

# Sam urges media to show 'One Country, Two Systems' achievements to world

Tony Wong

During last night's dinner reception for Macau's Chinese-language media, Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai urged them to showcase to the world Macau's significant achievements in the successful implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle through various means and channels, telling the global community the good stories of China and Macau.

In his speech delivered during the reception, Sam urged them to convey information to the international community about the values embodied in the "One Country, Two Systems" cause, namely peace, inclusiveness, openness and sharing, making contributions to the dissemination of "Macau's experience" and "Chinese wisdom", with the aim of enabling more people in the world to see clearly that the "One Country, Two Systems" principle is feasible, achievable, and beneficial to humanity.

The reception was held at MGM MACAU in Nape, attended by four of Sam's five portfolio policy secretaries, namely Secretary for Economy and Finance Tai Kin Ip, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam, and Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raymond Tam Vai Man.

Sam noted that the past year marked the 75th Anniversary of the founding of New China and the 25th Anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland. President Xi Jinping paid a three-day inspection visit to Macau last month to attend the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland and the inauguration ceremony of the Macau Special Administrative Region's



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai addresses yesterday's dinner reception for Macau's Chinese-language media at MGM MACAU in Nape. - Photo: GCS

(SAR) sixth-term government, apart from attending various other activities in the city, underscoring his deep affection and care for the city, Sam said.

Sam noted that Xi said during his last month's visit to Macau that "Macau is a pearl in the palm of the motherland. Its development and the well-being of its residents have always been in my mind", adding that these remarks by Xi "have brought us warmth and encouragement".

history and written a brilliant chapter in the successful implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle with Macau characteristics.

Sam said that the news media sector, as an important witness to and participant in the MSAR's development as well as disseminator of its information, has constantly paid close attention to and followed up the MSAR government's work and various activities, praising the sector for assisting the government in widely disseminating its information through various forms and platforms.

Sam underlined that since taking office 26 days ago, his government has steadily been pushing ahead with its various endeavours. In the new year, Sam said, his government will keep in mind the various important speeches and instructions made by Xi during his last month's inspection visit to Macau, better leveraging the institutional advantages brought about by the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, striving to promote Macau's appropriate economic diversification, enhancing governance effectiveness, and maintaining social harmony and stability.

Sam pledged that his government will resolve Macau's long-standing social issues, ensuring improvements in the population's well-being and enabling Macau to make steady progress, based on the solid foundation of the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

The dinner reception was attended by about 50 representatives of Macau's Chinese-language media as well as Macau-based Chinese-language media correspondents. Macau has 13 Chinese-language dailies. ■

## Trump says will create 'External Revenue Service' for tariffs

WASHINGTON – US President-elect Donald Trump said yesterday that he plans to form an "External Revenue Service" for tariff collection, less than a week before he takes office.

This comes as Trump, who posted the statement on social media, has promised sweeping levies on allies and adversaries as he seeks to pressure partners into tackling issues including migration and drug trafficking.

Even before his return to the White House, Trump has vowed tariffs on major

US trading partners Mexico and Canada, as well as competitor China.

He has also floated across-the-board duties on all imports, and steeper rates on Chinese goods.

Trump wrote on Truth Social yesterday that he would create the new body "to collect our tariffs, duties, and all revenue that come from foreign sources."

"January 20, 2025, will be the birth date of the External Revenue Service," he added, referring to the day he takes office.

The name is a play on the Internal Revenue Service, a bureau under the Treasury Department that administers and enforces US tax laws.

While the president-elect has said that countries like China would foot the bill on tariffs, tariffs are a tax on imported goods and importers in the United States pay the duties.

The economic burden of such levies may also end up being shared with exporters and consumers.

In his online post, Trump did not provide further details on how the new department would be formed.

Trump yesterday also criticised the United States' past efforts to pursue trade agreements, saying these accords were "soft and pathetically weak."

