidelines of yesterday's event that the mixed category is hoped to give female athletes more participation opportunities.

Vong also noted that organisers are hoping to attract more teams from overseas to take part in this year's races, adding that the event regularly sees teams from Thailand, Indonesia, the mainland and Hong Kong, and hopes to also attract those from places such as South Korea and the Philippines.

Meanwhile, Sports Bureau (ID) President Luís Gomes also highlighted the activities aside from the races in his speech, noting: "Alongside the races, there will be sporting and cultural activities and performances, creative products booths, and food stalls, contributing to the traditional and lively carnival atmosphere".

SJM Managing Director Daisy Ho Chiu Fung said in her speech that "this year, we aim to further refine our efforts, spread the culture



SJM Managing Director Daisy Ho Chiu Fung (3rd from left), Sports Bureau (ID) President Luís Gomes (4th from left), and Dragon Boat Association of Macao, China President Vong Ka Hou (5th from left), along with other guests, pose for a group photo after yesterday's press conference at Grand Lisboa Palace (GLP) in Cotai. - Photo: Rui Pastorin

of dragon boat racing even further, and attract more elite international teams to compete, while also inviting more visitors from around the world to experience the vibrant tradition of dragon boat racing and enjoy the lively atmosphere of this event in Macau".

Team registration, which started earlier this month, ends tomorrow

at 10 p.m., while training begins on February 27. Teams that have set up online accounts can register for their categories between Thursday and February 26.

More event and registration details can be found at www.macaodragonboat.com.

* "Duanwu Festival" can be translated as the "Festival of the Fifth

Day" or "Festival of the Fifth Noon." It is celebrated on the 5th day of the 5th month of the Chinese lunar calendar, which is why it is also commonly referred to as the "Double Fifth Festival." The festival is widely known for traditions like dragon boat racing and eating zongzi (sticky rice dumplings), and it honours the memory of the ancient poet Qu Yuan. - DeepSeek

MUST to host Open Day on Sunday

Rui Pastorin

A variety of activities are set to take place at the private Macau University of Science and Technology's (MUST) Open Day on Sunday.

The on-campus event on Avenida Wai Long (氹仔偉龍馬路) in Taipa also celebrates the university's 25th anniversary, according to an MUST statement last night.

Held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the statement pointed out that the event will feature booths and activity highlights such as campus tours, performances, an outstanding achievements exhibition, and programme introduction and admission consultation.

The event will also feature the Macau University of Science and Technology's 25th Anniversary of Macau's Return to the Motherland Special Exhibition titled "The Radiance of Technology, the Dream of Astronautics!", as well as the "Stamp Your Journey" and "Elegance is with Me" activities, where one can



This poster provided by the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) yesterday promotes this Sunday's Open Day.

collect stamps and take pictures at photo spots for souvenirs.

Moreover, one can learn more about the university's faculty programmes, admissions, applications and campus life,

among others, through the Admission Office and School of Graduate Studies on-campus booth, the statement said.

More details can be found on <http://openday2025.must.edu.mo>

Applications still open for UTM luxury hospitality programme

Rui Pastorin

The Macao University of Tourism (UTM) is set to launch its new Master of Science (MSc) degree programme in Luxury Hospitality and Health Service Management for the 2025/2026 academic year, according to a LinkedIn post by the public university yesterday, with applications open until April 30.

A separate UTM statement recently has elaborated that the two-year programme aims to "nurture graduates who are capable of managing and leading successful luxury and health service businesses, contributing to the growth and development in these industries".

The new programme has been

launched to meet the growing demand for high-end service experience, the statement noted. It focuses on practical skills in health services and addresses "the trend of integrating high-end hospitality with health services".

The statement added that students completing the programme will receive a master's degree, a "Fitness and Sports Nutrition Professional Certificate", and a "Health Foods and Special Diets Instructor Certificate" awarded by the UK-based International Professional Training and Fitness Academy (IPTFA).

More programme details can be found by visiting UTM's website at <http://www.utm.edu.mo>



This poster recently provided by the Macao University of Tourism (UTM) promotes its new Master of Science degree programme in Luxury Hospitality and Health Service Management.

