



Xia urges Macau to launch new measures to foster Hengqin's development

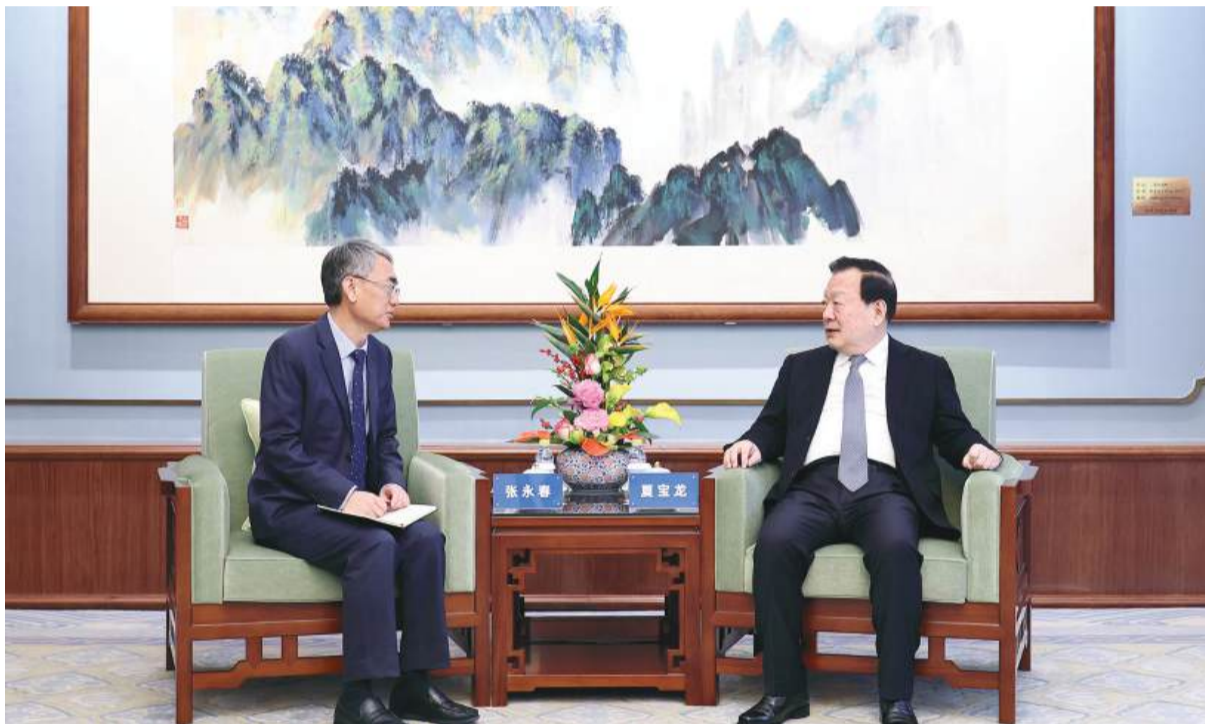
Tony Wong

Xia Baolong, who heads both the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO), has met with Macau Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon, who is also the permanent deputy director of the management committee of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, in Beijing where he urged the local government to study and roll out new policies and measures to foster Hengqin's development.

The zone's management committee is its top decision-making body jointly administered by Guangdong Province and the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR).

A statement released by Cheong's office through the Macau Government Information Office (GCS) on Friday night announced details of the meeting between Xia and Cheong held in Beijing earlier that day.

The statement said that entrusted by Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai, Cheong led a delegation to Beijing



State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong (right) talks with Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon in Beijing on Friday. — Photo: Secretariat for Administration and Justice

to seek support from the central authorities' relevant ministries and commissions and listen to their guidance and opinions concerning Macau's implementation of the spirit of President Xi Jinping's important speeches during his visit to Macau and Hengqin last month, as well

as the ongoing efforts to accelerate Hengqin's development, apart from his meeting with Xia where he reported the MSAR government and civil society's ongoing in-depth study and implementation of the spirit of Xi's important speeches during his visit to Macau.

According to the statement, Cheong also briefed Xia on the MSAR government's main directions for deepening public administration reform and legislative coordination and promoting Hengqin's development in the next phase.

In the meeting, the statement said, Xia urged the new-term MSAR government, under Sam's leadership, to be upright and innovative, work diligently, thoroughly understand the spirit of Xi's important speeches and instructions, put them into practice, and create a new development situation for Macau.

Xia also urged the local government to actively study and roll out new policies and measures to foster Hengqin's development, and closely cooperate with Guangdong to jointly advance the zone's high-quality development, with the aim of living up to Xi and the central authorities' ardent expectations for Macau.

During his one-day working visit in Beijing, according to the statement, Cheong and members of his delegation also met separately with top officials of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the General Administration of Customs, and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (NATCM).