While Washington had for decades used free-trade pacts to forge relationships around the world, it has more recently shifted away from this stance, including under outgoing President Joe Biden. - AFP

### Xi calls China-EU partnership one of mutual achievement

There exists no clash of fundamental interests or geopolitical conflicts between China and the European Union (EU), making them partners that can contribute to each other's success, President Xi Jinping said yesterday. - Story on p. 7

### Survey shows 46 pct of adults worldwide hold antisemitic views

A survey published yesterday by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) showed 46 percent of adults worldwide – about 2.2 billion people – hold antisemitic views. - Story on p. 10

### Mozambique opens new parliament amid protest, boycott

Mozambique swore in its new parliament on Monday with the streets of the capital deserted after the opposition leader called a strike to protest the result of highly disputed elections. - Story on p. 12

# Guaranteed places for Macau students in mainland universities hit record high: DSEDJ

Yuki Lei

The Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has recently pointed out that this year's guaranteed places offered by mainland universities to Macau students hit a record high of 1,397 – and The Chinese Educators Association of Macau Vice President Vong Kuoc Ieng told the *Post* on Monday that there had been a “noticeable” change in students' habit of choosing majors at universities in general this academic year, with a “trend towards diversity” and that some of this year's top-ranking disciplines included Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Vong, who spoke with the *Post* in a telephone interview, attributed the main reason to the local government's promotion of its “1+4” appropriate economic diversification development strategy in recent years. Vong said he was glad to see the changes, adding that “if students all concentrate on just one or two professions, it will have a negative impact on their future career planning”.

According to previous statements by the local government, the “1+4” strategy aims to reinforce Macau's function as “One Centre” for integrated tourism and leisure, officially known as the World Centre of Tourism and Leisure, while facilitating the development of four emerging industries: big health;

modern financial services; high-tech; and conventions, exhibitions, sports, and the commercial and trade industries.

Vong cited the fact that in the past, professions such as teacher training degrees and even medical degrees had always been popular disciplines, however, due to factors such as the declining birth rate, quite a few industries are now experiencing market saturation, “that is to say, according to our government's statistics in recent years, it includes an oversupply of teachers, and even difficulties for medical students to find a job”.

Based on the expected demand by civil society in the future, Vong predicted that disciplines such as AI, Information Technology and Nursing would replace Medical Science as the most popular subjects among local students. “We have seen an increase in the number of students enrolled in the nursing profession, and it seems that nursing care for senior citizens may be a trend among the new programmes being offered”, he noted.

The “2025 Joint Entrance Exam of Ordinary Universities in Mainland China for Macau's Recommended Students”, followed by interviews conducted by the participating mainland universities, was held last weekend, with the admission results announced yesterday.

According to a DSEDJ statement on Monday, a total of 1,413 F6 students from

various local secondary schools were recommended to take the entrance exam for 1,397 places offered by 121 tertiary education institutions in Beijing, Guangdong Shanghai and Zhejiang. Among the institutions, China Academy of Art, Ningbo University, Communication University of Zhejiang, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology, China University of Geosciences and The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) are new on the list. A separate statement by the bureau yesterday noted that after taking last week's exam and interview, 1,301 students from Macau had their admission places guaranteed.

“The difference this year is the competition between Shanghai and Beijing,” said Vong, according to whom among the mainland universities, Tsinghua University, Peking University and Beijing Normal University in the past provided only five guaranteed places each for Macau students but have each increased their places to 20 this year.

Vong urged the students to value their hard-earned places and “choose the right subject”, underlining that every university place, especially for mainland students, was precious and, therefore, “we should never give up these learning opportunities easily because of the increase in university places” for students from Macau. ■

# USJ, Oxfam ink MoU



This undated handout photo downloaded from the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) website last night shows Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) Dean Prof. Jenny Philips (left) and Oxfam Hong Kong Director of Fundraising and Communications Michael Wong Ho-ming shaking hands after signing the memorandum of understanding on the USJ campus recently.

Rui Pastorin

A signing ceremony for a memorandum of understanding (MoU) has recently been held at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) between the higher education institution's Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) and Oxfam in Macau.

The private Catholic university said in a statement yesterday that the MOU was signed to “strengthen the commitment to empowering Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students and advancing community development in Macau”. It covers internships and joint projects.

The statement added that the partnership aims to create opportunities for students to get first-hand experience in social entrepreneurship and sustainable development while “addressing pressing community needs through joint initiatives”.