Mainlander loses HK\$285,000 in 'fake police' scam: police



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Sio Keong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. - Photo: Ada Lei

Ada Lei

A man from the mainland has lost HK\$285,000 in a "fake police" scam, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Sio Keong said in a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Cheong, the victim had received a call while in Macau on October 11, 2024, in which a man claimed to be an "officer from the Immigration Department".

The "officer" alleged that the victim had sent out a large number of scam messages and that the

case had already been filed for investigation in the mainland.

The "officer" then transferred the call to another person, who claimed to be a "Shanghai police officer". The victim believed the "police officer" and transferred a total of HK\$285,000 in three transactions to a Hong Kong bank account as the "police officer" had requested.

Cheong noted that the victim realised he had been scammed after noticing anti-fraud messages by police and finally decided to report the case to the police. ■



Fusion of cultures: Henry Ma's artistic journey

Adrian Vallesteros

Macau's Centre for Creative Industries (CCI) is hosting a free-admission exhibition titled "Searching – Chinese ink painting", which will run until March 11.

Located on the ground floor of the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM), the exhibition is open from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. from Monday through Saturday, excluding public holidays.

According to a statement by the organisers, the exhibition features the work of Henry Ma Kam Keong (馬錦強), an artist born in Macau who graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Concordia University in Canada. In addition to his artistic pursuits, the statement noted that Ma has lectured at various universities including Peking University and the private Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST). He has published numerous articles in academic journals and authored a book titled "A Research on Blue and White Porcelain Wares of the Ming Dynasty Unearthed in Macau."

Ma's art features, among other things, Chinese calligraphy, paintings and photographs, which have all been shown in Macau, the mainland as well as Canada.

An estimated thirty of Ma's artworks, which are Chinese outdoor ink sketches created in recent years, are on display at the exhibition. Ma was quoted by the statement as saying: "Although they cannot be considered as great works of art, yet [they] can be regarded as a review of my searching and developing stages. Indeed, there are still many shortcomings which need improvement."

The statement noted that Ma's artistic approach stems from his desire to blend Western painting techniques with Chinese art and calligraphy. Ma said that he had initially struggled, but insisted that "the effect was not significant," adding that since then he has returned to outdoor sketching, starting with fibre pens on handmade paper. However, he later switched to Chinese ink on rice paper. He pointed out: "At the early stage, I was unable to handle the reaction between ink and water," but after years of practice, he said he had gained insight into their relationship.

Even now, according to the statement, he admitted: "I am still constantly thinking and SEARCHING for the way to express myself in my own art works."



Photos taken yesterday at Creative Macau in Nape by Adrian Vallesteros



Tourism crisis assistance team returns from Taichung



Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Public Relations Division Chief Liz Lam Tong Hou speaks to reporters at the local airport upon her and her team's arrival from Taiwan yesterday evening. - Photo courtesy of TDM

Yuki Lei

The Macau Government Tourism Office's (MGTO) tourism crisis assistance team, in conjunction with the Macau Red Cross, travelled to central Taiwan's Taichung City on Thursday to provide appropriate assistance to the Macau victims of the gas explosion at a department store there, as well as their family members - and MGTO said in a statement yesterday that the first stage of the assistance work has been completed, with the team and Macau Red Cross having returned to Macau, adding that MGTO will continue to assist the family members in Macau in liaising with the relevant entities to expedite follow-up arrangements for handling the remains.

The tourism crisis assistance team and staff members of the Macau Red

Cross returned to Macau yesterday, during which MGTO Public Relations Division Chief Liz Lam Tong Hou told public broadcaster TDM at the local airport that the team and the Macau Red Cross met with the victims' family members again on Sunday to summarise the follow-up situation, and returned to Macau after ensuring sufficient communication with the family.

In the statement, MGTO pledged to maintain close communication with the family members, keeping track of the situation and providing them with the necessary support and appropriate assistance.

The statement summarised the assistance provided by the crisis assistance team and the Macau Red Cross in Taichung, noting that

upon their arrival on the night of the accident, the team, along with the Macau Red Cross, visited the injured in several hospitals and conveyed Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai's deepest condolences and sympathies while, at the same time, taking note of their requests and offering all appropriate assistance.

The statement added that the team also accompanied the family members to meet with undertakers and legal professionals in Taichung, having followed up on the subsequent handling and arrangement of the remains, as well as compensation for the seven Macau victims, two of whom were killed by falling debris caused by the gas blast.