Continued on p.2

TikTok says restoring service in US, thanks Trump for 'clarity'

WASHINGTON, DC – TikTok said yesterday that it is "in the process of restoring service" in the United States, after briefly going dark as a law banning it in the name of national security came into effect.

In a statement on X posted after Donald Trump promised to delay implementation of the ban, TikTok thanked the incoming president for "providing the necessary clarity and assurance" that service providers would not be penalized for allowing Americans to access the app.

Trump had said earlier yesterday on Truth Social that he will issue an executive order today that will allow TikTok to continue operating.

– (More on p.11) – AFP, Xinhua

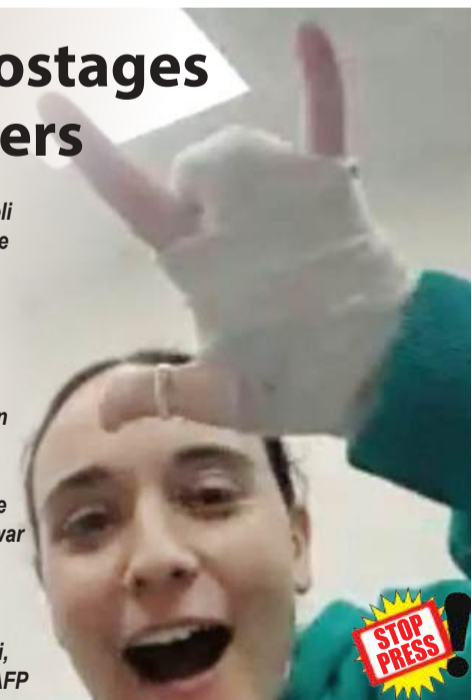


Israel army says freed Gaza hostages reunited with their mothers

JERUSALEM – The Israeli military said the three women hostages freed by Hamas yesterday as part of a Gaza ceasefire deal were reunited with their mothers inside Israel.

"The three returnees have just arrived at the initial reception point in the Gaza envelope area, and they are now meeting with their mothers," said the military, which shared an image of released hostage Emily Damari alongside her mother smiling and waving with a heavily bandaged hand. (More on p.10) – AFP

This handout picture released by the Israeli army shows Emily Damari, one of the three Israeli hostages who had been abducted during the October 7, 2023 attacks by Palestinian militants, celebrating upon her release at an undisclosed location yesterday after a ceasefire and hostage-prisoner exchange deal in the war between Israel and Hamas was implemented. The first three Israeli hostages were released yesterday under a long-awaited Gaza truce aimed at ending more than 15 months of war that has ravaged the Palestinian territory. The Hostage and Missing Families Forum campaign group had identified the three women set to be released as Emily Damari, Romi Gonen and Doron Steinbrecher. – AFP



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

The Macau Post Daily

Xi, Trump hold phone conversation

President Xi Jinping held a telephone conversation on Friday with US President-elect Donald Trump at the latter's request.

– Story on p. 7

Trump says he'll sign record number of executive orders on Day 1

Donald Trump said on Saturday he plans to sign a record number of executive orders after being sworn in as president, beginning "right after" he delivers his inaugural address.

– Story on p. 11

School keeps Portugal's UNESCO-listed equestrian art alive

Stable hand Catarina Cabaca carefully braided the mane of a Lusitano thoroughbred in the distinctive Portuguese style that's just been added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage.

– Story on p. 12

Lawmaker voices concern about medical assistance for dialysis patients

Yuki Lei

Lawmaker Ron Lam U Tou raised yesterday concerns about the government's vetting and approval criteria for medical assistance to dialysis patients and the effectiveness of its centralised organ donation registration system.

He pointed out that the number of residents suffering from kidney failure has been increasing annually, reaching an estimated number of 832 patients in 2023, whereas for the government's organ donation registration system, which was launched in 2018, the total number of organ donation registrations as of Friday last week stood at 6,342, accounting for only about 1 percent of the local population.

In his written interpellation, Lam, a directly-elected lawmaker-cum-current affairs commentator, highlighted the fact that the number of people suffering from kidney failure in Macau has been increasing annually, citing the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) as pointing out that 136,358 dialysis treatments were provided in 2022, the 13th consecutive year of growth and 1.7 times more than in 2010. In 2023, Lam estimated, based on a typical haemodialysis session of three times per week, that 832 local residents were living with kidney failure with 129,859 dialysis treatments provided, a temporary decline due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Kidney disease is increasingly affecting younger generations," noted Lam, who quoted kidney



Lawmaker Ron Lam U Tou (from left to right), the "Enduring Grace" documentary co-director Catherina Ho, Macau Renal Insufficiency Friendship Association Chairperson Long Sut Man, and the documentary's featured person Anita, as well as Macau Synergy Association Chairman Johnson Ian Heng Ut address yesterday's screening of the documentary at the lawmaker's office in the city centre.