FBL Dean Prof. Jenny Philips and Oxfam Hong Kong Director of Fundraising and Communications

Michael Wong Ho-ming signed the MoU during the ceremony.

Philips was quoted by the statement as saying that the partnership “further extends the training of our students and events collaboration with the non-profit sector, which strongly reflects our Faculty's teachings of Business and Organisations as a social unit promoting human and societal values”.

Wong added: “Together, we can inspire the next generation to combat poverty and inequality through education and action”.

Oxfam is a global movement of people working together to end the injustice of poverty. It is a confederation of charitable organizations focused on alleviating poverty and addressing social injustices through various means, including advocacy, development programs, and humanitarian response.

Oxfam was founded in 1942 in Oxford, England, originally as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief. ■



This handout photo provided by the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) on Saturday shows some of the bureau's senior officials, including its director Kong Chi Meng (third from right, standing), visiting Kao Yip Middle School in Zape during the “2025 Joint Entrance Exam of Ordinary Universities in Mainland China for Macau's Recommended Students”.

# Duo rob illegal currency exchange dealer of HK\$300,000

Tony Wong

Two men from the mainland robbed an illegal currency exchange dealer of HK\$300,000 in a hotel guestroom in Cotai on Sunday, after which one of them was arrested in Macau while the other was caught in Zhuhai the next day, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chao Teng Hin said during a special press conference yesterday.

Chao identified the suspect arrested in Macau as a 41-year-old surnamed Cai and his accomplice caught in Zhuhai as a 37-year-old surnamed Zhang.

The robbery victim, also from the mainland, illegally engaged in currency exchange activities in local casinos.

On Sunday night, Chao said, Zhang contacted the male victim via an instant messaging app where they struck a currency exchange deal according to which the victim was to exchange yuan into HK\$300,000 for Zhang. The victim agreed to go to a hotel guestroom in Cotai to meet Zhang to carry out the transaction.

After the victim entered the guestroom, Zhang and his

accomplice, Cai, chatted with him for a while, during which the duo suddenly robbed him of the HK\$300,000 cash that he had taken to the room with him for the transaction, and then fled the scene.

The victim reported the case to the police, after which PJ officers identified the two robbers and confirmed that they quickly fled to the mainland via the Macau-Zhuhai checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB), Chao said.

The Judiciary Police contacted their mainland counterparts asking them to look for the duo, after

which the mainland police caught Zhang at the airport in Zhuhai at noon on Monday when he was about to catch a flight, while Cai was intercepted on Monday night when he was re-entering Macau via the HZMB Macau-Zhuhai checkpoint.

According to Chao, the duo had split the ill-gotten money equally between them.

The Judiciary Police have meanwhile launched an investigation into the robbery victim's suspected illegal currency exchange activities, Chao said. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded robbery suspect arrested in Macau to a PJ van outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. – Photo: Tony Wong

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## Macau Weather

**CLOUDY, BECOMING FINE.  
LIGHT RAIN AT FIRST.  
FORCE 4 TO 5 NORTHERLY  
WINDS WITH GUSTS.  
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL  
RANGE BETWEEN 35% AND 90%.**



14°C~20°C

Source: SMG

# Macau reaches flu peak as daily emergency dept visits exceed 1,300: SSM

William Chan

Health Bureau (SSM) Director Alvis Lo Iek Long said yesterday during an inter-departmental press conference on the government's response to the influenza (flu) peak that the virus is currently active and has entered its peak period. In the past week, he said, the daily average number of residents visiting medical institutions' emergency departments exceeded 1,300 people.

According to Dr Lo, 1,000 of the patients were adults and 300 were children, 125 of whom had flu symptoms. The flu virus positive rate has risen by 6.2 percent per week, reaching 22.3 percent. Among them, the H1N1 subtype accounts for more than 90 percent, consistent with the situation in the mainland and Hong Kong, Dr Lo noted.

In response to the flu, Dr Lo noted that this weekend the bureau will cooperate with over 10 social organisations and medical

institutions to set up 15 community flu prevention consultation stations across the city. Lo noted that the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre has established a multi-point trigger monitoring and early warning mechanism, which will mobilise medical personnel to meet the health consultation needs of the residents.

