

Govt says still finalising Hac Sa youth adventure camp project's design

Tony Wong

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) underlines that after gathering and assessing opinions and suggestions from various segments of civil society, it is still improving and finalising the design of its youth adventure camp project near Coloane's Hac Sa Beach, before announcing the details "in due course".

The bureau has yet to reveal when it expects construction to finally get off the ground after first announcing the large-scale project in 2023.

The bureau made the remarks about the latest progress of its project's design in a reply to a written interpellation made by indirectly-elected lawmaker-cum-unionist Lei Chan U early last month. The bureau made and signed the reply on Wednesday last week, the copy of which was released by Lei's office to the media yesterday.

The reply was signed by the bureau's newly appointed president, Chao Wai Ieng, who took office on New Year's Day.

In his written interpellation, Lei pointed out that the bureau was aiming in late 2023 to complete the final design of its youth adventure camp project, covering 100,000 square metres, in the first half of 2024 after which its construction could start.



This artist's rendition provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) shows an area for adventure sport including a skatepark in the future youth adventure camp near Coloane's Hac Sa Beach.

In his written interpellation submitted in early December last year, Lei noted that, however, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon told reporters in September 2024 that the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) was carrying out an archaeological investigation in the area earmarked for the camp project with the aim of confirming whether there were archaeological relics on the site and that the investigation was then

slated to be completed by the end of 2024.

Lei asked the government about the progress of the Cultural Affairs Bureau's archaeological investigation and when it expects to announce details of the camp project's final design.

In its reply to Lei's written interpellation, the Municipal Affairs Bureau quoted the Cultural Affairs Bureau as saying that the area's archaeological investigation was

completed in October 2024, with no archaeological relics having been discovered, after which the site had already been returned to the Municipal Affairs Bureau the next month.

The reply said that after listening to opinions and suggestions from various segments of civil society, IAM officials are now improving and finalising the design of the youth adventure camp project, which aims to create an outdoor

training base for young people to engage in adventures as well as a space for those of all ages to enjoy diverse leisure activities.

The reply underlined that the government will announce details of its youth adventure camp project's final design in due course.

When the government announced the large-scale youth adventure camp project in 2023, it said that it was aiming to reduce its total construction cost to a level lower than its preliminary estimate of 1.4 billion patacas, pledging the government would anyhow ensure that the project would not cost more than 1.4 billion patacas.

The government first planned in 2020 to develop a large plot of idle land between Hac Sa Beach and the nearby hillside into a recreational area, which was then planned to cover seven hectares, i.e., 70,000 square metres, with a budget of only 229 million patacas.

However, the government announced in 2023 that it had decided to upgrade its original 2020 plan to a new proposal to build a large-scale youth adventure camp there, covering 10 hectares, i.e., 100,000 square metres, with the aim of providing a base for young people to improve their physical strength, as well as a venue for the organisation of team-building games. ■

Israel, Hamas reach Gaza ceasefire deal: media reports

DOHA/CAIRO/JERUSALEM – Israel and Hamas have finally reached a ceasefire agreement to end over 15 months of fighting in the Gaza Strip after intensified efforts by mediators, Egypt's state-affiliated Al-Qahera News TV channel reported yesterday.

Meanwhile, Israeli media, citing US and Israeli officials, confirmed that the two warring parties have reached an agreement on a ceasefire and hostage release.

Israel's state-owned Kan TV

news earlier quoted an Israeli official as reporting that Israel received a "positive" written reply from Hamas for approving a proposed Gaza ceasefire-for-hostage release deal.

Also yesterday, Al Jazeera reported that Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met with Hamas and Israeli negotiators in Doha in a "final push" to reach a ceasefire deal. (More on p.10) – Xinhua

MOC pledges efforts to expand opening-up, welcomes foreign investment

BEIJING – China will roll out more measures to expand opening-up and attract more foreign investment in 2025, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) announced yesterday.

Efforts will be made to further ease market access, MOC official Li Yongjie told a press conference in Beijing. She said that after China placed zero restrictions on foreign investment in its manufacturing sector last year,

it will advance the opening-up of its services sector this year – particularly pilot programs in the telecommunication, medical care and education fields.

On optimizing the country's business environment, Li pledged continuous efforts to promote the Invest in China campaign this year, and improve services for foreign-invested firms.

Efforts will be made to resolve problems foreign-invested firms

face in qualification licensing, standard setting and government procurement, according to Li.

Efforts should also be made to build high-level opening-up platforms that align with high-standard international economic and trade rules, the official said, calling for continued work to improve the quality and efficiency of the country's pilot free trade zones.

– Xinhua

Macau's most popular English-language newspaper – Your trustworthy source of news & views

The Macau Post Daily

Xi calls for fostering new highlights in China-Sri Lanka cooperation

China will actively support Sri Lanka in focusing on economic development and the two countries should jointly foster new highlights in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, President Xi Jinping said yesterday.