According to the statement, the mechanism of the Tourism Crisis

Assistance Team was activated upon receiving notification of a gas explosion in Taichung on Thursday that killed two local residents and injured five others - a family of four generations, including a retired policeman, who died at the scene of the accident, and an in-service police officer, who sustained injuries.

The statement noted that among those from Macau injured in the disaster, two were discharged from hospital on Friday after treatment, two others were in stable condition yesterday after surgery last week, while one - a two-year-old girl - was still in the intensive care unit (ICU) yesterday after craniotomy, a surgical procedure in which a portion of the skull (called a bone flap) is removed to access the brain. ■

Gongbei Customs intercepts woman smuggling 226 dried geckos

Ginnie Liang

A woman was caught smuggling 226 dried endangered geckos from Macau to the mainland when she was intercepted by customs officers in Zhuhai last month, according to a Gongbei Customs statement yesterday.

The woman is a mainlander surnamed Ye, the statement said.

According to the statement, the woman entered the mainland carrying two plastic bags through the "nothing to declare" channel at Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs checkpoint at about 6:31 p.m. on January 20.

Customs officers intercepted her after discovering her trying to avoid the X-ray screening of her bags, and found that one of the two plastic bags she was carrying contained a number of suspected

animal products, the statement said, adding that customs officers later confirmed that the total number of the suspected animal products was 226.

Gongbei Customs has recently identified the suspected animal products as dried geckos, the statement said, adding that it is an endangered species, which is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and is a Class II protected wild animal, the statement said.

The statement underlined that without the examination and approval by the mainland authorities, all living animals other than dogs and cats are forbidden to be taken or sent by post to the mainland. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Gongbei Customs yesterday shows 226 undeclared dried endangered geckos.

Gongbei customs seizes large quantity of cosmetics, cigars & alcoholic drinks smuggled by driver

Ginnie Liang

Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs announced yesterday that its officers have caught a Macau single-licence plated vehicle driver attempting to smuggle a large number of undeclared goods from Macau to the mainland through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) checkpoint last Wednesday.

According to Gongbei Customs, the case was busted last Wednesday at 3 p.m., when Gongbei Customs officers at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) checkpoint discovered an abnormality in a single-licence plated vehicle at a vehicle inspection channel - the vehicle was carrying a large number of messy luggage items, and the driver was visibly nervous.

Upon further inspection, the customs officers seized a total of 35 boxes of luxury cosmetics, 48 high-end cigars, and three bottles of alcoholic beverages in the vehicle's second row of the seats, the gap



This undated handout photo provided by Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs shows some of the seized goods from a single-licence plated vehicle at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) checkpoint on Wednesday.

between the driver's and passenger's seats, beneath the passenger seat and in other hidden areas.

It was verified by the Gongbei Customs that the driver was a short-term, multiple-trip visitor.

Gongbei Customs reminded the public that according to the "Regulations of the Customs of the

People's Republic of China on the Administration of Baggage Items of Chinese Passengers Entering and Leaving the Country", customs officers will only allow the passage of items needed by those frequently travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macau within a short period of time. ■

Macau logs 25 suicides in Q4 last year

Ginnie Liang

Macau recorded 25 suicides - 17 males and 8 females - in the fourth quarter of last year, according to a statement by the Health Bureau (SSM) yesterday.

The statement noted that among the 25 victims, aged between 13 and 75, 20 were local residents, accounting for 80 percent, while five were non-local residents.

The statement pointed out that mental diseases, relationship problems, gambling issues and financial problems were the most probable causes of the suicides for the quarter.

Members of the public can visit <https://www.ssm.gov.mo/apps1/mentalhealth/ch.aspx#clg28356> for mental health information, which has been set up by the bureau to address the public's misunderstandings and prejudice concerning mental illness, enhance the public's understanding of mental health, raise the willingness of people in need of professional support, and promote the overall mental health of Macau residents.

In order to help reduce the incidence of suicide, the bureau urged members of the public to contact, communicate and care more about people around them in their daily lives, and encourage people suffering from emotional distress to actively seek professional assistance.