Multi-point trigger monitoring refers to a system or process used to track and analyse events or conditions at multiple designated points.

Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) President Wilson Hon Wai said that as of Sunday, the flu vaccine inoculation rate for children in childcare facilities stood at 60 percent, and for residents of elderly care homes it was 80 percent. Hon noted that the bureaux will hold a coordination meeting with social service institutions to provide professional training on flu prevention and enhance their response capabilities.



Leong Iek Hou, who heads the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of the Health Bureau, addresses yesterday's inter-departmental press conference on the response to the current influenza (flu) situation.

Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Deputy Director Wong Ka Ki noted that they will hold a meeting with all local schools in Macau before



Health Bureau (SSM) Director Alvis Lo Iek Long addresses yesterday's inter-departmental press conference on the response to the influenza (flu) situation. - Photos: William Chan

the Chinese New Year holiday, to remind schools to maintain a clean and hygienic campus environment and strengthen health education.

Leong Iek Hou, who heads the

Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of the Health Bureau, noted that to cope with the flu peak, the authorities have purchased 198,000 doses of vaccine and 174,000 people have already been vaccinated, a year-on-year increase of 7.4 percent in the vaccination rate.

She noted that all Macau residents can receive the flu vaccine for free, while non-resident workers (NRWs) and non-local students can go to Kiang Wu Hospital and the Workers' Medical Clinic to receive the government-subsidised vaccine.

Dr Leong said that the vaccine needs at least two weeks after inoculation to reach its maximum effectiveness. She pointed out that the Chinese New Year is approaching soon, and called on the public to get vaccinated as soon as possible. She also advised citizens to take precautions when travelling, and seek medical attention promptly if flu symptoms occur. ■

## 5-year Physical Fitness Monitoring campaign starts



School children have their physical fitness tested at the Olympic Sports Centre Stadium yesterday. - Photos: Yuki Lei

Yuki Lei

Macau's 5<sup>th</sup> Residents Physical Fitness Monitoring & Assessment campaign was launched yesterday, with 9,990 valid samples being collected from four age groups: kids, teenagers, adults-at-work and the elderly - and Sports Bureau (ID) President Luís Gomes said that by collecting physical fitness data from local residents aged between three and 79 through "scientific sampling", the campaign would help the government better formulate its policies or implement measures in the fields of sport, education, healthcare, and elderly care.

Since 2005, the Sports Bureau, in conjunction with the Health Bureau (SSM), the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) and the Macao Polytechnic Institute (MPU), has jointly launched the four-month campaign every five years with the aim of improving the understanding of the changes in local residents' physical

activity behaviour, and providing reference for designing relevant policies specifically in the fields of sport, healthcare and education.

With the technical support from the China Institute of Sport Science (CISS) of the General Administration of Sport of China, "a raft of new important indicators has been added this year, including a 15-metre obstacle course for kids, grip strength measurements, scoliosis\* screening for teenagers, blood glucose measurement for adults, and sarcopenia\*\* assessments for senior citizens, among others," Cheong said.

Yesterday's ceremony was held at the Macau Olympic Sports Centre Stadium, with the attendance by Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam, CISS Director Cao Jingwei, and Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the MSAR Publicity and Culture Department Deputy Director Bai Bing, as well as senior officials from the four participating bureaux.



Sports Bureau (ID) President Luís Gomes delivers a speech during yesterday's launching ceremony of the 2025 Macau Residents Physical Fitness Monitoring & Assessment.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the ceremony, Gomes said that the current campaign covers 16 local primary and secondary schools, five tertiary education institutions and 29 organisations participating in the testing of different age groups, with the entire sampling having been divided into districts, strata and age, "first according to the proportion ratio and district distribution, and then according to the ratio of males to females and age groups", underlining that the total of 25 years' worth of data "is collected under the unified standards".

Lasting until April, according to Gomes, the findings from the campaign may only be able to be released in the fourth quarter of next year or the first quarter of 2027. ■

\*Scoliosis is a medical condition characterised by an abnormal lateral curvature of the spine.

\*\*Sarcopenia is a condition characterised by the progressive loss of muscle mass, strength, and function, typically associated with ageing.