– Story on p. 7

Cocaine use nearly doubles in France: study

Cocaine use in France has nearly doubled and consumption of hard drugs like heroin and ecstasy is also rising, a study said yesterday, the increase taking place as drug-related violence spreads across the country.

– Story on p. 11

Mozambique's new president vows 'unity' as sworn in amid deadly protests

Mozambique's new president Daniel Chapo vowed yesterday to unite the country upon taking the oath of office under heavy guard following weeks of deadly political unrest.

– Story on p. 12

Illegal currency dealer punches cop during pursuit: police

Ada Lei

Two men from the mainland were apprehended for engaging in an illegal currency exchange transaction on Tuesday, one of whom assaulted a police officer, according to Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Siu Keong during a regular press conference held yesterday.

The two suspects, surnamed Liu and Zhou, are in their thirties. They claimed to be jobless.

According to Cheong, two police officers were on patrol in a Cotai casino when they spotted Liu and Zhou engaging in an illegal currency exchange deal. Liu and Zhou ran away when the two police officers were approaching. When the officers caught up with the suspects Liu hit one of the officers on the back during a scuffle. The police officers eventually arrested both suspects.

Cheong noted that, under questioning, the suspects admitted to having engaged in illegal currency exchange



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

activities since November, and each had earned a profit of HK\$50,000. The police also seized HK\$177,000 in cash and chips from them.

Both suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing charges of illegal currency exchange, while Liu also faces charges of aggravated assault and resisting arrest. ■

Annual awareness-raising carnival to take place in lao Hon on Sunday



Representatives of the co-organisers of this Saturday's "Jointly Creating a New Environment for the Community" carnival pose during yesterday's press conference at the Kai Fong headquarters in Toi San district. — Photo: Yuki Lei

Yuki Lei

The "Jointly Creating a New Environment for the Community 2025" public awareness promotion carnival will take place in lao Hon Market Park on Saturday, with the expected number of participants ranging from 800 to 1,000.

The annual event, co-organised by the Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations (commonly known as Kai Fong in Cantonese), in conjunction with the Unitary Police Service (SPU), Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), Public Security Police (PSP), Judiciary Police (PJ), Fire Services Bureau (CB), Health Bureau (SSM), and the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), aims to further enhance public awareness of crime prevention through a raft of "interesting" activities, jointly creating a good and stable living environment and building a safe, healthy and harmonious community

through cooperation between government and residents.

The event will kick off at 3 p.m. that day and end at 5:30 p.m., featuring booth games, educational videos, thematic education, and performances. Fire engines, police vehicles, and other exhibits such as advanced firefighting equipment, crime scene investigation vehicles and crime investigation tools, will also be on display during the one-day event.

The organisers held yesterday a press conference at the Kai Fong headquarters in Toi San district about the upcoming activity.

According to the press conference, through the upcoming event, the Judiciary Police aim to enhance public awareness of crimes affecting the community such as theft, robbery and fraud; the Public Security Police will promote crime prevention awareness; the Unitary Police Service (SPU) aims to deepen the public's understanding of disaster prevention

and improve the community's understanding of and cooperation with the SPU civil defence work; the Fire Services Bureau will promote home fire prevention, electrical safety, and safety in the use of gas-fuelled appliances, as well as promote the use and installation of automated external defibrillator (AED) units; the Municipal Affairs Bureau will publicise civic education and promote the concept of "Courtesy Living Charter", respect for life and care for the environment; the Health Bureau will emphasise the importance of influenza prevention and influenza vaccination; while the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) will promote Macau's long-term carbon reduction strategy, green living and low-carbon environmental protection, as well as raise awareness of the safe use of gas water heaters.

The press conference noted that the PSP band will also be performing at the event. ■

Police nab 7 for helping gang launder money



Long Hon Wai (centre), who heads the Judiciary Police (PJ) IT Crimes Division, addresses yesterday's special conference, flanked by other PJ investigators in the press conference room. — Photo: William Chan

William Chan

Six locals and a woman from the mainland have been arrested for assisting a "guess who I am" fraud gang to launder money, Long Hon Wai, who heads the Judiciary Police (PJ) IT Crimes Division, said in a special press conference yesterday.

According to Long, the police received reports from three local residents in recent months, who fell victim to the "guess who I am" scam, collectively losing over 100,000 patacas.

The investigation revealed that the victims were transferring money to the fraudsters by scanning mobile payment e-wallet QR codes registered with overseas phone numbers. The police identified a total of 14 interconnected phone scams, involving 16 local victims,

who suffered a total loss of 495,000 patacas.

Long noted that the money laundering operation was active from August 2023 to mid-2024 and involved four local family members surnamed Wong, aged between 36 and 55. According to Long, the Wongs received the scam proceeds by laundering funds through over 150 mobile e-wallet accounts to avoid detection by the police.