- Photo: Yuki Lei

disease patients as saying that the youngest patient they had seen during their haemodialysis sessions was only about 11 years old.

According to Lam, kidney disease patients are now entitled to local residents' lower charges for haemodialysis treatment at the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre, they still need to pay over 8,000 patacas every month, which, he said, with the trend of kidney disease becoming more common among young people nowadays, would exert tremendous financial pressure on kidney disease patients and their families in the long run.

The lawmaker stated that

although there is a law in Macau that guarantees free medical treatment for local residents with financial difficulties, the law does not specify the criteria for medical assistance, urging the government to reestablish "reasonable, fair and transparent" criteria for approving medical assistance for dialysis patients. He also said that nearly 40 years have already passed since the promulgation of the relevant legislation, in view of which the government should re-examine the city's healthcare policies and services, as well as conduct a public consultation on amending the relevant legislation.

Lam repeated his interpellation's

remarks during yesterday's screening and sharing of the documentary "Enduring Grace" at his office.

The documentary, directed by Jody Lei (李文蕊) and Catherina Ho (何倩玲), takes Anita (庭茵), a patient suffering from end-stage chronic renal failure, as its subject, recording her real-life fight against the disease and her life journey, demonstrating her resilience and strength, and urging viewers to interpret the meaning and value of life from different perspectives. Filmed in 2021 and premiered last year, the documentary chronicles Anita's three-year journey from regular dialysis to the dilemma posed by the COVID-19 outbreak and, finally, to the unexpected opportunity of a kidney transplant.

Addressing yesterday's event, Macau Renal Insufficiency Friendship Association Chairperson Long Sut Man said that patients with kidney disease needed to have their kidneys dialysed three times a week, and the cost of each dialysis amounted to 700 patacas for local residents at the Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre and about 2,000 patacas at private hospitals, which was a great financial burden for patients with kidney disease as many of these patients tend to lose their jobs after diagnosis due to various reasons.

Currently, in line with the local medical legislation, only those who are pregnant, suffer from infectious diseases, a psychiatric condition or cancer, as well as primary and

secondary school students, and persons aged 65 or above are provided with free medical treatment.

Long further pointed out that for most patients with end-stage renal failure, a kidney transplant is their best hope for a new life, "but the pace of arranging kidney transplants here is too slow".

In this regard, both at yesterday's event and in his interpellation, Lam criticised the "cumbersome" procedures for the registration of organ donations in Macau, resulting in the fact that out of the total number of 6,342 people who had expressed their wish to be organ donors online, only 4,322 of them completed the necessary procedures to be an officially registered organ donor.

Lam also quoted the government as pointing out that there have been eight cases in which potential donors meeting the diagnostic criteria for brain death, none of whom received consent from their families for organ donation, adding that not a single organ donation was carried out during the six years of operation of the city's centralised organ donation registration system. He questioned whether the government has reviewed the circumstances of the past potential organ donation cases and proposed targeted improvement measures so that the local organ donation and transplant mechanism could be operated more effectively.

He urged the government to clarify whether its organ donation queue database was being updated regularly. ■

Xia urges Macau to launch new measures to foster Hengqin's development

Continued from p.1

Cheong had in-depth exchanges of views with the officials of the four entities on various topics such as the possibility of the central authorities launching various new policies and measures to support the in-depth cooperation zone's second-phase development, the promotion of the development of the zone's traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) industry and sciences and technology sector, improvements in the zone's current "tier-specific management" special customs arrangements, and the possible implementation of a

special measure to allow Macau cars with a permit to travel in Hengqin to also travel elsewhere in Guangdong Province.

According to the statement, the officials of the four entities, in their respective meetings with Cheong, pledged to deeply study and earnestly implement the spirit of Xi's important speeches, adding that they will actively plan and roll out new policies and measures to support the zone's development in compliance with the new "Macau+Hengqin" development positioning and the zone's second-phase development goals. ■

Eco bureau to launch 4 swap street charging stations

Yuki Lei

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) will set up this week four swap stations in four districts, including the Macau peninsula's reservoir, Rua Central da Areia Preta (黑沙環中街), Rua da Docca Seca (船澳街) and at Taipa Central Park, to help electric motorcycle owners swap their empty batteries with fully charged ones, according to DSPA Director Ip Kuong Lam.

Speaking on the sidelines of a public event on Saturday, Ip told the media that this "innovative scheme" would run for a trial period of two years, adding that the swap stations would be set up in temporary pick-up and drop-off areas in the four districts, which would "not cause traffic congestion and also make it easier for vehicle owners to swap their batteries".

