



# Sam says Portuguese- & English-language media are 'bridge for int'l communication'

**Staff Reporter**

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai said yesterday that Macau's Portuguese- and English-language media "as an important embodiment of the MSAR's multiculturalism and internationalisation will, in the new year, continue to function as a bridge for international communication."

Sam, who was sworn in as Macau's fourth chief executive by President Xi Jinping during the latter's three-day inspection tour of the SAR last month, made the remarks in a speech during last night's Chinese New Year dinner at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Nape.

Sam also said in his speech, which he delivered in fluent Portuguese, he hoped that while fulfilling their role in overseeing the local government's administrative affairs, the Portuguese- and English-speaking media "will continue to leverage their advantages in language, culture and international connections, continue to introduce to the outside world Macau's unique blend of East and West and contribute to enhancing Macau's role as a platform for cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and as a platform for the country's high-level opening up."

Sam also said that he hoped that Macau's Portuguese- and English-language media will continue to grow and, together with the



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (centre, front) poses with senior Portuguese- and English-language media representatives and government officials before a Chinese New Year dinner at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Nape last night. — Photo: GCS

MSAR government, continuously promote Macau's internationalisation, and the city's global influence and attractiveness.

"Through your professional reporting, we hope you can spread worldwide 'Macau's experiences' and 'Chinese wisdom', eliminating misunderstandings, and making Macau an important window of exchanges between the Chinese and Western civilisations".

Sam reaffirmed that "press freedom is fully guaranteed by the MSAR Basic Law and the Press Law", adding that the local government will, as always, govern in accordance with the law, support the press in better performing their duties, assist the media in conducting interviews and accessing information and... set up more efficient exchanges with the press."

Sam, 62, also said that last year, Macau's

Portuguese- and English-language media also showcased to the world that the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle has enabled Macau to achieve gains in terms of a 'peaceful, inclusive, open and sharing' living environment, offering more insights into China's system that can benefit, and be a reference for, humanity".

Continued on p.6



## Musk slams Trump-backed AI mega project

WASHINGTON — Tech titan Elon Musk cast doubt yesterday on a US\$500 billion AI project announced by US President Donald Trump, saying the money promised for the investment actually wasn't there.

The comments marked a rare instance of a split between the world's richest man and Trump, with Musk playing a key role in the newly installed administration after spending US\$270 million on the election campaign.

In his first full day in the White House, Trump on Tuesday announced a major investment to build infrastructure for artificial intelligence (AI) led by Japanese giant SoftBank and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI.

Trump said the venture, called Stargate,

"will invest US\$500 billion, at least, in AI infrastructure in the United States."

But in a post on his social media platform X, Musk said the main investors "don't actually have the money."

"SoftBank has well under [US\$]10B secured. I have that on good authority," Musk added in a subsequent post.

Musk's sideswipe could be particularly targeted at OpenAI, the world's leading AI startup that Musk helped found, before leaving in 2018.

The Tesla boss and OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman, who was present at the White House on Tuesday, have been mired in a serious feud, with Musk opening repeated lawsuits against the company behind ChatGPT. —AFP



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, talks with villagers in Zhujiagou Village, Suizhong County of Huludao City, northeastern Liaoning Province, during an inspection visit. Xi braved the cold to visit people affected by floods in the village. (More on page 7) — Xinhua

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

The Macau Post Daily

### Iran says Oct 7 attack 'destroyed' chance for US nuclear talks

Iranian Vice President Mohammad Javad Zarif said yesterday that Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel had "destroyed" an opportunity for talks to revive a landmark nuclear accord. — Story on p. 10

### Knife attacker in Germany kills 2, incl child

A knife attacker in Germany killed a two-year-old child and a man and seriously wounded two other people yesterday, said police, who arrested an Afghan suspect at the scene. — Story on p. 11

### Trump's climate retreat will have 'significant impact' on COP30: Brazil

Brazil warned on Tuesday that US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement would have a major impact on COP30 talks to be held in the Amazon in November. — Story on p. 12

# Police bust local man for cheating 334 mainlanders out of 580,000 patacas in job scam

Ada Lei

A local man was arrested on Tuesday for job scamming 334 mainlanders out of 580,000 patacas in total since 2023, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chao Teng Hin said in a special press conference yesterday.

The suspect surnamed Fong is a 58-year-old construction worker.