Since the money in the MPay wallet cannot be directly withdrawn as cash or deposited in bank accounts, the Wongs recruited the three other suspects—surnamed Chan, Wu, and Lam—to convert the ill-gotten funds into cash. Chan used money in the MPay wallets to purchase gold items for resale, while Lam, who runs a collection shop, used point-of-sale

(pos) machines to launder the money as the shop's revenue.

The laundered money was then transferred to bank accounts associated with the phone fraud gang, while the seven suspects received "commissions" ranging from thousands to 20,000 patacas.

The seven suspects were arrested on Monday and confessed to their involvement in the money-laundering scam. Long noted that the police also identified 31 potential victims. Thanks to timely warnings from the police, these individuals avoided any financial loss.

The quartet were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing money laundering and fraud charges, according to Long. ■

SCHOOL OF THE NATIONS
聯國學校

36th anniversary

ENROLMENTS FOR 2025/2026
2025/2026 年度招收新生

- K1: Please follow the DSEDJ Announcements**
K1: 請留意教育及青年發展局公告
- Other levels (K2-F5): From 1 Mar 2025**
其他年級 (K2-F5): 由2025年3月1日起
Applications are available online via the school website.
接受透過本校網上系統報名。

Public Information Day 課程資訊日
18 Jan 2025, Saturday, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm
2025年1月18日, 星期六, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

/ Telephone 電話: +853 2870 1759
/ Website 網頁: www.schoolofthenations.edu.mo

School of the Nations is the first school in Macau to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Our quality English and Mandarin programmes encourage academic excellence, character development, a spirit of service and community mindedness. Please visit our website for details.

聯國學校為學生提供優質的英、中文(普通話)教學課程, 專注於學生的知識、品格及服務精神的培養。本校是澳門第一所提供國際文憑組織(IB)大學預科項目教學的學校。有關學校的詳情, 請瀏覽學校網頁。

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS & ASSESSMENT
Diploma Programme

Published since Aug 2004

- Director & Chief Editor – Harald Brüning
- Office Manager – Sally Chong
- Marketing Manager – Kevin Cheung King Lok
- Managing Editor – Maria Cheang Ut Meng
- Editors – Lesley Wells, Johnny Un
- Senior Reporter – Tony Wong
- Reporters – Rui Pastorin, Yuki Lei, Ginnie Liang, William Chan
- Chief Graphic Designer – Simon Wang
- Graphic Designer – Colin Zhong
- Administrative Assistants – Ester Mak, Carl Leong
- Printed by Tipografia Welfare Lda., 82-86 Rua dos Pescadores
- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua



Macau Weather

TEMPERATURE FALLING. COLD AND VERY DRY. FINE.
FORCE 3 TO 4 NORTH TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS, OCCASIONALLY FORCE 5 WITH GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 25% AND 60%.



12°C~19°C

Source: SMG

Man keeps extra cash in currency deal: police

Ada Lei

A man from the mainland was arrested on Saturday for knowingly keeping extra cash from a currency exchange deal, Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Wong Wai Chon said in a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Wong, the suspect is surnamed Cai, who is in his fifties and works as a driver.

Wong pointed out that when Cai was exchanging currency at a pawn shop on Saturday at around 11 a.m., he gave a pawn shop employee 776 yuan in exchange for HK\$800. The staff member accidentally gave him HK\$8,000 instead, and Cai immediately took the HK\$8,000 and ran away. The victim could not catch him and promptly reported the case to the police.

The police arrested Cai in a casino in Zape an hour later. Under questioning, Cai admitted that he knew the victim had given him the wrong amount of money. Driven by greed, he took the money and left, and gambled it all away afterwards, he told police.

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

Eurasian otters reappear in Macau after decade: group

Yuki Lei

Eurasian otters, which had not been seen in Macau for more than a decade, seem to have reappeared, as evidenced by their droppings and footprints that have been found by local eco-enthusiasts who are members of the “Chief of Macau Ecology” group since September last year along city’s coastline.

“Chief of Macau Ecology”, a Facebook page created by two local environmental protection activists, have recently posted that “since September last year, we have found a total of 20 faecal samples and a footprint record of a Eurasian otter along the coastline of Macau,” adding that it had been more than 10 years since the last well-documented record of Eurasian otters in Macau.

According to Tuesday’s post, the “Chief of Macau Ecology” group members discovered the first suspected otter droppings in early September, which were then identified by an otter specialist group as belonging to the local native species, the Eurasian otter. It added that through monitoring and investigations at the site, “We found a total of 20 otter dropping samples and a precious footprint record in the coastal habitats of Macau in the past four months,” proving that some of the city’s natural coastal habitats were still “important” foraging and resting sites for Eurasian otters.