According to Ip, each swap station will initially be equipped with a "couple of branded battery compartments". He did not identify which companies' batteries would be used for the pilot programme, nor did he say how many battery compartments



This undated handout photo provided by the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) last Tuesday shows the charging station for e-motorbikes in a public carpark.

would be provided at each swap station. However, in speaking to reporters, Ip called on the sector to apply for more different brands of batteries to be put on the market.

Meanwhile, according to the bureau, 630 electric vehicle charging stations are now available in 49 public carparks, with a total of 204 national standard sockets. Among the city's carparks, eight are equipped with swap stations. The bureau's decision to set up

the national standard sockets was made in response to a raft of incidents suspected to have been caused by the improper use of charging sockets for electric motorcycles.

Applications for the second phase of financial assistance for the replacement of old motorcycles with electric ones will end on May 31. Asked by the media about the scheme, Ip revealed his bureau's plan of launching its third phase. ■

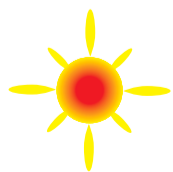
Published since Aug 2004

- Director & Chief Editor – Harald Brüning
- Office Manager – Sally Cheong
- Marketing Manager – Kevin Cheung King Lok
- Managing Editor – Maria Cheung 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 POST

Macau Weather

FINE. FORCE 2 TO 3 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 35% AND 85%.



13°C~23°C

Source: SMG

CNY float parade set for Jan 31, Feb 8

Yuki Lei

This year's Chinese New Year (CNY) falls on Wednesday, January 29, and the annual CNY parade will take place on January 31 and February 8, with 17 floats and more than 30 performance groups from Macau and elsewhere.

As in previous years, the first session of the float parade will start at 8 p.m. on the third day of the Chinese New Year on January 31 in Sai Van Lake Square (西灣湖廣場), moving through Avenida Dr Sun Yat-Sen (孫逸仙大馬路) and passing the Macau Science Centre (澳門科學館) until it reaches the Macau Fisherman's Wharf (澳門漁人碼頭) in Nape. The second session of the float parade will set off also at 8 p.m. but on the 11th day of the Chinese New Year on February 8 from Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde (青洲河邊馬路), passing through Avenida do Conselheiro Borja (青洲大馬路), Estrada do Arco (拱形馬路), Estrada da Areia Preta (黑沙環馬路), Avenida de Venceslau de Morais (慕拉士大馬路), Rua Quatro do Bairro da Areia Preta (黑沙環第四街), Avenida da Longevidade (長壽大馬路), Rua do Mercado de Iao Hon (市場街), and ending in Iao Hon Market Park in the northern district. Two performances will be held respectively at 5:30 p.m. on January 31 and 8:15 p.m. on February 8 in Sai Van Lake Square and Iao Hon Market Park, the first before and the second after the float parade.

The arrangements were announced by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) during a press conference on Friday at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre.

According to MGTO, on top of performers

from Macau, Hong Kong and the mainland, there will be about 1,300 performers from Colombia, France, India, Romania and Spain, as well as troupes from Zhejiang Province's Huzhou City, Japan's Kamakura City and South Korea's Anseong City, which, like Macau, have all been selected as "Culture Cities of East Asia" in 2025.

An MGTO statement noted that in addition to the traditional grandstands in Sai Van Lake Square, Avenida Dr Sun Yat-Sen, the front square of the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre and the roundabout in front of the Macau Science Centre, this year, a new grandstand complete with 1,000 seats will be added to the viewing area of the Roman amphitheatre at the Macau Fisherman's Wharf, resulting in a total of more than 4,300 seats in all five viewing areas.

The 17 floats will be displayed at Macau Fisherman's Wharf on February 1-7 and in Tap Seac Square on February 9-16.

The total budget for the whole event amounts to 34.8 million patacas, an increase of 3.2 percent over last year's, of which 18 million patacas will be borne by the city's six integrated resort (IR) operators, MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said, adding she expected the number of visitors to the two parades this year to increase by 10 percent compared to last year, reaching 85,000 visitors.

The remainder will be borne by the government.

3 CNY fireworks, 15 minutes each

As part of the CNY celebratory events, three firework displays are scheduled at 9:45 p.m. on January 31 and at 9 p.m.



This handout photo provided by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) shows Friday's press conference at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre in Nam Van about the upcoming Chinese New Year celebratory events.

on February 4 and February 12 off the Macau Tower for 15 minutes each, while the annual walking tour by Caishen (God of Wealth – 財神), the gods of the three stars – Fuk (Fortune), Luk (Prosperity), and Sau (Longevity) (福祿壽), the Golden Dragon, the Golden Boy and Jade Girl (金童玉女), MGTO mascot "Mak Mak" and the traditional Dragon and Lion Dance will take place on January 29 and 30 this year.

Macau to see surge in visitors during CNY holiday: tourism chief

Speaking to the media after the press conference, the tourism chief said that MGTO is set to welcome a surge in visitor arrivals as the mainland's Chinese New Year holiday season unfolds, predicting a

daily average of about 185,000.