According to Chao, a man from the mainland reported to the police last July that Fong had promised to arrange jobs for residents from his hometown but after he paid the purported fees, he lost contact with him. Fong had told the victim that he

was in charge of a big construction project and that he could arrange jobs in Macau. The victim believed him and collected 141,360 yuan from 92 people and transferred the money to Fong. The victim then lost contact with Fong after sending him the money.

The police arrested Fong in the city centre on Tuesday. The police searched Fong's home in the northern district and found 63 Individual Visit Scheme documents and identification document copies belonging to the victims and 33 health certificates. In the course of the investigation,

the police suspected Fong of involvement in four similar offences, involving 242 other victims, together with the 92 victims in this case, totalling 334 victims, who were cheated out of 580,000 patacas.

Chao did not elaborate on the four other suspected cases.

The police confirmed that Fong does not have the right to arrange jobs in Macau. Under questioning, Fong refused to cooperate.

Fong was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a fraud charge, according to Chao. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the suspect from the PJ headquarters in Zape to a PJ vehicle after yesterday's special press conference. — Photo: Ada Lei

## Education bureau vows to raise students' anti-crime awareness via teaching materials

Yuki Lei

The Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) announced yesterday that common local social issues will be included in teaching materials this school year, with the view of assisting teachers in raising students' crime prevention awareness.

The teaching kit, entitled "New Knowledge for Youth" ("青年新知"), aims to sensitise students to identify illegal traps and the latest scams that they need to be aware of, thereby preventing deviance, the bureau said in a statement.

The statement noted that the bureau will, in conjunction with Macau's law enforcement agencies, continue its efforts to enhance

students' awareness of compliance with the law through various channels, including on-campus and community campaigns.

In addition, the bureau called on young students and their parents to refrain from engaging in smuggling activities, highlighting the fact that the legal consequences would not only affect their own future, but could also have a negative impact on their families and the community in general.

According to the statement, the bureau also urged young students to never believe in recruitment advertising from unknown platforms, especially those featuring promotion tactics such as promising "quick money". ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) yesterday shows its official (right) and a Macau Customs Service (SA) officer (left) trying to raise a student's awareness of lawfulness at the Barrier Gate checkpoint.

## Police nab local thief for 4<sup>th</sup> time

Ada Lei

A local man was arrested on Monday for stealing cash from two male non-resident workers (NRWs), Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Cheong Im Sim said at a regular press conference held yesterday.

It was the fourth time that he was arrested for stealing.

The suspect surnamed Chio is a 65-year-old man who is jobless.

According to Cheong, the police received reports from two non-resident workers on December 25 and January 10 respectively that they had separately lost cash in two shops in Tamagnini Barbosa (台山) and Portas do Cerol (關關), and when both returned to the respective locations the money had vanished. The police checked the CCTV footage in the shops and identified Chio as the suspect. Chio was intercepted in Avenida de Artur

Tamagnini Barbosa (巴波沙大馬路) on Monday.

Under questioning, Chio admitted to pickpocketing 20,000 patacas and 4,000 patacas respectively from the pocket and crossbody bag of the two victims, and claimed that he had meanwhile

spent all the stolen money. The suspect was arrested on three previous occasions for theft, according to Cheong.

The suspect was transferred to the Public Prosecution Office (MP) yesterday. Chio is facing aggravated theft charges. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows a PSP officer escorting the suspected thief to a police station.

## List of winners for fireworks photo, drawing contests available

Rui Pastorin

The list of winners of the photo and student drawing competitions, both of which were parallel activities for last year's 32<sup>nd</sup> Macau International Fireworks Display contest, has been unveiled, with 78 works from a total of 1,770 entries receiving prizes, according to an Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) statement on Tuesday.

The full list of winners can be

found by visiting <http://fireworks.macaotourism.gov.mo>

The "32<sup>nd</sup> Macao International Fireworks Display Contest in celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR" was held between September and October last year.

During the period, the statement noted that MGTO received 1,019 photos and 751 drawings for both the

Photo Contest and Student Drawing Contest. The statement said that there were 937 participants across the different age categories in both competitions, with winners determined after evaluation by professional judges. Merit awards were also distributed.

A prize-giving ceremony is set to take place during the 13<sup>th</sup> Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo, with more details to be announced in due course, the statement said. ■



This image provided by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) shows a drawing by Kuong Hei Lam, the first prize winner of the Student Drawing Contest, Category A (Age: 6-10).



