

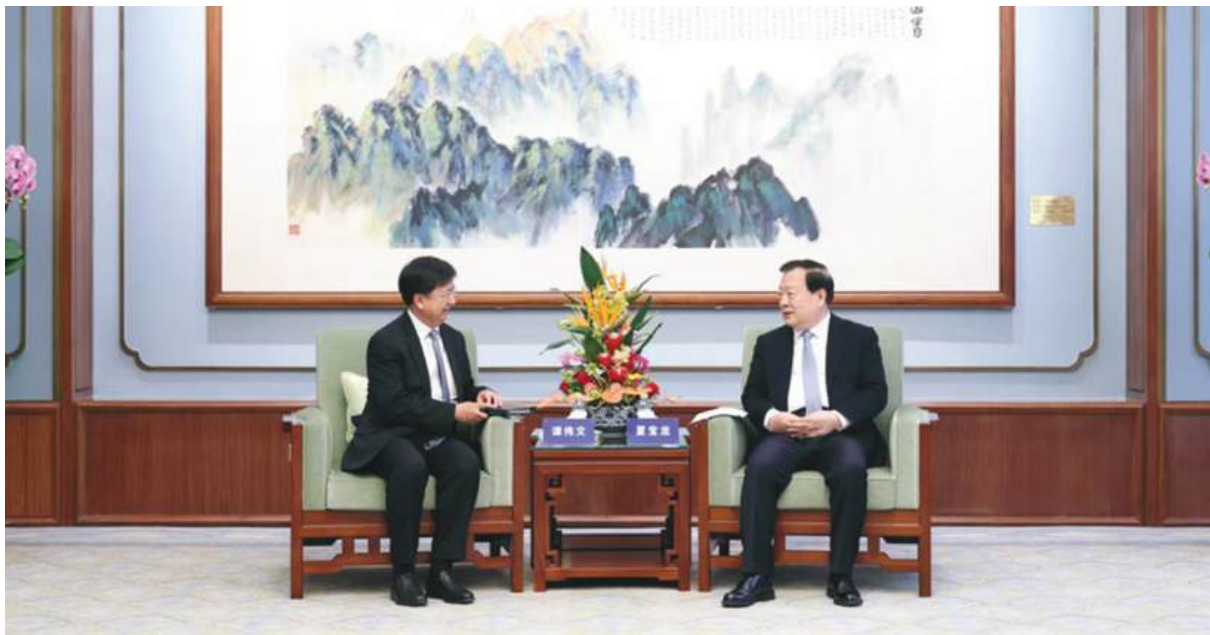
Raymond Tam vows to enhance Macau's public infrastructure facilities

Yuki Lei

Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raymond Tam Wai Man met Xia Baolong, director of 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, in Beijing yesterday, during which he undertook to make every effort to enhance the construction of public infrastructure facilities in areas such as transportation, energy, environmental protection, telecommunication and urban safety, in line with the city's development and demands by the public.

According to a statement by his office yesterday, Tam and his delegation departed on Tuesday to visit the relevant ministries and commissions of the central authorities in Beijing for exchanges and to listen to their views on urban development, sustainability and regional collaboration. The meeting was also attended by Zhou Ji, executive deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office who's in charge of day-to-day operations.

The statement quoted Tam as



State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong (right) talks with Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raymond Tam Wai Man in Beijing yesterday. - Photo: Secretariat for Transport and Public Works

telling Xia that under the leadership of Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai, his office would strive to the best of its ability to integrate the development needs of the city and the demands by the public, with a view of improving Macau residents' living environment, enhancing their quality of life, and responding in a proactive manner to public issues.

Tam also reported to Xia on the

follow-up measures his office and bureaux under his policy portfolio have meanwhile been taken to promote the implementation of the three expectations and four hopes President Xi Jinping laid down for Macau during his inspection tour of Macau last month.