Senna Fernandes said she expected the number of visitors to Macau this year to reach 38-39 million, "very close to the pre-COVID pandemic level in 2019", with an average of 185,000 visitors per day, a year-on-year increase of about 9 percent, thanks to various travel promotion measures by the central government.

In pre-pandemic 2019, Macau welcomed a record 39.4 million visitor arrivals, according to official statistics.

Among the total number of visitors, apart from those from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Senna Fernandes said she expected a daily average of 8,000 foreign visitor arrivals, up 17 percent compared with that of last year. ■

PHILIP COLBERT

龍蝦星球澳門之旅

A VIAGEM AO PLANETA LAGOSTA MACAU

THE JOURNEY TO THE LOBSTER PLANET

1/15 - 2/15 2025 MACAU

展場地點: ·ART空間(澳門文化中心一樓)

LOCAL: ·ART ESPAÇO NO CENTRO CULTURAL DE MACAU 1 ANDAR

VENUE: ·ART SPACE AT MACAO CULTURAL CENTRE 1F



QR code linking to event details

合辦單位:

Co-Organizadores:

Co-Organizers:





Photos: Rui Pastorin



Local Filipinos celebrate another vibrant Sinulog Festival

Interviews by Rui Pastorin

The sound of Sinulog* beats echoed across Praça da Amizade (友誼廣場) yesterday as members of the local Filipino community danced in vibrant costumes in celebration of the highly anticipated Sinulog Festival Macau.

The festival is celebrated in Cebu on the third Sunday of January to honour “Santo Niño” – the child Jesus. Its local iteration, which is organised by the Associação do Santo Niño de Cebu em Macau, was first held in 2003.

Marking 22 years of celebration in the city, the colourful event drew crowds from not just the Filipino community, but locals and visitors alike. Among them, Nina, a 20-year-old tourist told the *Post* that the local event served as her first-ever encounter with the festival. “I was just surprised that there was this international thing going on, but I think it’s really cool that everyone comes together”.

Travelling from Switzerland, Nina said: “I’m excited about what’s going to happen, although I don’t quite know what it is”.

The annual event had kicked off in the morning with a Eucharistic Mass at St. Augustine’s Church before moving

on to the main venue – Praça da Amizade, colloquially known as Sintra Square. The parade, an event highlight, was then held in the afternoon and ran along Avenida Doutor Mário Soares (蘇亞利斯博士大馬路) before concluding in Avenida Panorâmica do Lago Nam Van (南灣湖景大馬路), capturing the attention of many curious onlookers.

Performances also took place as the event went on, along with the Sinulog dance contest, which comprised four competing groups. One of them told the *Post* that they were beyond happy and excited to be a part of the festival, feeling as though they had already won something just by being there. Patrick, the group’s coach, further highlighted that dancing at the event was not about competing, but showing your devotion to Santo Niño and how grateful you are for all the good things that has happened to you.

Echoing the group’s strong feelings of devotion was spectator Angel, 42.

Particularly, Angel, who has been in Macau for nearly two years and used to travel to Cebu just to celebrate the event, who felt elated that she could celebrate the event in Macau, with yesterday marking the first time that she was participating in it here.

“It’s very comforting for us, especially since we are here and far away from our families. Even if we are in a different part of the world, at least he [Santo Niño] is still there to guide and protect us...it’s already a privilege to see him here”, said Angel, who had also joined in on the celebration at St. Augustine’s Church. “He is still protecting and looking after us through all the difficulties we face as OFWs [Overseas Filipino Workers] in Macau. So, we are blessed that we can still celebrate this here”.

Aside from devotion, a sense of togetherness among the community was also present, Associação do Santo Niño de Cebu em Macau President Violeta Duran told the *Post* yesterday. “The significance of this event in Macau is to have all Filipinos in Macau united”, gathering all in one place to celebrate the festival.

* “Sinulog” is derived from the Cebuano word “Sulog”, which means water current movement. It refers to the ritual prayer dance honouring Santo Niño (“Holy Child”) and is reminiscent of the water current movement, according to a report by the *Post* last year. It is done to the drumming of Sinulog beats.



Wynn's revitalisation project added to Tsinghua case platform

Rui Pastorin

Wynn Macau Limited said in a statement last week that its Rua da Felicidade ["Street of Bliss"] Pedestrian Zone revitalisation project has recently been chosen for the 20th Tsinghua Business Case Competition, the university's annual event, and added to the platform of the China Business Case Centre at Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management for teaching purposes.

The statement noted that the project is the first local enterprise case study to be published on the platform. "With the Rua da Felicidade Pedestrian Zone revitalisation project becoming a

case for study in the competition, Wynn has joined Tsinghua University to foster future leaders by exchanging ideas with the academic circle and providing participating teams with field study support", according to the statement.