This photo provided by MGTO shows Lei Cheok Seng's first prize winning work for the Photo Contest, Youth Category (Age: 12-18).

### Published since Aug 2004

- Director & Chief Editor – Harald Brüning
- Office Manager – Sally Chong
- 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 Weather

CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY PERIODS. LIGHT RAIN AT FIRST. FORCE 2 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 50% AND 95%.



16°C~23°C

Source: SMG

## Each school in 'School Village' to be equipped with sports courts



This artist's rendition provided by the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) shows the government's "School Village" in the Zone A land reclamation area.

**Yuki Lei**

The government's "School Village" project in Eastern District 2 is currently under construction, and Public Works Bureau (DSOP) Director Lam Wai Hou says that each school there would surely be equipped with a standard outdoor basketball court and indoor sports venue.

He made the remarks in response to a written interpellation by lawmaker Leong Sun Lok late last year.

Leong sent Lam's reply to the media yesterday.

In line with the government's urban development plan for "Eastern District 2", according to Lam's written reply, the "School Village" on lots B1 and B2 will comprise eight school campuses and an educational activity centre, and each school will be equipped with a standard outdoor basketball court and indoor sports court, while the adjoining sports venue will be

mainly used for schools' training sessions and for organising sports meets for local schools.

The eight schools in Zone A will be Escola dos Moradores (坊眾學校), Escola de Santa Madalena (聖瑪大肋納學校), Escola Sun Wah (新華學校), Escola Choi Nong Chi Tai (澳門菜農子弟學校), Lou Hau High School (勞校中學), Macau Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society (同善堂中學), Escola Hoi Fai (海暉學校), and Escola de Santa Teresa do Menino Jesus (聖德蘭學校).

Concerning the use of lot B3 in Eastern District 2, Lam revealed that the lot has been zoned for recreational and sports facilities with a maximum permissible building height of 31.5 metres, mainly for schools' physical education lessons, school competitions and school training. He also noted that the exact functions of the lot would be set in line with the project's budget outline. ■

## Wynn announces wage hike for staff effective March 1



This undated photo downloaded from the Wynn Macau website shows Wynn Palace in Cotai.

**Rui Pastorin**

Integrated resort (IR) operator Wynn Macau, Limited announced in a statement yesterday a wage hike that covers 98 percent of its 11,527-strong workforce that will be effective from March 1.

According to the statement, the salary increase covers eligible employees (excluding senior management) at both Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace in Cotai.

The statement said that staff members with a monthly salary of 16,000 patacas or below will receive a 600 pataca pay rise, which is equivalent to a 3.8 percent to 5.7 percent increase, while eligible

employees with a monthly salary over 16,000 patacas will get an average of a 2.5 percent salary increase.

President, Vice Chairman and Executive Director of Wynn Macau, Limited Linda Chen Chih-ling was quoted by the statement as saying: "Our heartfelt appreciation goes to every team member of Wynn for their relentless efforts and contributions, and we hope to share our fruitful results with them through the salary increase".

"As we step into the new year, we anticipate moving further forward with all our team members to make great achievements together for Macau", Chen added. ■

## Police expect up to 670,000 CNY daily entries & exits

**William Chan**

The Public Security Police (PSP) announced yesterday that they expect the city to record between 630,000 to 670,000 daily entries and exits at its border checkpoints during the upcoming Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday period, or 3 percent more than last year.

The mainland's 8-day holiday, known as the Spring Festival Golden Week, will take place from next Tuesday, to February 4. The Year of the Snake begins on Wednesday, January 29.

Lei Tak Fai, who heads the Public Security Police's (PSP) Public Relations Division, made the remarks during a press briefing at the Barrier Gate checkpoint where he and officials from several other public entities briefed reporters about the local government's ongoing preparations for tackling the expected high number of visitors during the CNY holiday period.

The entry and exit figures recorded regularly by the Public Security Police, who run the city's immigration service, comprise local residents, visitors, non-resident workers (NRWs) and non-local students enrolled in Macau.



Lei Tak Fai, who heads the Public Security Police's (PSP) Public Relations Division, speaks during yesterday's press briefing at the Barrier Gate checkpoint. – Photos: William Chan

Lei said that the police are predicting that Macau will record 5.04 to 5.36 million entries and exits at its checkpoints over the 8-day holiday period, and that the police expect the fourth and fifth day of the Chinese New Year, i.e., February 1 and 2, to see the peak of entries and exits.