The bureau said that its psychology clinics in Tap

Seac, Fai Chi Kei, Areia Preta, Ocean Gardens, Our Lady of Carmo-Lago, Coloane's Seac Pai Van and on Rua da Praia do Manduco are open to the public without referral from the city's hospitals.

It also urged all those beset by anxiety or despair to phone Macau Caritas's Life Hope Hotline - 2852 5222 for Cantonese and 2852 5777 for English speakers. ■



This image downloaded from the Health Bureau's mental health information website last night encourages viewers to take care of their mental health.

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.02 pct lower

HONG KONG - Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.02 percent to close at 22,616.23 points. The Hang

Seng China Enterprises Index fell 0.09 percent to end at 8,323.67 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index fell 0.49 percent to end at 5,499.26 points. - Xinhua

Chinese blockbuster 'Ne Zha 2' brings benefits beyond theaters

BEIJING – Having broken the Hollywood monopoly in the global list of 10 highest-grossing films, the animated feature “Ne Zha 2” is generating ripple effects beyond cinemas, showcasing China’s vibrant consumption and dynamic economy.

Less than three weeks since its premiere, the global earnings, including presales, of “Ne Zha 2” have exceeded 12.05 billion yuan (US\$1.68 billion).

Drawing inspiration from a Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) mythological tale, much like the globally acclaimed 3A video game “Black Myth: Wukong,” “Ne Zha 2” reimagines the story of Nezha, a legendary boy with extraordinary powers, for today’s audience. He is also a character in the classic novel “Journey to the West,” which features the Monkey King, or Sun Wukong.

The film’s success extends to catering, retail, tourism, and capital markets.

Inspired by the film, a restaurant in north China’s Tianjin Municipality has creatively incorporated the film’s characters and cuisines into its menu, with dishes like “stir-fried squid tentacles” recalling a humorous scene from the movie.

Traditional specialties, such as lotus root powder – used in the film to remake Ne Zha’s flesh – have seen a resurgence in popularity.

Additionally, a Ne Zha-themed hot pot restaurant in Yibin, Sichuan Province, has become a popular spot for photos due to its interior design

inspired by the film’s elements, like the Red Armillary Sash.

CRAZE FOR IP DERIVATIVES

The craze for intellectual property (IP) derivatives is evident, with Ne Zha-themed merchandise selling out rapidly. In Shanghai, movie theater operators reported that popcorn tubs and drink packages featuring Ne Zha sold out within days of the film’s release. In Beijing, action figures of Ne Zha are in high demand, with shipments scheduled as far out as July.

“I really like Ao Bing (a dragon prince and friend of Ne Zha in the film). I ordered six blind boxes from Pop Mart as soon as the products were released, hoping to get a toy of Ao Bing,” said Dekyi Yangzom, a movie enthusiast from the Xizang Autonomous Region, who was deeply impressed by the story and visual effects of the film.

Online sales of “Ne Zha 2” merchandise have surged, with sales reportedly exceeding 50 million yuan on Taobao, the country’s leading e-commerce platform

Zhang Zizhong, an assistant professor at Zhejiang University, highlighted the evolving revenue models in China’s film industry.

“In the past, films mainly relied on the box office to generate revenues. However, today, IP derivatives have become a significant source of profits,” said Zhang, adding that consumers are willing to pay for content beyond the movie itself.



A fan poses with a statue of Nezha, the main character from “Ne Zha 2,” at the Gazelle Digital Cultural and Creative Valley in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, on February 8, 2025. – Xinhua

A BOOST FOR LOCAL TOURISM

The film’s use of various Chinese dialects has entertained audiences and highlighted the unique charm of local cultures, boosting cultural tourism in regions like Tianjin and Sichuan.

Locations like Chentangzhuang in Tianjin, linked by some people to Chentang Pass in the film, are seeing increased visitors. Capitalizing on the opportunity, Tianjin’s cultural and tourism sector has introduced several Ne Zha-themed experiential routes, resulting in a nearly 30 percent surge in visitor traffic.

In the Cuiping District of Yibin City, known for ancient temples honoring Nezha, newly launched attractions and themed events have drawn crowds, leading to a 34 percent increase in hotel bookings.