The statement said that the case study, entitled "Wynn Macau: attempting district empowerment in the pursuit of diversification", provided an analysis of the integrated resort operator's "endeavours to empower the district by consolidating its tourism and cultural resources" by adding festive decorations, large art installations and organising cultural and creative markets, cultural activities and night markets, among others. ■



Pedestrians stroll along Wynn Macau's Rua da Felicidade Pedestrian Zone revitalisation project in the city centre last night. — Photo: Rui Pastorin

2 drivers involved in traffic dispute fined

Ginnie Liang

A short video is circulating on social networking platforms about a female vehicle driver committing a traffic offence and making indecent gestures to another driver on Avenida do Infante D. Henrique (殷皇子大馬路) on Wednesday, near the Portuguese School, and the two drivers involved were fined for their respective traffic offences, the Public Security Police (PSP) announced in a statement on Friday.

According to a video that appears to be taken by a dash camera that shows the date of January 15, 2025, a woman gave an offensive finger-gesture after stopping her car on the roadway near the Grand Lisboa casino-hotel, just past the traffic lights right in front of a car whose driver was about to move as the traffic light turned green.

Upon learning of the incident, PSP officers immediately contacted the two drivers involved for follow-up action. After investigation, it was confirmed that the female driver, reportedly a local Portuguese lawyer, had committed a number of traffic offences, while the other driver involved in the incident also committed a traffic offence, the statement said, adding that both were fined.

However, the statement did not reveal which offences the two drivers committed.

PSP officers appealed to all motorists to consciously observe road traffic rules and relevant laws, and not to obstruct traffic in any way. In addition, the statement said, drivers should travel in a civilised and courteous manner, so as to build a harmonious and tolerant road environment. ■



This pixelated screenshot from a video circulating on a social networking platform shows a female driver making an offensive gesture on Avenida do Infante D. Henrique (殷皇子大馬路) on Wednesday.

Sam urges public servants to work in line with spirit of Xi's speeches



This undated handout photo released by the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) yesterday shows Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (centre) addressing a session earlier this month at Government Headquarters briefing officials and public servants from the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) and from the Commission of Audit (CA) about the spirit of President Xi Jinping's speeches, flanked by CCAC Commissioner Ao Ieong Seong (left) and Commissioner of Audit Elsie Ao Ieng U.

Tony Wong

The Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) said in a statement yesterday that Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai convened and chaired seven sessions over a 10-day period earlier this month briefing high-level political appointees and senior public servants in different portfolios about the spirit of President Xi Jinping's various speeches during his visit to Macau last month and how they should apply the spirit in their work.

According to the statement, the seven sessions were held at Government Headquarters or the Services Platform Complex for Commercial and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-

speaking Countries (aka Forum Macao Complex), with each of them lasting about two hours. The seven sessions, held between January 8 and 17, were attended by over 500 political appointees and public servants in total.

The statement noted that unlike previously when the government only held one session each time about a particular topic for top officials of the government's bureaus and other bureau-level entities together, this time, Sam convened seven sessions, briefing political appointees and senior public servants from entities in seven different portfolios respectively, namely entities directly under the chief executive, entities under each of the five

portfolio policy secretaries, as well as all those from the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) and from the Commission of Audit (CA) together.

The statement also said that this time the sessions were also attended by department heads of bureaus and other bureau-level entities. While bureaus consist of departments, the latter consist of divisions.

The statement said that in each of the seven sessions, Sam laid out requirements and gave instructions to the high-level officials and senior public servants, based on the spirit of Xi's various speeches, tailored to the different functions of various public entities under the seven different portfolios. ■

Macau logs record 803,000 entries & exits on Saturday

Ginnie Liang

Macau recorded 803,000 entries and exits on Saturday, breaking the previous highest single-day number of people entering and exiting the city record, a 6.6 percent increase over the 753,000 border crossings made on August 24 last year, Public Security Police (PSP) announced in a statement yesterday.

Among Saturday's record number of locals and visitors crossing Macau's border checkpoints, 53.7 percent of the entries and exits were made through the Barrier Gate checkpoint, or 430,000 border crossings, a record for the total number of entries and exits on a single day since the COVID-19 pandemic, the statement said.

Macau's three-year COVID-19 pandemic curbs began in January 2020.

The Qingmao pedestrian checkpoint recorded nearly 124,000 entries and exits, or 15.4 percent of the total number of border crossings on Saturday, the statement said. The Macau-Hengqin joint checkpoint recorded over 100,000 entries and



Border crossers walk to the Barrier Gate border checkpoint last month. — Photo: Tony Wong

exits, or 12.5 percent of the total.