The police will arrange for back-up officers to provide support to frontline immigration officers during the CNY holiday period,

Lei said, adding that the police will increase patrols at festival event locations and popular tourist spots, including the temporary pedestrianisation of "Old Taipa" district.

Meanwhile, U Chin Keong, a senior officer from the Macau Customs Service, said during yesterday's press briefing that the peak traffic flow for vehicles exiting Macau via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) was expected for the Lunar New Year's Eve, i.e., next Tuesday, while the peak for vehicles entering Macau was expected for next Thursday. The expected peak hourly traffic flow is around 500 vehicles.

According to Hong Kong media reports, vehicles with seven seats or less will be exempt from paying tolls on the HZMB during the 8-day holiday period.

Liz Lam Tong Hou from the public relations division of the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) said that as of January 16, the hotel industry had received hotel reservations close to 80 percent of capacity, with average room rates ranging from around 1,000 to 2,000 patacas. ■

## 'Digital Macau' launched, English to be included next step

**Yuki Lei**

The "Digital Macau" information platform has officially been launched, and Dragonsource Digital Media Group President Tang Chao said during a kick-off ceremony yesterday that as a next step, it would provide translation from Chinese to Portuguese and English to facilitate foreign visitors' business exchanges as well as everyday services.

According to yesterday's ceremony at the Macau Chamber of Commerce Building in Zape, the mobile app, launched on December 20 – the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland, integrates government, economic, cultural, social and ecological information to assist residents and visitors

alike in looking for "in-depth" services including clothing, food, housing, transportation, shopping, sightseeing and tourism, without any additional expenditure. The app also aggregates newspaper, radio, new media and video content from the mainland, Southeast Asia as well as locally.

Tang said: "Concerning the fact that economic development has been the basic driving force of Macau, 'Digital Macau' will provide one-stop digital services to the local business community, ensuring that associations, enterprises and merchants, no matter they are big or small, will be able to obtain one-stop digital support for management, services and marketing, with the aim of enhancing their efficiency, reducing technical costs and

pushing them to the next level".

Global News (International) Group Limited President Qiu Yue Jin said he expected the platform, with the care, support and help of all sectors of Macau society, to be able to tell the story of China, Macau in particular, turning the city into an important window for the world. He also said that based on its user needs, the app would use artificial intelligence (AI), big data and blockchain technology to empower different organisations and industries.

The app also includes other services, announcements and news involving Macau and the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, with the aim of promoting the two places' digital integration. ■



Global News (International) Group Limited President Qiu Yuejin (left) and Dragonsource Digital Media Group President Tang Chao deliver speeches during yesterday's launching ceremony of the "Digital Macau" information platform at the Macau Chamber of Commerce Building in Zape. – Photo combo: Yuki Lei



# Silk screen prints of Alphonse Mucha's works on display at Lisboeta Macau

**Rui Pastorin**

A new exhibition titled “Garden of Time – Mucha’s Art Poems” is taking place at Hwa’s Gallery (formerly the Humarish Club) in the Lisboeta Macau H853 Fun Factory complex in Cotai.

The exhibition features silk screen print reproductions of posters by Czech painter, illustrator and graphic artist Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939), a representative painter of the Art Nouveau period (1883–1914).

According to Wikipedia, Mucha lived in Paris during the period and was known for his “distinctly stylised and decorative theatrical posters”, particularly those of French stage actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923).