## CTT to offer postmark cancellation on Legislative Assembly Open Day

Rui Pastorin

The Macau Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) said in a statement on Monday that a temporary post counter will be set up at the Legislative Assembly Building on Saturday in celebration of its Open Day.

According to the statement,

commemorative postmark cancellation services will be available at the counter from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The statement added that commemorative envelopes with a cancelled stamp will cost nine patacas, while other philatelic products will also be on sale. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Macau Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) yesterday shows the Commemorative Envelope of the Legislative Assembly Building Open Day on Saturday.



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# Window Cleaning Service to perform video game & anime music

Interview by William Chan

Local band Window Cleaning Service is gearing up to host a Video Game & Anime Music Concert at Sifang Art Space this Saturday night, guitarist Henry Huang Seong Fong said in a recent online interview with the *Post*.

The band, whose members are under the age of 18, includes Huang on the guitar, Diego Lam on keyboards, Vit Polasek on trumpet and violin, Jason Chon on bass, Wyatt Shum on saxophone and Lukas Lei on drums. Saturday's gig will be largely influenced by jazz fusion.

Huang noted that the decision to organise the concert stems from their love for the music found in video games and Japanese anime shows from their childhood, which holds a nostalgic sentiment for them and their friends, motivating them to perform and share their enjoyment with others.

In Macau, it is rare to find bands with such a young lineup. Huang credits this to their schooling at the Macau Anglican College (MAC), where they have the opportunity to place a priority on music in their academic lives. He said, "The primary educational structure we adhere to is based on A-levels, a British system that allows students to specialise in 3-4 subjects including music of their choice, dedicating the majority of their time to these areas."

Therefore, their school curriculum incorporates formal music training, with band classes a weekly in-school subject that provide instrumental experience preparing them for future exams and enabling them to form a band at a young age. "Our school also includes composition as a key component, which helped us become familiar with notation software," Huang added. For their future shows, they plan to compose original songs and perform them.

Regarding their chosen music genre, Huang highlighted that their school culture is supportive of a diverse range of music styles. "While some schools may focus solely on classical music, our school has a jazz band. Before our teacher Johnny Yau departed from MAC, he encouraged us to form a band, which sparked our interest. Additionally, some older MAC students who are now studying music at university level were involved in fusion and jazz music, serving as inspirations for us," Huang said.

Under the continuous influence of teachers, including Claudio Lopes, Ng Sa and Roy Amitavoin, Huang said that bassist Jason Chon wants to study sound engineering, Lukas Lei (drums) wants to study jazz performance, and he himself is interested in music education.

Tickets for the concert are priced at 80 patacas, primarily to cover rental costs and make the event accessible for their peers, according to Huang. Prior to their 8 p.m. performance at Sifang Art Space on Saturday, an even younger band, a girl band named Finger Biscuits also from Macau Anglican College, will take the stage as the opening act for Window Cleaning Service.



Henry Huang plays the guitar with his fusion band Window Cleaning Service in 2023.  
—Photos provided by Huang



## Lawmaker calls for accountability as budget implementation rates fall short



Lawmaker-cum-restaurateur Andrew Chan Chak Mo (right), who chairs the legislature's 2<sup>nd</sup> Standing Committee, talks to reporters after the committee's closed-door meeting reviewing the government's implementation of the 2023 budget yesterday, while the committee's secretary, Lam Lon Wai, looks on.

— Photo: Ginnie Liang

Ginnie Liang

Lawmaker-cum-restaurateur Andrew Chan Chak Mo, who chairs the Legislative Assembly's 2<sup>nd</sup> Standing Committee, expressed concerns raised by committee members yesterday regarding the low implementation rates of the budgets for the government's key funds, requesting a greater transparency and accountability from the government.

Chan made the remarks when addressing a press briefing after yesterday's closed-door meeting reviewing the government's implementation of its 2023 budget, which was attended by officials from the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Forum Macao), Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), Cultural Development Fund (FDC), Education Fund and the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund (FDIC).