About 169,000 tourists arrived in Macau on Saturday, among who mainlanders totalled 131,000, or 77.6 percent, while Hongkongers totalled 27,000, or 15.8 percent, the statement said.

Since January 1, permanent residents of Zhuhai City have been able to apply for a "one trip per week" permit for Macau. Under the policy, they can visit Macau once per calendar week, with a maximum stay of seven days per trip.

With the approaching Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday and the new measures for travelling to Macau, the number of arrivals and departures is expected to remain at a high level, the statement said.

The government has deployed additional police officers to open additional lanes in a timely manner to ease the passenger and vehicle traffic, and closely cooperate and communicate with the relevant departments to ensure that the traffic in various checkpoints runs smoothly, the statement said. ■

5 Mongolians arrested for theft, 2 involved in drug use: police



This undated photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) on Friday shows PSP officers escorting the five Mongolian theft suspects to a police station.

Ginnie Liang

Five Mongolians aged 20 to 40 were arrested on Wednesday after stealing clothes valued at 34,000 patacas from shops in a shopping mall of a hotel in Cotai, with two of the suspects also found to be entangled in drug activities, a Public Security Police (PSP) spokesperson said in a press conference on Friday.

According to the spokesperson, the four men and one woman, who told the police that they are jobless, businesspeople and self-employed, separately entered Macau on January 7, 13 and 15, and then set up a "theft gang".

On Wednesday, PSP officers received a report that a gang stole a total of 120 items of clothing worth 34,000 patacas from at least three shops in a shopping mall in a hotel in Cotai, with one of the shops saying that clothes worth 5,000 patacas in total had been stolen.

PSP officers identified the gang and arrested them on Wednesday in the lobby of the resort where they committed the crime, when the suspects were sharing the stolen garments out, the statement said, adding that PSP officers seized a powerful magnet, believed to have been used for removing the security tags on the stolen clothing, from one of the male suspects' belongings, and drug paraphernalia from two of the male suspects' belongings.

One of the suspects tested positive for methamphetamine – also known as ice, the spokesperson said.

The five suspects were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on Wednesday, facing charges of aggravated theft, while one of the male suspects faces additional charges of drug use and possession of drug-taking paraphernalia, and another male suspect faces an additional charge of possession of drug-taking tools. ■

GDP growth of 5 pct hits target

Analysis by Ouyang Shijia and Zhou Lanxu

China's gross domestic product expanded 5 percent in 2024, official data showed on Friday, which is in line with the central authorities' preset target of around 5 percent and provides a solid base for stabilizing the economy this year.

Economists said the country's economy will likely continue to grow at around 5 percent this year if the government adopts more expansionary moves for macroeconomic adjustment to boost domestic demand.

In addition, economists said they expect more policy easing in 2025 to offset the headwinds from a more complicated and grimmer external environment, with the shift toward consumption-driven and high-quality growth seen as the key to fostering the economy's endogenous growth momentum.

The Chinese mainland's GDP came in at 134.9 trillion yuan in 2024, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on Friday. In the fourth quarter of last year, the Chinese economy grew 5.4 percent year-on-year, following 4.6 percent growth in the third quarter.

"China's GDP for the first time surpassed 130 trillion yuan last year, maintaining its position as the world's second-largest economy," Kang Yi, head of the NBS, said at a news conference in Beijing on Friday. "China is among the top ranks of major economies in terms of annual growth rate, and it continues to serve as a key growth driver for global economic growth."

Citing the latest economic indicators, Jeremy Zook, lead analyst for China at Fitch Ratings, said China's economy rebounded more than anticipated in the fourth quarter on the back of a step-up in fiscal stimulus and strong export performance.

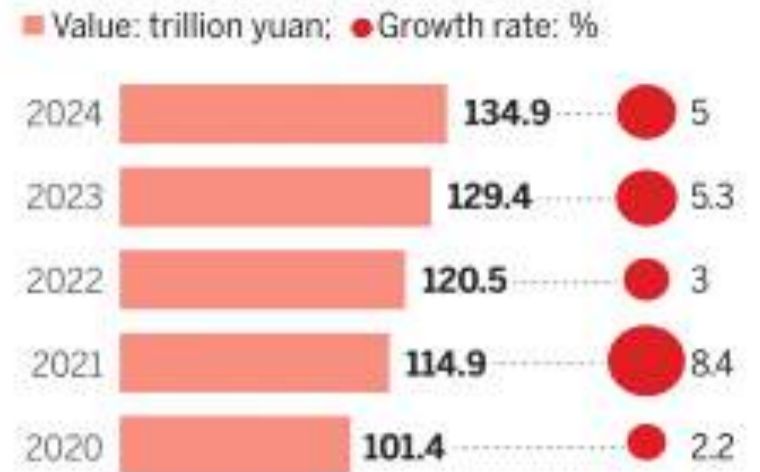
"This has created positive spillovers to industrial production activity, which performed well in December," Zook said.