The three expectations are to align with the motherland's developments, to uphold the

principle of "One Country, Two Systems" and the underlying values of love for the nation and love for Macau, and to undergo reforms and innovation, while the four hopes are to focus on fostering appropriate economic diversification, enhancing governance as a special administrative region, building itself into a platform for higher-standard opening up, and maintaining social



harmony and stability.

According to the statement, during the three-day visit, the delegation also attended the third inter-ministerial working group meeting with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, in line with the arrangement for cooperation in environmental protection measures between the mainland and Macau.

Members of the delegation also included Public Works Bureau (DSOP) Director Lam Wai Hou, Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) Director Susana Wong Soi Man, Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) Director Ip Kuong Lam, and Tam's office consultant Un In Lin. ■



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, greets shoppers while visiting a food market in Shenyang, capital city of northeastern Liaoning Province, yesterday. Xi yesterday paid an inspection visit to Shenyang. - (More on p.7) - Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

2 soldiers dead, 12 wounded in ambush by ex-Philippine rebels

Former Muslim rebels ambushed government troops assigned to escort UN staff visiting the southern Philippines, killing two soldiers and wounding 12 others, the military said yesterday.

- Story on p. 8

Trump tells Davos: produce in US or pay tariffs

US President Donald Trump issued a blunt warning to global elites in a video message to the World Economic Forum (WEF) yesterday: Make your products in the United States or pay tariffs.

- Story on p. 11

Mozambique opposition leader says will not join new govt

Mozambique opposition leader Venâncio Mondlane told AFP on Wednesday that he was not interested in joining the new government formed after a deadly months-long dispute over election results.

- Story on p. 12

Indonesian couple busted for selling drugs worth 210,000 patacas

Yuki Lei

The Judiciary Police (PJ) on Tuesday arrested an Indonesian couple in San Kio district for drug abuse and trafficking, with 105 grammes of cocaine and 0.73 grammes of methamphetamine (aka ice) worth 210,000 patacas seized, according to a special press conference yesterday.

PJ spokesman Chao Teng Hin identified the two suspects during the press conference – the male, aged 45, is surnamed Edi, while

the female, aged 39, is surnamed Muchidatun. The two told the police that they work as a cleaner and a domestic helper respectively.

Chao said that upon receiving intelligence that Edi was selling drugs to his compatriots in the city centre, the Judiciary Police put him under surveillance and arrested him on Tuesday in San Kio district. He added that PJ officers later took Edi to his home in the area where they found Muchidatun.

Chao noted that the duo tested

positive for drugs, and both were believed to have been trafficking drugs for at least two weeks.

In the operation, according to Chao, the Judiciary Police seized 37 packets of cocaine weighing 105 grammes, one packet of ice weighing 0.37 grammes, and 15,000 patacas of suspected drug proceeds.

The Judiciary Police transferred yesterday the two suspects to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), where they are facing drug trafficking charges. ■



The two hooded drug suspects from Indonesia are escorted by Judiciary Police (PJ) officers from the PJ headquarters in Zape to a vehicle after yesterday's press conference. – Photo: Maria Cheang Ut Meng

Symposium explores modern finance trends

Rui Pastorin

The “3rd Macau-Hengqin Modern Finance Development Trend and Financial Technology Seminar” was held yesterday afternoon at the Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre (CPTTM) in Zape, with the event exploring fintech (financial technology) trends and opportunities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Co-organised with the Macau Economic and Livelihood Alliance and featuring four invited experts from the mainland and Hong Kong as keynote speakers, the one-day event explored fintech (financial technology) innovations in the GBA and the transition from data infrastructure to AI (artificial intelligence) infrastructure, among other trending topics. Cutting-edge products and success stories were also discussed at the event.

In his speech, CPTTM Deputy Director-General Jack Chang (曾澤瑤) said: “Industrial integration and technological innovation between Hengqin and Macau play an

important role and will help promote the appropriate diversification of Macau’s economy”. He added that it was hoped that the symposium would provide insightful views for the development of fintech.