Chan highlighted the overall positive financial situation in 2023, noting a substantial surplus of over 9.8 billion patacas in the government's general revenue. Chan also noted that the improving global economic conditions at that time led to a net investment of over 18 billion patacas from eight specific entities, a significant recovery from the 6.5 billion patacas loss experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic era in 2022.

In terms of the budget implementation situation, Chan

noted, the Permanent Secretariat of Forum Macao had an approved budget of 188 million patacas but only had an actual expenditure of 100 million patacas, resulting in an implementation rate of just 55.4 percent.

Similarly, the Cultural Development Fund, with a budget of over 200 million patacas, with an actual expenditure of only 160 million patacas, achieved an implementation rate of merely 58.9 percent, Chan pointed out.

The Education Fund fared somewhat better, with an approved budget of 1.5 billion patacas but had an actual expenditure of 1.0 billion patacas, leading to a 64.5 percent implementation rate, Chan noted.

The FDIC displayed the lowest figure, with a budget of 700 million patacas, but it only had an actual expenditure of 300 million patacas, culminating in a mere 45.6 percent implementation rate, Chan noted.

While the Cultural Affairs Bureau had a budget of 1.2 billion patacas and an actual expenditure of 1 billion patacas, achieving a relatively higher implementation rate of 78.2 percent, members of the committee still sought clarification on why the remaining budget went unspent, Chan said.

Government officials from the five entities will be invited to a future meeting to explain the reasons behind the notably low budget implementation rates, Chan said. ■

## Marine and Water Bureau promotes best use of water resources

Ginnie Liang

Since 2018, the Marine and Water Bureau's (DSAMA) "Safe Water Use in Buildings" programme has seen participation from 819 high-rise buildings across Macau, with more than half of these buildings committing to regular inspections and maintenance of their internal water systems, including semi-annual cleaning of water tanks, the bureau said in a statement yesterday.

The statement said that this proactive approach was crucial to ensuring the safety and quality of drinking water, allowing residents to enjoy clean and reliable water sourced from the mainland, and raising the awareness of owners and property management companies on the maintenance and management of buildings' water systems.

According to the statement, over the years, the bureau has worked "tirelessly" to promote various water-saving programmes, with one of the bureau's flagship initiatives, "2024/2025 Water Conservation Education Promotion Programme," which encourages students to unleash their creativity by creating media and art projects centred on responsible water use, particularly focusing on the theme of using recycled water for toilets, the statement said, with 38 schools, 718 teams, 202 teachers, and over 3,000 students participating.

The programme is still open for work to be submitted, and the winning schools will be recognised as "Model Schools for Water Conservation Education" and will have the opportunity to visit key water supply facilities on the mainland.

Meanwhile, in order to deepen students' understanding of water resource management, the bureau has recently organised a field trip for 126 students and teachers to the Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works in Hong Kong.



This poster provided by the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) yesterday promotes its "Safe Water Use in Buildings" programme.

Given that 99 percent of Macau's water is sourced from the mainland, the bureau has forged strong partnerships with water authorities across the border to ensure a reliable supply, particularly during the dry season from October to March, the statement underlined. ■

## Sands China introduces 'Alipay Tap!' to properties

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort operator Sands China said in a statement yesterday that it has partnered with Alipay and Macau Pass to introduce the payment service "Alipay Tap!" to its properties.

The statement noted that the payment service, first introduced in the mainland in July last year, can be used across 300 businesses at The Venetian Macao, The Parisian Macao, The Londoner Macao and Sands Macao in the first phase.

The service can be used in paying for hotel accommodation, dining, shopping, and ticketing, among others, and special offers are available to mainland visitors using the service during the promotional period, according to the statement.

Through "Alipay Tap!", payments can be conducted without opening the Alipay app, with the statement adding that users only need to unlock their phones and tap the respective business's payment device. The service is available in over 100 cities and more than 1,000 shopping malls and commercial districts in the mainland, the statement said.

Li Jiajia, vice-president of Alipay, Ant Group, was quoted by the statement as saying: "Macau has unique geographic advantages, providing an ideal environment for the introduction of innovative technologies. Alipay and Alipay+'s



This undated handout photo provided by Sands China yesterday shows the Alipay Tap! payment service in use.

cross-border services have already covered nearly 90 percent of merchants in Macau".