In Xixia County, Henan Province, the Nezha Temple attracts global visitors annually. Following the movie’s release, the local cultural and tourism department reported a year-on-year rise in visitor numbers at the county’s major scenic spots, accompanied by a 13.2 percent increase in overall revenue.

STOCK PRICE RISE

As “Ne Zha 2” continues to dominate the box office, the stock prices of the companies involved in its production, including Beijing Enlight Media Co., Ltd., the main producer, have seen a significant uptick.

Within seven trading days after the Spring Festival holiday, Enlight Media’s stock price hit the upper limit five times, with its market value soaring from approximately

28 billion yuan on January 27 to 101.9 billion yuan on February 14.

Wang Changtian, the company’s chairman, said that such performance is a direct market response to the box office success of “Ne Zha 2.”

Zhu Yuqing, vice chairman of the industry review committee of the China Film Critics Association, said that amidst the global sensation of “Ne Zha 2,” investors previously skeptical about the Chinese film market have shifted their stance and are now paying attention to Chinese animated films.

“The investment rationale for animated films extends beyond box office revenue; their industrial chain is extensive. Derivative products, real-world scenery development, souvenirs, and games can all generate a long-tail effect,” Zhu explained, adding that the capital market is generally optimistic about animated films this year, which marks the 120th anniversary of Chinese cinema and the 130th anniversary of world cinema.

“The strong start of ‘Ne Zha 2’ is just the beginning. The vast potential for consumption in China’s film market, the broad development space for the film industry, and the growing enthusiasm for domestic blockbusters will drive Chinese filmmakers to create more outstanding domestic animations that will shine on the global stage,” said Zhao Xinli, dean of the Advertising School at the Communication University of China. – Xinhua, MPD



Students perform a folk dance at a middle school in Wuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, yesterday. With a mixture of nerves and excitement, many students in mainland China attended their special first class of the new semester yesterday. – Xinhua

10 dead, 19 missing after landslide in Sichuan

CHENGDU – As of yesterday noon, a landslide in Sichuan Province had left 10 people dead, 19 missing and two injured, according to the emergency rescue headquarters.

Houses of 10 households had been buried in the landslide and more than 100 hectares of crops had been damaged.

The landslide occurred on

February 8 in Jinping Village, which is located in Junlian County in the city of Yibin.

More than 3,000 personnel from the armed police, firefighting, emergency response, transportation, medical and other forces have been dispatched to join the search and rescue efforts, aided by drones, sniffer dogs and life detector

equipment.

Currently, 767 people in 139 households have been evacuated and relocated to safety.

The post-disaster reconstruction work is being carried out simultaneously in Junlian to restore normal production and living conditions of the affected people.

– Xinhua

China’s intelligent computing power to maintain rapid growth: report

BEIJING – China’s intelligent computing power is set to expand rapidly in the coming years, driven by surging demand for large models and generative AI, according to a report by market research firm International Data Corporation (IDC) and Chinese IT firm Inspur Information.

The sector is projected to grow at a 46.2-percent compound annual rate from 2023 to 2028, according to the report.

Based on half-precision (FP16) intelligent accelerator card performance, China’s intelligent computing power reached 725.3 EFLOPS* in 2024, surging 74.1 percent year-on-year. It is expected to rise further to 1,037.3 EFLOPS in 2025, 1,460.3 EFLOPS in 2026, and 2,781.9 EFLOPS in 2028.

Robust demand and diverse applications are accelerating the development of China’s AI computing infrastructure, which now features diversification, service-oriented models, scenario-specific solutions and green initiatives, according to the report.

However, enterprises face

challenges such as inadequate computing architectures for large-scale AI deployment, high infrastructure costs and insufficient high-performance resources as generative AI adoption continues to expand.

To address these issues, the report advocates a dual strategy of expanding capacity and improving efficiency by enhancing resource accessibility, optimizing infrastructure, fostering industrial clusters, boosting model efficiency, and strengthening data support, said Zhou Zhengang, vice president of IDC China.

*EFLOPS stands for “Exa Floating Point Operations Per Second.” It is a unit of measurement used to quantify the computing performance of a system, particularly in high-performance computing (HPC) and supercomputing. 1 EFLOPS means the system can perform 1 quintillion (10¹⁸) floating-point operations per second. This metric is commonly used to describe the performance of the most powerful supercomputers in the world. – DeepSeek