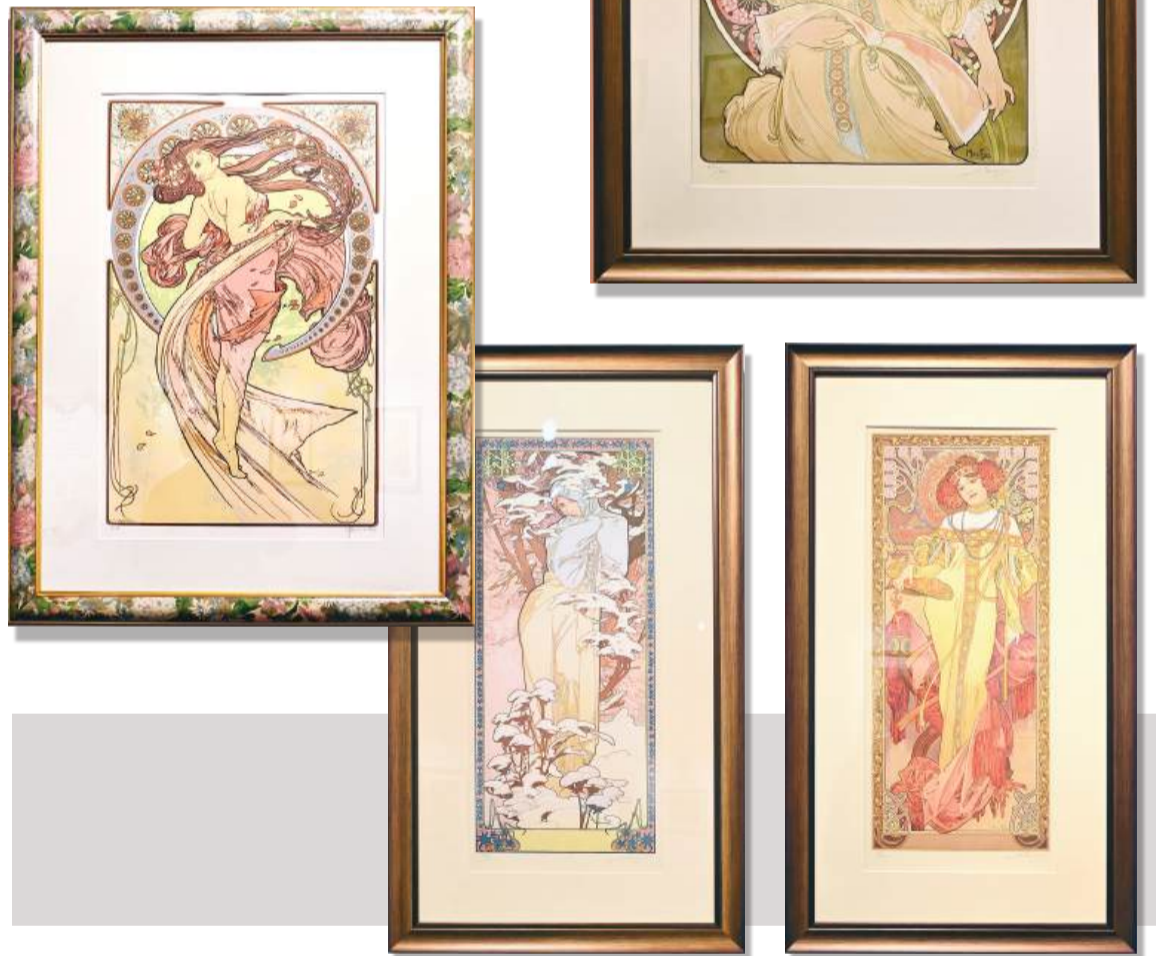
Wikipedia adds that Mucha produced illustrations, advertisements, decorative panels, as well as designs that became among the best-known images of the period.

The artworks presented are reproductions of works that were made in the late 1890s, later remade by professional printmakers authorised by the Mucha Foundation, according a recent statement by the gallery.

Describing his works, the statement said that Mucha had an “elegant, romantic, delicate and aesthetic style of painting” that captured “the beauty of the female form” through delicate lines enhanced by floral and botanical elements.

The statement noted that the exhibition is on until February 25 and aims to introduce visitors to the Art Nouveau style through Mucha’s works, enabling them to “experience the elegance and sophistication of this historical art movement”.

Those interested in viewing the works can visit the gallery daily from 12 noon to 8 p.m. For details, one can visit <https://www.humarish.com>



Photos: Rui Pastorin

# SSM suggests getting post-flu jab to protect against different virus

Ginnie Liang

Leong Iek Hou, who heads the Health Bureau's (SSM) Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Division, suggested yesterday that people who have recently been infected with influenza should still get their flu jab to prevent them from contracting different influenza viruses.

Leong made the remarks in a phone-in programme hosted by public broadcaster TDM's Chinese-language radio station, Ou Mun Tin Toi, which discussed the fight against respiratory diseases.

Leong said that the current influenza vaccine provided by the bureau is a quadrivalent vaccine, which means it can protect against four types of influenza viruses, and emphasised that viruses are constantly changing, and she suggested that people should receive the vaccine to prevent different influenza viruses even after recovering from the flu not long ago.

Leong also said that some

people believed that they would develop influenza symptoms after being vaccinated. She stressed that many people received the vaccine during the peak season of influenza, and it was possible that they were vaccinated when they had already been infected with influenza viruses, rather than because they became ill after having the jab.