Meanwhile, Macau Economic and Livelihood Alliance Deputy Director General Lei Iam Leong told reporters on the sidelines of yesterday’s event that the construction of a modern financial market requires hardware, software, and data. According to Lei, the mainland has made good progress in the related technological development, pointing out that top financial professionals were invited to talk at the symposium about their experiences.

He added that many local financial professionals and youths are also keen on engaging in the GBA’s development, stressing that the seminar aimed to provide them with learning opportunities.

A statement by the centre released after yesterday’s event noted that the event was attended by over 90 participants. ■



A speaker delivers a presentation during yesterday’s “3rd Macau-Hengqin Modern Finance Development Trend and Financial Technology Seminar” at CPTTM in Zape. – Photo: Rui Pastorin

Local 18-year-old nabbed for stealing 49 phones from shop

Ginnie Liang

A local 18-year-old man was arrested on Wednesday for stealing 49 mobile phones from a strongbox in a shopping mall near the Barrier Gate checkpoint, and the victim reported a total loss of 160,000 patacas, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said in a press conference yesterday.

The suspect surnamed Hoi told the police that he is jobless, the spokesperson said.

According to the spokesperson, PJ officers received a report from a middle-aged shop owner in the afternoon of November 21 last year that she had lost a total of 49 mobile phones stored in the combination strongbox in her shop in the afternoon, after she had just put the phones into it earlier that day, causing her a loss of 160,000 patacas.

Upon investigation, PJ officers

found that Hoi used a screwdriver to pry open the strongbox in the shop on November 21 last year, stealing a total of 49 mobile phones and putting them into his backpack before leaving Macau through the Barrier Gate checkpoint on the same day.

Hoi was identified and intercepted when he re-entered Macau on Wednesday afternoon, and he refused to cooperate with PJ officers, the spokesperson said.

At the time of the press conference, PJ officers were still investigating why Hoi knew there were a number of mobile phones in the security box and whether there are more people involved in the case, the spokesperson said, adding that PJ officers believe that the victim and Hoi do not know each other.

The spokesperson said that PJ officers were also still

investigating more details of the case and tracing the whereabouts of the stolen goods.

Hoi has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a charge of aggravated theft, the spokesperson said. ■



A Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman looks on during yesterday’s regular press conference at the PJ headquarters in Zape. – Photo: Ginnie Liang

Last year marks 5 traffic fatalities in 15,511 accidents: police

Yuki Lei

Macau recorded 15,511 road traffic accidents last year, including five fatalities, marking the highest number of accidents in the past nine years, according to information released by the Public Security Police (PSP) on their official website this week.

Road traffic statistics by the Public Security Police showed

that last year’s total of more than 15,000 traffic accidents was nearly 2,000 more than in 2023, with an increase of 14.36 percent year on year. This figure was the third highest compared to the 16,029 accidents recorded in 2014 and the 15,804 in 2015.

The Public Security Police said that the five traffic fatalities recorded last year were down from

the eight recorded in 2023. Last year’s fatalities comprised four males and one female, all of them drivers.

Last year, 5,341 people were injured in traffic accidents, a year-on-year surge of more than 600 people, 76 of whom required hospitalisation, a decrease of 67, or over 46 percent, compared to 2023. The number of traffic accidents involving pedestrians increased by 6 percent year on year to 510.

Meanwhile, the Public Security Police issued more than 700,000 fines for road traffic violations, a year-on-year increase of less than one percent, while the total fines involved amounted to 189 million patacas, a year-on-year jump of more than nine percent, the highest amount in the last six years.

The traffic violations included illegal parking, disobeying traffic signs and jaywalking, accounting for 618,260 cases, 32,693 cases and 7,460 cases respectively, with an increase of about 58 percent in the number of pedestrians crossing the road illegally. ■



This file photo taken last year shows police officers and firefighters standing next to a lorry and a public bus which collided on Friendship Bridge. – Photo courtesy of TDM

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Macau Weather

CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS. LIGHT RAIN IN THE MORNING AND AT NIGHT. FORCE 3 TO 4 EASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 65% AND 95%.