The page stated that the Eurasian



This undated file photo shows a Eurasian otter. – Photo: Wikipedia



This undated file photo taken by the “Chief of Macau Ecology” Facebook group shows footprints of a Eurasian otter discovered along Macau’s coastline.

otter belongs to the genus Otter of the Weasel family of the order Carnivora, which is the most widely distributed otter species in the world, and is one of the three species of otter in China. It belongs to the second level of the national wildlife protection, and is rated as Endangered (EN) in the Red List of China’s Biodiversity: Vertebrates. The post highlighted the fact that Eurasian otters used to be found almost everywhere in China, the population of which, however, declined “precipitously” due to the massive hunting and killing of the animals for the fur trade in the 1950s-80s and the loss of their habitat.

“Our ecologists also thought that Eurasian otters were

extinct in Macau,” said one of the posts, which noted that with the increased emphasis on ecological conservation in the nation in recent years, an ecological survey in Zhuhai has confirmed the existence of a relatively stable population of Eurasian otters in the neighbouring islands of Hengqin and Qi’ao, which are connected to Macau’s coastal waters.

The “Chief of Macau Ecology” group said they believed that the possibility of rediscovering the otters in Macau “is not zero”, explaining that otters are generally considered to be highly adaptable, with their activity areas probably quite close to those of humans, while their nocturnal habits are staggered with

the time of human activities.

Encouraging the creation of a more suitable ecological environment for the local and neighbouring Eurasian otter populations, as well as in order to enhance the biodiversity of Macau’s coastline and wetlands, the eco-enthusiasts suggested that Macau’s ecology-related entities take the initiative to carry out scientific habitat management and environmental monitoring of the otter habitats, such as natural coastlines, beaches, mudflats and mangroves, as well as to tackle the factors affecting otters and their habitats, such as marine garbage, and sewage discharge, by taking concrete actions. ■