As for many elderly and chronically ill people who are worried that the vaccination would worsen their chronic diseases, Leong said that many elderly and chronically ill people suffer from pneumonia after catching influenza, so chronically ill people should be vaccinated against the flu early, and suggested that high-risk people should receive the pneumococcal vaccine as well as the influenza vaccine.

Leong said that the number of influenza-like patients visiting the two major hospitals in Macau has remained relatively stable, with a decrease in acute influenza cases compared to last year, adding that

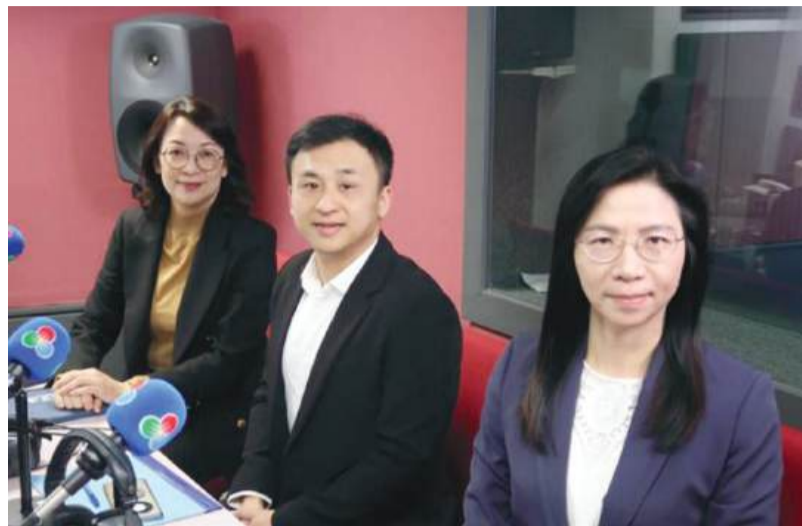
patients with influenza-induced fever accounted for 16.2 percent of the total number of patients.

In view of the upcoming Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday and the increase in the risk of infectious diseases due to more group activities, the bureau launched influenza prevention and control campaigns last week, which included setting up street stations in local communities to promote public awareness and answer health enquiries, which so far has reached out to nearly 15,000 residents, Leong noted.

Leong also said that the influenza vaccination situation in Macau is satisfactory, noting that as of January 19, 179,000 people in Macau had been vaccinated. Leong also said that Macau has been at the peak of influenza since the final week of last year and the situation was expected to continue until next month.

Education Department of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Deputy Director Wong Ka Ki said that his bureau has actively promoted the vaccination of students against influenza, and the vaccination rate of non-tertiary education students in Macau now stands at nearly 80 percent, which was enough to form a barrier against the flu.

Wong also said that his bureau has also set up an online



Leong Iek Hou, who heads the Health Bureau's (SSM) Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Division (right), Education Department of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Deputy Director Wong Ka Ki (centre) and Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) Deputy Director Hoi Va Pou 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

platform to allow students to make appointments to be vaccinated, adding that they can apply for "reasonable absence" from school in order to get the jab.

Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) Deputy Director Hoi Va Pou said that her bureau has required social service agencies to formulate contingency plans for infectious diseases and conduct regular drills, and child care centres and day care centres for the elderly and persons with disabilities have implemented the "morning check-up" measures, under which notification must be

made once any health abnormality among their staff has been detected.

Hoi noted that over 90 percent of the senior citizens in retirement homes and over 60 percent of children in creches have been vaccinated.

Hoi called on parents not to take their children suffering from infectious diseases to child care centres, but also called for understanding that most of the users of child care services are from families where both parents work, or are too busy to pick up their children. ■

## 3 more elderly cheated in 'guess who I am' scams: PJ

William Chan

The Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday three more "guess who I am" phone scams, in which a Hong Kong man and a mainland man purporting to be the victims' "grandsons" separately cheated three local elderly out of a total of 169,000 patacas, PJ spokesman Chao Teng Hin said in a regular press conference yesterday.

The three victims, two females and one male, reported to the police in the past week their separate losses of 15,000 patacas, 100,000 and 54,000 patacas respectively.

The three victims said that they had received calls from their "sons" or "grandsons" who, in the respective cases, told them that they had injured someone and were required to pay "bail", and the scammers told the victims that someone would collect the money from them, according to Chao.

Chao noted that the victims gave the money to the scammers in the northern district, and only later realised that they had been

defrauded and then reported the case to the police.