17°C~22°C

Source: SMG

Guangdong-Macau cross-border ambulance service to start this year



Fire Services Bureau (CB) Commissioner Leong Iok Sam briefs reporters about his bureau's work last year during yesterday's media forum at the CB headquarters in Nam Van. — Photos: Yuki Lei



Several journalists attend yesterday's media forum at the CB headquarters held by senior officers of the Fire Services Bureau.

Yuki Lei

The governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau signed in June last year a framework agreement on setting up a government-led cooperation mechanism for emergency response measures, and Fire Services Bureau (CB) Commissioner Leong Iok Sam said yesterday that the relevant discussions have nearly reached completion, expecting that the five local ambulances and three fire engines licensed for use in Guangdong would start operating later this year.

Leong made the remarks during yesterday's media forum at the CB headquarters in Nam Van.

Leong clarified the role of the Fire Services Bureau in cross-border emergency medical services between Guangdong and Macau, saying that the bureau has already obtained dual Guangdong-Macau licence plates for five of its ambulances and three fire engines. "It is not a problem for us to pass through the checkpoints on both sides", he said, adding that, however, in the case of medical teams, a number of entities would be involved. "Simply speaking, we will only arrange for vehicles to pick up patients after

communication and coordination between the medical authorities of the two places, such as which hospital an ambulance should be sent to pick up and drop off a patient", said Leong, who emphasised the role of his bureau as the one in charge of transferring the patients.

Referring to the Hong Kong-Macau Pilot Scheme for Direct Cross-border Ambulance Transfer, Leong said that the drill, simulating the transfer of a patient to Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) in Hong Kong from the public Conde S. Januario Hospital Centre late last year, was conducted "smoothly". He added that the bureau currently has three ambulances ready for use by the Hong Kong-Macau cross-border ambulance service.

Emphasising that the relevant work was being prepared in an orderly manner, Leong said that his bureau would continue to draw on experience and make timely requests for increasing the number of emergency vehicles and drivers in accordance with the needs of the community.

Transfer of fuel intermediate storage now underway

The government has finalised the relocation of its temporary fuel intermediate storage in

Ilha Verde district to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) man-made island and handed it on December 18 last year over to the Fire Services Bureau, in response to which Leong said that the relevant work was being carried out to meet safety management standards and other requirements, adding that considering the traffic congestion in and around Zone A, "we are working with the relevant entities trying to address the traffic issues there, making proactive preparations to relocate the intermediate storage facility as soon as possible".

According to Leong, the bureau launched a new database system for hazardous materials in September last year, and currently there are about 130 types of dangerous goods registered in the database, as well as about 40 storage locations. He said that the database system enables different entities handling hazardous materials to share data in real time and keep track of the information of dangerous goods storage sites in Macau.

The bureau has also launched its Reporting and Management System for Dangerous Goods for users to report hazardous materials anytime, anywhere by computer or mobile phone.

CB marks 54,133 incidents last year, incl 45,236 ambulance operations

Meanwhile, during yesterday's forum Leong also briefed the media about the bureau's fire and rescue incident statistics.

According to Leong, the bureau attended to 54,133 incidents last year, a year-on-year increase of 2.75 percent, among which 45,236 involved ambulance operations, only 882 cases were attributed to fire alarms.

In term of ambulance services, minor discomforts such as dizziness and headache remained the main causes of the increase, while for fire alarms, failing to turn off the stove, leaving behind unextinguished items such as smouldering joss sticks and incense, and equipment malfunction continue to be the most common causes of fire, Leong noted.