The Lobster King's Vacation in Macao

海濱奇想

龍蝦國王暢「游」澳門 COASTAL FANTASIA

2025 Philip Colbert in Macao

15/01 - 16/03

Macao Science Center Waterfront

Venetian Macao Outdoor Lagoon

World-Renowned Pop Artist PHILIP COLBERT

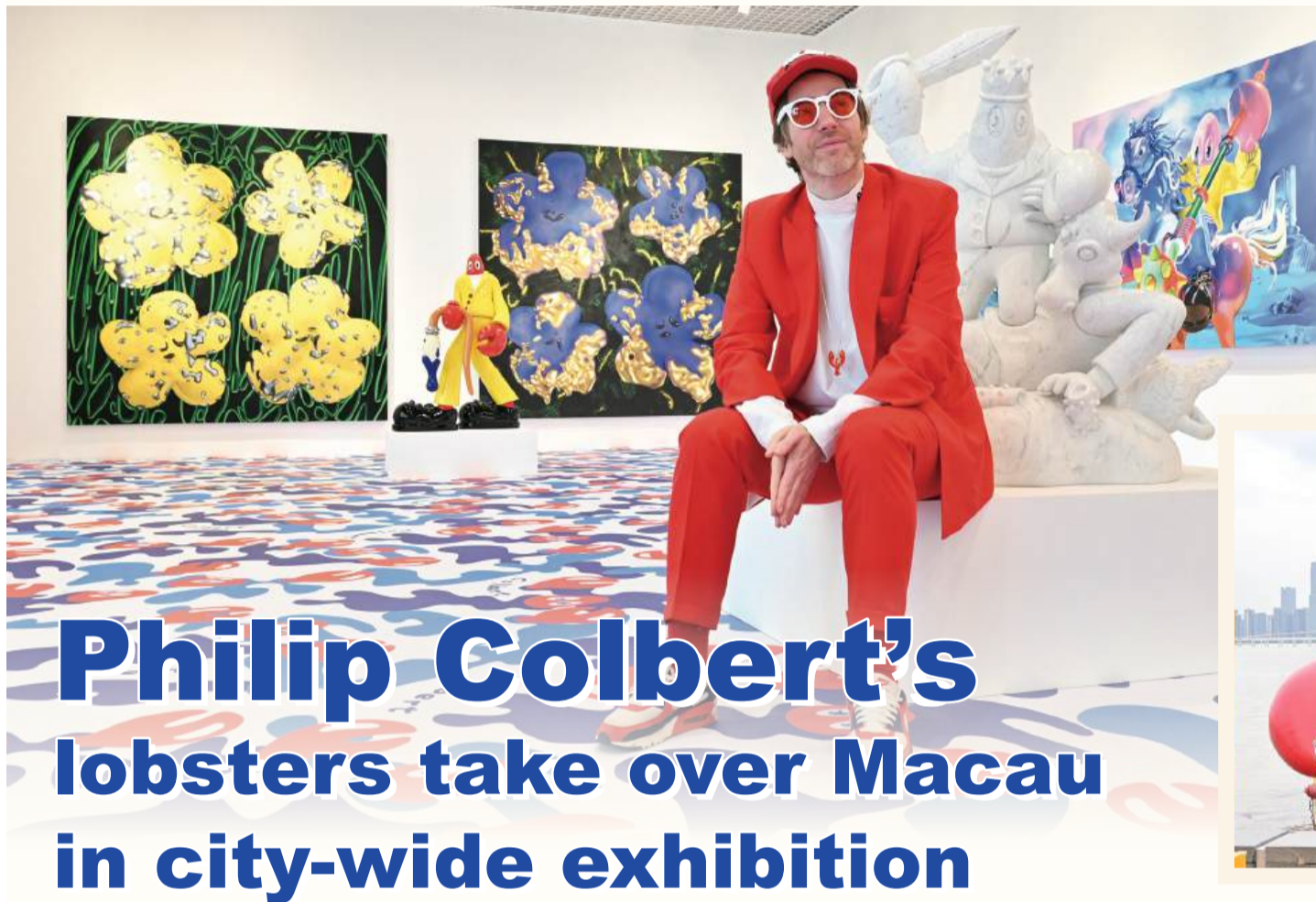
First Debut in Macao, Come & Visit

Supporting Entity:



Organizer:





UK contemporary pop artist Philip Colbert poses at his debut solo exhibition in Macau "The Journey to the Lobster Planet Macao" at the •ART SPACE after Tuesday's interview. – Photos taken between Tuesday and yesterday's opening ceremony by Rui Pastorin



Philip Colbert's lobsters take over Macau in city-wide exhibition

Interview by Rui Pastorin

UK contemporary pop artist Philip Colbert's iconic Lobster cartoon persona is back in Macau, this time in a city-wide multi-venue exhibition presented by integrated resort operator Sands China titled "Coastal Fantasia: The Lobster King's Vacation in Macao".

Colbert's has held over 50 solo exhibitions in different parts of the world, with many in Asia. His Lobster persona is the central character of his works. He had previously exhibited his works in Macau for Sands China during Art Macao in 2023.

"I think this time, the ambition and the scale of the project is far greater", the artist, often referred to as the "Godson of Andy Warhol", said in an interview with the *Post* on Tuesday at the •ART SPACE at Macau Cultural Centre, during which he added that this was the biggest show that he has done in terms of having multiple locations at the same time.

Taking around a year or more to put together, the exhibition, which also features works specifically created for Macau, had its opening ceremony yesterday and amounts to a "city takeover", spanning five different locations across the city, according to Colbert, who was born in Scotland.

Signalling his arrival from London to unleash his lobsters on the city is the 15-metre-high inflatable installation titled the "Lobster Submarine", which is situated off the Macau Science Centre (MSC) in Nape, where four steel sculptures are also displayed.

Featuring Colbert's cartoon persona on a yellow submarine, the artist said that the installation was specifically created from the idea of him arriving from the sea. The yellow submarine, meanwhile, is a pop culture reference to The Beatles' 1966 song of the same name, with Colbert adding: "The sort of spirit of British pop also felt appropriate for me as an artist based in London".

Moreover, at the Iec Long Firecracker Factory and Taipa Houses, seven sculptures are on display for Sands China's Community Revitalisation Series: "Philip Colbert's Macao Art Tour", with Colbert highlighting that

it includes two that draw from the historic venues that will permanently remain here.

Colbert explained that this includes "Macau Lobster Firecracker", a four-metre steel sculpture that pays homage to the local history of firecracker creation, and "the Lobster Cockerel", which references the Portuguese legacy of Macau and stems from the idea of creating a mascot for the city.

Another inflatable installation, the seven-metre-high "Lobster Flamingo", is also floating in The Venetian Macao's outdoor lagoon in Cotai, while Colbert also makes his Macau debut solo exhibition with "The Journey to the Lobster Planet Macao" at the •ART SPACE, which comprises over 20 new works including oils and steel sculptures.

Through the works, the artist aims to convey the message of the celebration of creative freedom, the idea that anyone can really have a dialogue with art history, which he said he's obsessed with, as well as for people to get a sense of positive energy and empowerment from his work. "I'm very anti-pretension, so my work is very accessible and very much a celebration of creative freedom".

Colbert also said that he hopes that the works would also be accessible to children. "I find that a lot of kids like going to my shows and really connect with my work so I like it to be for everyone".

Meanwhile, during yesterday's opening ceremony, Sands China Executive Vice Chairman Wilfred Wong Ying-wai said that by introducing the works to the city, the company aims to boost Macau's "coastal tourism offerings and promote the beauty of the city's coastline – while further enriching Macau's distinctive tourism and cultural atmosphere and enhancing its international reputation through this newly launched maritime and cultural art exhibition".

The installations, along with the sculptures on display for Sands China's Community Revitalisation Series, are on display until March 16, while the solo exhibition runs through February 15. Admission is free. More details can be found on <https://en.sandsresortsmacao.com/sands-lifestyle/events/king-lobster-vacation-2025.html>.



These photos provided by Sands China show Philip Colbert's "Macau Lobster Firecracker" and "The Lobster Cockerel".