According to the crime statistics released by the Judiciary Police on Tuesday, the "guess who I am" scam is the second most common type of phone scam in Macau, following the "fake police" scams. In 2024, there were 44 reported cases of the "guess who I am" scam, and over 80 percent of the victims were individuals aged 65 and above, with an average age of 73.8 years. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chao Teng Hin looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. - Photo: William Chan

## 8-day CNY Market in Tap Seac opens

Rui Pastorin

The eight-day Chinese New Year (CNY) Market in Praça do Tap Seac (塔石廣場) kicked off yesterday, with fairgoers able to explore the offerings from flowers and decorations to snacks and games until January 29<sup>th</sup>.

According to a poster at the venue, the market is open from 10 a.m. to midnight through next Monday, and until 2 a.m. next Wednesday.

A recent statement by the Macau Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) noted that this year's CNY

market comprises 14 stalls selling Chinese New Year gifts, six selling flowers, and four selling light snacks. Performances are also set to take place throughout the event's run, along with a large-scale floral exhibition, the statement said. ■



These photos taken yesterday show the Chinese New Year Market in Praça do Tap Seac. - Photo: Rui Pastorin

### STOCK MARKETS

## Hang Seng Index closes 1.63 pct lower

Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 1.63 percent to close at 19,778.77 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index fell 1.96 percent to end at 7,177.14 points, and the Hang Seng Tech Index fell 2.4 percent to end at 4,581.09 points. - Xinhua

# Last Macau governor dies in Lisbon: reports



Undated file photo of Macau's last Portuguese governor, Vasco Rocha Vieira, who died in Portugal yesterday. — Photo courtesy of TDM

## Staff Reporter

Macau's last Portuguese governor, Vasco Rocha Vieira, died yesterday at the Armed Forces Hospital in Lisbon, aged 85, Portuguese media reported last night.

The reports quoted the Portuguese Army.

Rocha Vieira, an engineer by profession, held a raft of senior military posts before he was appointed by Portuguese president Mário Soares governor of Macau in April 1991. He remained at the helm of Macau's Portuguese administration until midnight on December 19, 1999, when Portugal returned its temporary administration to China. His final

military rank was lieutenant-general. After 1999, Rocha Vieira lived as a retiree in Portugal.

According to local Portuguese sources, Rocha Vieira died of the consequences of severe head injuries sustained in a fall in his home's bathroom. Local broadcaster TDM reported last night that the accident happened some three months ago.

Macau's post-1974 governors were appointed by Portugal's president to whom they were answerable. The governors were Portugal's top representative in Macau. Portugal unilaterally relinquished its claim of sovereignty over Macau shortly after the anti-colonial Carnation

Revolution in April 1974. The People's Republic of China (PRC), which never recognised foreign sovereignty over Chinese soil, refrained from exercising its sovereignty over Macau until the 1999 transfer of administration.

Locally, Rocha Vieira oversaw Macau's return from Portuguese to Chinese administration in the 1990s. Compared with the conflict-ridden situation in British-ruled Hong Kong in the run-up to its 1997 return to Chinese rule, Macau's return from Portuguese to Chinese administration was relatively smooth and its transfer ceremony on December 19-20, 1999, was quite dignified, observers said at that time. ■

## MGTO urges residents to travel safely during CNY

### Ginnie Liang

As the Chinese New Year holidays approach, the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) is advising residents to take all the necessary precautions before embarking on their trips, according to an MGTO statement yesterday.

With many locals expected to travel during the holiday, MGTO emphasised the importance of thorough preparation, including purchasing travel insurance and enhancing safety awareness to mitigate potential risks.

Residents are encouraged to choose safe travel destinations and plan suitable itineraries, the statement noted, adding that before one's departure, it's advisable to share important information such as passport details, travel insurance, and flight itineraries with friends and family.

MGTO also reminded residents that they should keep their passports and travel documents secure and avoid entrusting them to strangers during the trip.

Travellers should select activities

within their comfort levels and invest in comprehensive travel insurance, the statement said, adding that while abroad, maintaining a heightened sense of personal safety and adhering to local laws is essential.

MGTO also recommended that travellers set up communication links with friends and family prior to their journey. Keeping mobile services active, including roaming and data, is vital for staying in touch, or purchasing a local SIM card to facilitate communication, MGTO said.