Li added: "The successful introduction of Alipay Tap! in Macau will further enhance the convenience of payments for mainland Chinese visitors, accelerate the digital transformation of businesses, unlock more commercial potential, and promote the digital connectivity of digital everyday services within the Greater Bay Area [GBA]."

Sands China Vice President of E-Commerce and Digital Marketing Allan Chung (鍾俊傑) was quoted as saying: "By deeply integrating it across various business operations within Sands Resorts Macao, we

have significantly enhanced the payment experience, making it smoother and more convenient for both domestic and international visitors. This initiative also helps foster an environment for the digital economy and technological innovation in Macau"

Moreover, Macau Pass Chief Technical Officer Gavin Zhao (趙皓) said in the statement: "As a leader in digital solutions in Macau, Macau Pass will integrate its own digital capabilities with the Alipay Tap! technology, connecting with local ecosystem scenarios to create a new model of digital commerce with local characteristics." ■

## STOCK MARKETS

### Hang Seng Index closes 1.83 pct higher

Hong Kong stock market ended higher yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index up 1.83 percent to close at 19,219.78 points.

The Hang Seng China

Enterprises Index rose 2.1 percent to end at 6,987.36 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index hiked 3.08 percent to end at 4,352.04 points.

— Xinhua

# Man unhappy with father's donation to seniors' centre damages door with hammer: police



These two undated handout photos provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday show the broken hammer.

## Tony Wong

A local man in his sixties banged on the glass entrance door of a service centre for senior citizens with a hammer last week, causing cracks to the glass, as he was unhappy that his father had donated money to the centre, Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Wong Wai Chon said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The man surnamed Chan told the police that he is unemployed.

The senior citizens' service centre is located on the ground floor

of a building on Rua da Rosa (連興街), a short alley near Luís de Camões Garden (白鴿巢公園).

According to Wong, Chan went to the service centre on Wednesday last week, and kept banging on its entrance door with the hammer, as he was "dissatisfied" that his father had recently donated money to the centre. The head of the hammer eventually broke off the handle after he had banged on the door repeatedly.

Centre staff reported the case to the police, after, however, Chan

stayed there and kept arguing with the staff. PSP officers later arrested him at the scene, Wong said.

According to Wong, Chan did not tell the police how much and why his father had donated money to the centre.

The centre told the police that repairs to the damaged door were estimated to cost 10,000 patacas.

Chan has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing charges of property damage and unlawful possession of a weapon. ■

# Chinese netizens welcome influx of 'TikTok refugees'

## Analysis

BEIJING – Chinese internet users on a popular social networking platform have noticed a sudden influx of foreign newcomers who claim to have migrated from TikTok due to concerns about a potential ban by the US government within the week.

On Xiaohongshu, a Chinese platform with combined features of Instagram and Pinterest, hashtags such as #TikTokRefugee have garnered hundreds of thousands of posts from accounts mostly registered in the United States.

The surge in activity has propelled Xiaohongshu, also known as RedNote abroad, to the top of the US Apple app store download rankings within just a few days.

TikTok, owned by Chinese internet company ByteDance but operated independently, has approximately 170 million users in the United States, nearly half that country's population.

Washington has sought to ban TikTok for many years, citing unfounded national security concerns and alleged risks to data privacy. It faces a possible ban on Sunday as the US Supreme Court is set to rule on enforcing a law that could either ban TikTok or force ByteDance to sell it to an American firm.

While anxiously waiting for the outcome, some content creators did not waste time laughing at the proposed ban and the irony it has created.

"They tried to ban TikTok [for national security concerns], so everybody now goes to an actual Chinese app," said a self-claimed "TikTok refugee" on Xiaohongshu, via a short video post.

"TikTok refugees are migrating to legitimate Chinese apps to willingly give their data directly," another post said on X in a sarcastic tone.

The proposed ban is not an isolated case. In recent years, an increasing number of Chinese tech companies, including Huawei and DJI, have been unfairly targeted by Washington – which rolled out a slew of measures to restrict their presence.

"US TikTok users are voting with their feet," said Lyu Xiang, a non-resident senior fellow at the Center for China and Globalization.