'Flu hasn't spread in schools yet': DSEDJ chief



Senior officials of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) and Health Bureau (SSM), including DSEDJ Director Kong Chi Meng (centre), address yesterday's work conference at the Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) in Zape.

— Photo: MPDG

Yuki Lei

Macau has entered its peak flu season, but Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Director Kong Chi Meng told the media yesterday that influenza has not yet spread in local kindergartens and schools, underlining that the flu vaccination coverage rate of Macau's primary and secondary school and kindergarten students was "very high" thanks to the government's school-based influenza vaccination programme, with more than 70 percent of them having been jabbed against the flu this academic year.

According to Kong, the influenza vaccination rate of kindergartens exceeds 80 percent, while that of primary schools stands at nearly 80 percent and that of secondary schools at nearly 70 percent. Kong said: "[Flu] vaccines offered at schools [in the 2024-2025 academic year] were completed in November and December [last year]"

Kong pointed out that some students were not immunised because of their specific health conditions, such as allergies, among other personal reasons: "Every year a group of students is left behind," underlining that the bureau would communicate closely with schools and issue a notice to urge students who have not yet been vaccinated to make appointments at local health centres "within two to three weeks before the Chinese New Year" or to just walk in.

According to Kong, a new electronic system has been introduced this year to assist schools in making appointments with the Health Bureau (SSM) for vaccination of their students.

Kong made the remarks on the sidelines of yesterday's work conference at the Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) in Zape with 200 representatives of the city's education sector involving all levels on influenza and the Chinese New Year (CNY) holidays.

In view of the CNY holidays, according to Kong, the conference was convened to remind school officials to step up their efforts to ensure campus cleanliness and raise students' awareness of self-health management, in particular when travelling outside Macau during the holidays.

Concerning the risk that students may be confronted with the possible peak of seasonal influenza during the CNY holidays when travelling outside Macau and visiting relatives in their families' hometowns, Kong said schools had been informed to verify through online means the health conditions of their students three days before returning to their school after the holidays, as well as to record the number of students who needed to stay at home, with a view to help his bureau decide on the measures that should be taken in collaboration with the Health Bureau.

The DSEDJ has noted that if a student was absent from school due to illness, the school should rearrange for the student to undergo a classroom assessment, taking into account school-based adjustments to their curricula, and that students feeling unwell should seek medical attention as soon as possible and stay at home, while informing the school of their condition in a timely manner. ■

Public concerns grow on rodent infestations

Ginnie Liang

Members of the public raised concerns yesterday about poor hygiene conditions in "three-nil" buildings – those which don't have an owners' corporation (OC), no tenants' organisation, and no property management company (PMC), which has led to rodent infestation, urging the government to assist in dealing with the problem.

Addressing a current affairs phone-in programme, Ou Mun Gwong Cheung, hosted by Ou Mun Tin Toi – the Chinese-language radio channel of public broadcaster TDM, General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau (UGAMM), colloquially known as "Kai Fong" representative Choi Seng Hong said that not just the bureau, members of the public should also dispose of large pieces of refuse as soon as possible to eliminate rodents' hiding places.

Rodent infestation refers to a situation where there is a significant presence of rodents, such as rats or mice, in a particular area, often leading to various problems.

Choi suggested that tenants of "three-nil" buildings should refer to Hong Kong's "joint building and joint management" approach by hiring property management companies to clean up common areas, so as to block the channels for rodent infiltration by scientific means.

Choi also said that the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has been prompting an environment cleaning strategy of



United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macao (UAFBMM) Vice President Fong Kin Fu (left), Northern District Community Service Consultative Council Committee Deputy Convener Kou Ngon Fong (centre) and General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau (UGAMM) representative Choi Seng Hong pose during yesterday's phone-in programme hosted by public broadcaster TDM's Chinese-language radio station, Ou Mun Tin Toi. — Photo courtesy of TDM

leaving mice and rats with no place to hide, nowhere to go, and no food to eat, and that if residents notice the presence of rodents, they can report the situation directly to the bureau through its "IAM Connect" mobile app.

The United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macao's (UAFBMM) Vice President Fong Kin Fu said that in recent years food businesses have attached greater importance to rodent and pest control, while the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has been holding food safety seminars for the trade and inspecting the hygiene conditions of food businesses.

However, Fong said, rodent infestation cannot be completely eradicated but can only be prevented, and property owners and building management staff members should pay more attention to the issue and learn from it.

Northern District Community Service Consultative Council Committee Deputy Convener Kou Ngon Fong said that about 1,400 fixed rodent bait boxes have been installed on public streets by the bureau, which to a certain extent covered many streets in Macau, while in private places such as restaurants, everyone needed to cooperate in the rodent disinfection work. ■

Lawmaker calls for noise pollution solution

Ginnie Liang

In a recent written interpellation, directly-elected lawmaker-cum-unionist Ella Lei Cheng I has raised concern over the rising instances of noise pollution in Macau, particularly the disturbances caused by everyday din.