In addition to safety measures, residents should prepare multiple payment options, such as carrying sufficient cash and ensuring that credit cards and digital payment tools are enabled for international use can help address unexpected situations.

For any assistance, Macau residents can reach out to the 24-hour tourism hotline on +853 2833 3000 or contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' global consular protection and emergency service hotline on +86-10-12308 or +86-10-65612308. ■

## Sam says Portuguese- & English-language media are 'bridge for int'l communication'

### Continued from p.1

In his speech, Sam also highlighted the significance of President Xi's recent visit to Macau during the celebrations of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its return to the motherland, pointing out that "President Xi's visit fully demonstrated his deep affection and profound care for Macau, providing strong encouragement and confidence for Macau's future development".

The chief executive, who has been in his post since December 20 last year, also pointed out that President Xi said during his recent visit that "Macau is a pearl in the palm of the motherland", adding that "Macau's development and the well-being of Macau residents have always been in his mind."

Sam underlined that President Xi's "words still resonate, warming our hearts and inspiring us." He also emphasised that

"over the past 25 years, the motherland has been the strongest pillar supporting Macau's prosperity and stability, consistently providing the greatest opportunities for Macau's development."

Sam, who headed Macau's Court of Final Appeal (TUI) for almost a quarter of a century, also said since the inauguration of the sixth-term government over a month ago, "our work has been running smoothly... all bureaus and sectors of the government are operating in an orderly manner, and we can say that this present-term government has started well."

The dinner was attended by senior representatives of Macau's Portuguese- and English-language print and broadcasting media, as well as several portfolio policy secretaries and the director and vice-director of the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS), Inês Chan Lou and Louie Wong Lok I. ■

## Macau's investment budget increases by 760 million patacas for Q3 2024

### Ginnie Liang

The Legislative Assembly's Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs has reported a significant boost to Macau's investment budget for the third quarter of 2024, rising from an initial 17.42 billion patacas to 18.18 billion patacas – an increase of 760 million patacas, while the actual expenditure reached 12.82 billion patacas, reflecting a budget execution rate of 70.5 percent.

Committee Chairwoman Wong Kit Cheng noted that the information provided by the government indicated changes in the approved budgets across 13 public entities, with the most significant increase coming from the Macau Public Security Forces (FSM), which recorded a budget rise of 130 million patacas.

Wong said this increase relates to the renovation project for the temporary transportation hub of the Macau-side checkpoint zone of the Hengqin joint checkpoint, which initially had a budget of 84.44 million patacas but grew to 222 million patacas by the third quarter, as the government confirmed the project was completed. The committee has called for a detailed explanation of the overall renovation

situation and specifics regarding the project.

The government's investment plan for the third quarter of 2024 included 241 projects, with nine new initiatives totalling 18.51 million patacas, including construction of a pedestrian bridge at Sai Van Lake, the extension of the light rail train to Qingmao checkpoint, the Taipa ferry terminal heliport, and construction of the health station in Zone A.

### AL seeks clarification on public housing budget cuts

The investment plan report for the third quarter of 2024 also highlighted significant budget changes in seven projects, each exceeding 100 million patacas. Notable increases include the government's Big Taipa Hill Tunnel project, which increased from 97 million patacas to 2.147 billion patacas, and the flood-prevention project on the west side of Coloane, which rose from 437 million to 703 million patacas, Wong noted.

In contrast, five public housing projects in Zone A experienced a combined reduction of over 3 billion patacas, Wong noted, expressing the committee's concerns regarding these public housing projects—specifically five plots of B5, B7, B8, B11, and B12—and

requested the government to explain the reasons behind these cuts and the future direction for public housing planning.

Moreover, Wong noted that the government had not clarified the reasons for delays or early completions in three specific projects, namely the undersea tunnel project between the land reclamation areas known as Zone A and Zone B, which is expected to be delayed by three years, pushing its completion to 2027, while the East

Line light rail project is now anticipated to finish ahead of schedule in 2027.

Notably, 14 projects reported a budget usage rate of zero, involving a total of 160 million patacas. Among the 241 projects in the investment plan, the government has modified the execution period for 10 projects, with five anticipated to be delayed, including the light rail consulting and inspection services and the Macau Peninsula section of the light rail. ■



Lawmaker Ip Sio Kai (left) and the head of the Legislative Assembly's (AL) Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs Wong Kit Cheng, pose before yesterday's press briefing at the Legislative Assembly Building. — Photo: Ginnie Liang