"This demonstrates that suppressing normal business activities of non-US companies is unpopular, as such actions by US politicians are harming the immediate interests of the American public," he added.

Lyu suggested that Washington should instead adopt an open mindset, ensure fair competition, and encourage US companies to innovate in creating products that meet the evolving demands of American users for social networking.

## WELCOMED IN CHINA

"TikTok refugees" have been warmly received by Xiaohongshu

users, who shared photos and videos with these newcomers, offering food and travel tips, while even providing free language lessons, given that the app's content is predominantly in Chinese.

Founded in 2013, Xiaohongshu initially focused on shopping tips but has evolved into a comprehensive lifestyle platform, blending social media and e-commerce. Users can share content and purchase products directly through the app, creating a seamless shopping experience.

"Welcome you to join us in this vibrant and colorful community," said a Xiaohongshu user who works as an English interpreter in Beijing.

"Let's start the new journey with Chinese food," posted another user from Sichuan, introducing the southwestern province's signature food recipes.

As conversations deepened, some Chinese students began seeking help with their English homework – and help they did receive.

A "TikTok refugee" named "Rosie\_in\_Wonderland" said Xiaohongshu is very similar to TikTok in making content and easy to do, and she hopes to find her community soon like she did on TikTok.

"You are not refugees. You all are explorers. Welcome to the new world," said another Xiaohongshu user who lives in China.

– Xinhua

# Scammers send SMS with link to pay fines for 'traffic offences': PJ

## Ginnie Laing

The Judiciary Police (PJ) warned the public in a statement yesterday about a phishing SMS sent out by scammers with a link to a fake Macau government portal website where would-be victims will be asked for credit card details to "pay their fines for 'traffic offences'".

The statement noted that the Judiciary Police has recently discovered that fraudsters have been sending out phishing SMSs that claim to be from the government. The fraudulent short message service claims that recipients need to "pay their fines for 'traffic offences'" by clicking an enclosed link that requires credit card details.

The link redirects recipients to a phishing website that closely resembles the actual Macau government portal website and prompts users to enter the registration number of their vehicle, according to the statement.

They are then required to provide credit card details including their card number, expiration date, cardholder's name, and security code, for purported "identity verification".

The statement underlined that in order to avoid data theft, the Judiciary Police Anti-Fraud and Coordination Centre is warning members of the public to be wary when receiving such messages and not to click any links or enter their account or credit card information.

The statement also noted that the government will only notify vehicle owners that they need to pay a traffic fine and will not include any link in the SMS.

The statement pointed out that if there are doubts about the authenticity of an SMS, one can call the actual entities to verify it, while those suspecting they have been scammed should immediately call the Judiciary Police's Anti-Fraud hotline on 8800 7777 or the crime report hotline on 993. ■



This poster provided by the Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday warns members of the public of the fake "pay fines for 'traffic offences'" phishing SMS.

# Scientists develop most refined chimpanzee brain atlas

BEIJING – A collaborative team of scientists from China and other countries has mapped the most refined chimpanzee brain atlas to date, providing novel insights into the evolution of the human brain, the *Science and Technology Daily* reported yesterday.

The study was published in the journal *The Innovation*.

Chimpanzees are one of humans' closest living relatives. Despite having a brain that is only about one-third the size of a human's, they share many similarities with humans in neuroanatomy and cognitive functions, making them an important comparison point for understanding human brain evolution.

"However, a major challenge in current cross-species neuroscience research is the absence of standardized brain reference systems with biological significance," said Fan Lingzhong, corresponding author of the study and a researcher at the Institute

of Automation under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Based on the concept of using brain connectivity information to construct brain atlases, researchers have successfully developed the Chimpanzee Brainnetome Atlas (ChimpBNA).

Leveraging this new resource, they found substantial differences in connectivity patterns between chimpanzees and humans across most association cortices, highlighting more complex and nuanced connectivity changes in brain evolution than previously understood.

Fan said that the ChimpBNA will serve as a valuable resource for neuroscience research and offer new insights into the unique characteristics of the human brain.

"Going forward, we will continue to expand the application of cross-species brain atlases to enhance their value in understanding the evolution of the nervous system," Fan added. – Xinhua