Lei submitted the written interpellation in November, and the reply from the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) was sent to the media on Sunday.

According to the findings in the "Macau Environmental Condition Report 2023," which revealed an upward trend in noise complaints since the implementation of the Environmental Noise Prevention and Control Law nearly a decade ago, the overall complaints decreased slightly in 2023 compared to the previous year, but the figures remained significantly above pre-pandemic levels, Lei pointed out.

Lei highlighted that in 2023 there were a total of 10,538 noise complaints, with a notable increase in disturbances from "talking noisily," which surged by 20.3 percent compared to 2022.

The DSPA statistics indicated that noise control measures



This undated file photo provided by directly-elected lawmaker-cum-unionist Ella Lei Cheng I yesterday shows her speaking in the Legislative Assembly's (AL) hemicycle.

accounted for only about 1 percent of the total number of complaints, which Lei deemed alarmingly low.

Lei raised concerns about the profound impact of ambient noise on residents' quality of life, particularly during night-time quiet when the din from nearby leisure areas often disrupts peace, urging the government to adopt a more proactive approach to combat persistent noise issues, as well as to review the noise control laws to adapt to Macau's evolving societal

landscape and the diverse lifestyles of its residents.

In response, the bureau acknowledged that while there has been a general decline in noise complaints since the law's enactment, the sporadic and unpredictable nature of social noise presents challenges for enforcement, adding that the police have increased patrols in known trouble spots and are working closely with building management companies to address recurring noise issues. ■

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.34 pct higher

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market ended higher yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index up 0.34 percent to close at 19,286.07 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index edged up 0.35 percent to end at 7,011.60 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index climbed 0.27 percent to close at 4,363.79 points. — Xinhua

GEG staff to get pay rise starting April

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort operator Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) announced in a statement yesterday that eligible staff members at Senior Manager grade and below will receive a salary increase effective from April 1, being set to benefit around 98 percent of staff.

The statement noted that staff who joined the company before January 1, 2025 and have a monthly

base salary and guaranteed tips (if applicable) of 16,000 patacas or below will receive an increment of 600 patacas.

Meanwhile, staff who joined before January 1, 2025 with a monthly base salary and guaranteed tips (if applicable) above 16,000 patacas will receive a 2.5 percent salary increase.

“GEG would like to thank all its team members for their

efforts and contributions in the past year, and looks forward to working together with them to achieve another success”, the integrated resort operator said in the statement.

GEG is the second integrated resort operator to announce a wage hike for staff after Sands China, which made its announcement late last month and will be effective from March 1. ■



Exhibitiongoers take photos of a tri-colored glazed pottery work, which depicts a nomadic camel rider, at the National Maritime Museum of China in the northern municipality of Tianjin, yesterday. An exhibition featuring the highlights of Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) cultural relics in Shaanxi Province kicked off at the museum yesterday. The exhibition brings together about 120 pieces (sets) of cultural relics from eight cultural institutions across Shaanxi Province.

— Xinhua

AI curbs show Biden's rejection of cooperation

China Daily Editorial

Looking back over the past four years, from its first sit-down with the Chinese side in Anchorage in March 2021, the Joe Biden administration has shown no qualms about carrying out its China policy from “a position of strength”.

That explains why, even though it has repeatedly claimed that cooperation is one of the three pillars of its China policy, it has never worked with Beijing to leverage the strength of that pillar as a stabilizer of relations. Instead, it has focused on continually reinforcing the other two pillars, competition and confrontation. Artificial intelligence is a good example of how the Biden administration has rejected cooperation in favor of competition and confrontation, although it has gone through the motions to make it look like it is cooperating with China on AI.

As agreed by the two heads of state in their San Francisco summit in November 2023, the US and China held the first meeting of intergovernmental dialogue on AI in Geneva in May. The two sides exchanged views on the technological risks posed by AI, global governance of the technology and its use, as well as other issues of respective concern. They also agreed to promote the sustainable development of artificial intelligence on the basis of safety, reliability and controllability. Later in June, carrying forward that consensus, the second China-US Track 1.5 Dialogue took place in Beijing, during which participants from both countries reached a

consensus to further deepen their cooperation in the field of AI.

Yet, on Monday, one week before it leaves office, the administration unveiled sweeping export restrictions on artificial intelligence semiconductors and model parameters, with China being the main target. The US' restrictive measures on AI chip exports, which extend its long-arm jurisdiction by setting obstacles in the way of normal trade between third parties and China, not only seriously hinder normal economic and trade exchanges between countries, affect global scientific and technological innovation, and damage the interests of companies in various countries around the world, but also divide the world on AI, pushing the technology to evolve in a direction opposite to what it agreed with China in Geneva.

No wonder many US high-tech companies and industry organizations have clearly expressed their dissatisfaction with the move through various channels, arguing that the measures have been hastily formulated and issued without sufficient discussion. Reportedly Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang is embarking on a trip to China this week, a visit apparently intended to figure out how to sidestep the Biden administration's latest AI chip curbs.