NBS data showed that China's value-added industrial output grew 6.2 percent year-on-year in December, following 5.4 percent growth in November.

Zook noted that domestic activity remains a clear challenge for the economy, stemming from weak consumer confidence.

Retail sales, a key measurement

China's GDP



Source: National Bureau of Statistics

CHINA DAILY

of consumer spending, increased 3.7 percent year-on-year in December, compared with the 3 percent growth recorded a month earlier. China's fixed-asset investment rose 3.2 percent in 2024, and in the first 11 months it grew 3.3 percent.

As increasing external challenges from a likely rise in trade tensions with the United States may add to headwinds from the still subdued domestic demand, Zook said his team expects "a considerable step-up in fiscal policy in 2025 to help mitigate part of the impact from an expected rise in US tariffs and to help boost domestic confidence".

"Ultimately, the ability of fiscal policy in sustainably boosting domestic demand ... will likely depend on whether it is effectively targeted to spur a recovery in household confidence," he added.

As part of the country's ongoing efforts to spur consumption, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC), together with several other central departments, issued a notice on Friday about extending the program for auto trade-in deals.

To provide an incentive for consumers to replace old vehicles with new ones, consumers who purchase new energy vehicles will be eligible for subsidies of 20,000 yuan, while those who purchase gasoline-powered passenger vehicles will be eligible for subsidies of 15,000 yuan, according to the new policy.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) announced earlier this month that the country will significantly increase the issuance of ultra-long-term special treasury bonds in 2025 to stimulate consumption and fund

key national projects. In addition, it will extend the programs for large-scale equipment upgrades and trade-in deals for consumer goods and expand the scope to more consumption fields.

Louise Loo, lead economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said, "With recent policy signals remaining decidedly dovish and authorities recognizing the importance of finding a sustainable growth engine, the coming months will likely feature more consumption-oriented stimulus."

Wang Tao, head of Asia economics and chief China economist at UBS Investment Bank, said she expects stronger macroeconomic policy support to be launched this year, with total government bond issuance likely to increase by more than 3 trillion yuan compared with last year, while the budgetary deficit-to-GDP ratio is likely to rise to nearly 4 percent, compared with 3 percent in 2024.

Wang also said that, apart from financing the investments of key projects and infrastructure, this year's fiscal stimulus may become more oriented to supporting consumption by boosting expenditures on pensions, medical insurance and childbirth subsidies, while doubling the support for trade-in deals for consumer goods.

With a package of incremental policies continuously taking effect this year and more policy easing in the pipeline, Zhang Yongjun, secretary-general of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said China's economy will likely expand by around 5 percent in 2025.

— Courtesy of China Daily

TALK at SUNSET

Journalism & Peace

The Media's Role in Times of War

Thursday, 23rd January 2025
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Vasco Bar, Artyzen Grand Lapa

Mr. JOÃO FRANCISCO PINTO
Rotary Club Deputy District Secretary - Mongolia Affairs.

He is a Past President of the Rotary Club of Macau (20/21 and 23/24) and currently serves as Deputy District Secretary - Mongolia Affairs. As a media professional, he has worked within Rotary on projects of media literacy projects and, more recently, on the role of the media in times of war. He is also a member of the District 3450 Public Image Committee. João Francisco Pinto holds a degree in economics and has worked as a journalist for more than three decades including his former role as TDM's Portuguese & English News and Program Controller.

ABOUT THE TALK

The media has always had a special relationship with wars and armed conflicts. Journalists are trained to look for conflict and find wars irresistible. But journalists also have a role to play in peace-building. Mr. João Francisco Pinto will share his experiences as a media professional and explore the critical role of the media during times of war.

Free for IAA members
MOP100 for partners and members
MOP150 for non-members
R.S.V.P.: info@iaamacao.com
Book by 16th January 2025

The event includes one drink per participant. Participants can enjoy 50% discount on drinks after the first drink until 8:30 PM.

About IAA Macao

Become IAA Member

Partners:

China completes 3 rocket engine ignition tests in single day

XI'AN – China successfully completed three ignition tests for liquid oxygen-kerosene engines yesterday, according to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).

This marks the first time that the country has conducted three ignition tests on two types of liquid oxygen-kerosene engines

within a single day.

The tests were carried out by the Academy of Aerospace Propulsion Technology, a subsidiary of CASC, at a facility in the Baolongyu area of Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province.

The tests involved two 120-tonne liquid oxygen-kerosene rocket engines and one 18-tonne liquid

oxygen-kerosene rocket engine.

The institute noted that this marks a major advancement in the country's testing and verification capabilities for the mass production and delivery of its new-generation launch vehicle engines, which will provide robust support for more frequent launch missions in the future. —Xinhua