Beijing has responded to the move by adding seven US companies to the unreliable entity list on Tuesday. Although the Chinese measures are not equivalent in scale and consequence to the US moves, they show Beijing's firm resolve to safeguard its core interests.

The development of AI is a double-edged sword. While it can be a boon for social progress and international security, it can also aggravate unfairness and injustice and be a threat to peace and stability. Unlike the US, which is seeking to build a high fence around the technology to ensure it serves only itself, China is committed to ensuring that artificial intelligence technology is beneficial to humanity, safe and fair, and always developing in a direction that is conducive to the progress of human civilization.

China therefore supports strengthening global governance of artificial intelligence and advocates giving full play to the main role of the United Nations to form a global artificial intelligence governance framework and standards with a broad consensus. China has always believed that the development of AI should not be a tool for competition and confrontation between countries, but a means of cooperation for the benefit of the whole of humankind.

At their meeting in Lima, the Chinese and US leaders affirmed the need to address the risks of AI systems, to improve AI security, and to enhance international cooperation on AI, stressing that a prudent and responsible attitude must be adopted in developing AI technology.

It is to be hoped that the incoming US administration realizes that it is in a position of strength for humankind to ensure that what is essentially alien intelligence is used for good and for the good of all.

— Courtesy of China Daily

China, EU can continue to contribute to each other's success by strengthening partnership

China Daily Editorial

Beijing has repeatedly said that it remains ready to work with Brussels to ensure that China and the European Union remain firm partners. It has called for Brussels to deepen strategic communication to enhance mutual understanding and political trust so as to promote the sound and steady development of China-EU relations and make new contributions to world peace and development.

China and Europe have generally been on good terms since China established diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community, predecessor of the European Union, 50 years ago.

For a long time, they had complementary economic and trade ties on which to strengthen their cooperation. But as China has moved upstream on the global industry and supply chains, competition has emerged and intensified between the two economies. This competition has produced trade frictions in some areas. So much so that the EU identified China as a “systemic rival” in 2019. The ongoing tit for tat over EU restrictions on Chinese electric vehicles is the latest sign of such unease.

But for all the competitive aspects of their relationship, Beijing and Brussels do not have to engage in mutually undermining rivalry. Sustaining and amplifying the mutually beneficial side of their relations are of particular significance amid today's global uncertainties.

The central message from Tuesday's phone conversation between Chinese President Xi Jinping and European Council President António Costa, that both sides seek to uphold their partnership, should thus be reassuring for both sides.

As President Xi correctly pointed out, China and Europe have “no fundamental conflicts of interest or geopolitical contradictions”, and have been “partners of mutual achievement”. This does not mean Beijing and Brussels should look aside from their present spat. But there are obviously better, more productive ways to handle it. The talks between the two leaders offered timely mutual assurance as both economies brace for unpredictable changes as a new administration takes office in the United States in a matter of days.

The next US administration will not necessarily upend the US' relations with China and Europe. But with the incoming US leader threatening tariff hikes against China and the

EU, both Beijing and Brussels are naturally respectively considering the vulnerabilities of the Chinese and EU economies and the best means of self-protection. Choosing to follow Washington's lead and wield the baton of unilateral sanctions would not only betray the EU's long-standing commitment to free trade. More importantly, it would bog Brussels down in the mire of anti-globalization and trade protectionism, and end up hurting the EU economy. If the present trade spat with China could be resolved via constructive consultation, it would change the ball game.

The two sides' agreement on organizing a China-EU summit this year, an annual event absent last year, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, indicates they opted for constructive engagement. As the top Chinese leader stated, as “defenders of the multilateral trading system”, Beijing and Brussels must strive to hedge their “symbiotic relationship” against the complex, severe uncertainties in today's world. The history of the bilateral relationship shows, as Xi highlighted, that so long as both sides respect each other, treat each other as equals, and engage in candid dialogue, they will be able to work together and accomplish big things. Partners do not have to share the same ideals, they can also be those who are able to shelve their differences and seek common ground, he said.

Just as Costa emphasized, both the EU and China respect the UN Charter, uphold multilateralism, seek to preserve free trade, and oppose bloc confrontation, hence they should cooperate, rather than compete. If the EU and China can resolve their trade disputes and expand their cooperation, they would no doubt instill badly needed stability and certainty into the turbulent international situation.

Building on the momentum generated by the two leaders' talks, the two sides should make good preparations for the next China-EU Summit. Both sides should also give full play to the roles of their strategic, economic and trade dialogue mechanisms, and step up their cooperation in response to climate change and the potential threats posed by artificial intelligence, and provide more convenience for people-to-people exchanges, so as to further consolidate their friendly relations and continue pushing forward the mutually beneficial China-EU partnership.

— Courtesy of China Daily