The CB officers carried out last year 15,924 inspections in line with the city's "Legal Framework for Fire Safety of Buildings and Premises", during which the officers fined 83 households for violations, Leong said, adding that the bureau conducted last year 220 courses on enhancing public awareness of fire safety. ■

Kai Fong's Guangdong office serves Macau residents' 27,000 times, up 51 pct

Ginnie Liang

The Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations' (UGAMM) office in Guangdong served Guangdong and Macau residents 269,000 times last year, including Macau residents served 27,000 times, representing a year-on-year increase of 51 percent, Tian Yi, who heads the union's office in Guangdong, said yesterday.

The union, commonly known as Kai Fong in Cantonese, held a press conference at its premises in Toi San district regarding its 2024 annual review, during which the findings of its survey on the opportunities and challenges of Macau residents' integration into the nation's development were also released.

With over 1,800 activities being held, the office last year followed up on 25 cases concerning Macau residents, answered 2,100 enquiries from Macau residents, and assisted 333 Macau residents in handling Central Provident Fund matters, 158 Macau residents in joining the Zhongshan Medical Insurance Scheme, and 145 Macau residents in applying for mainland public transport cards, and other related services, Tian said.

Over the past year, public satisfaction, evaluation and service professionalism of the office have been enhanced, Tian said, adding that in the future, his office will continue to deepen its services for Macau residents to respond to the increasing demands.

According to the findings, the 500 interviewees expressed the highest satisfaction with the reformed customs clearance policy between Macau and the mainland, while having the lowest satisfaction with employment policies in the mainland.

Macau residents' perception of the mainland's policies that benefit Macau is limited, and the policies lack stability, the findings show, suggesting that the local government set up a special policy monitoring and evaluation mechanism, as well as a permanent communication mechanism, to collect data on Macau residents' actual needs and suggestions, and also to adjust the content and implementation of the policies in a timely manner.

At the same time, the government should strengthen the legal framework to ensure policy stability and continuity, the findings show. ■



Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations' (UGAMM) Office Director Tian Yi (centre) and other representatives of the office pose before a press conference yesterday on its premises in Toi San district. — Photo: Ginnie Liang



32 artists present works in 'Good Time' exhibition

Rui Pastorin

Amagao Gallery's latest exhibition "Good Time" is showcasing a raft of works by 32 artists of different nationalities until March 17.

The free-admission gallery, managed by Galeria 57 (Macau) and located at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau hotel, showcases a total of 38 works by artists from Brazil, the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macau, as well as France, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Italy, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, Thailand, and the US. Among the artworks that exhibitiongoers will find are those created through mixed media, acrylics, photos and Chinese ink on silk as well as oils.

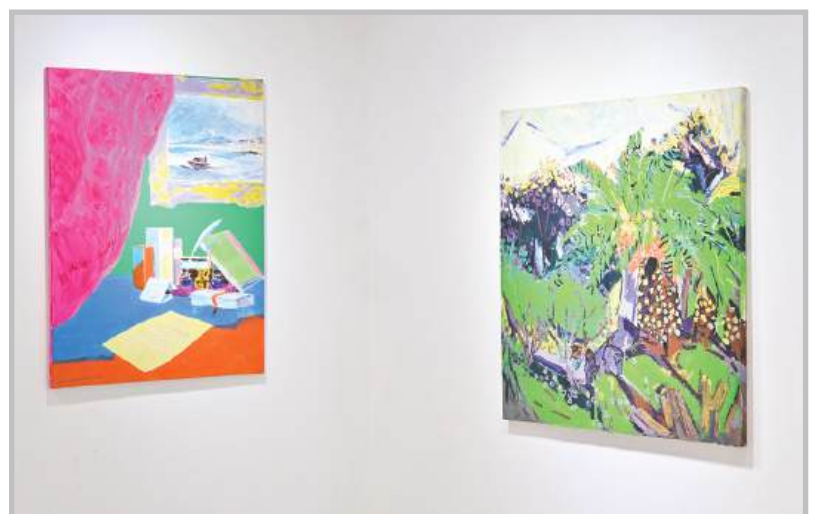
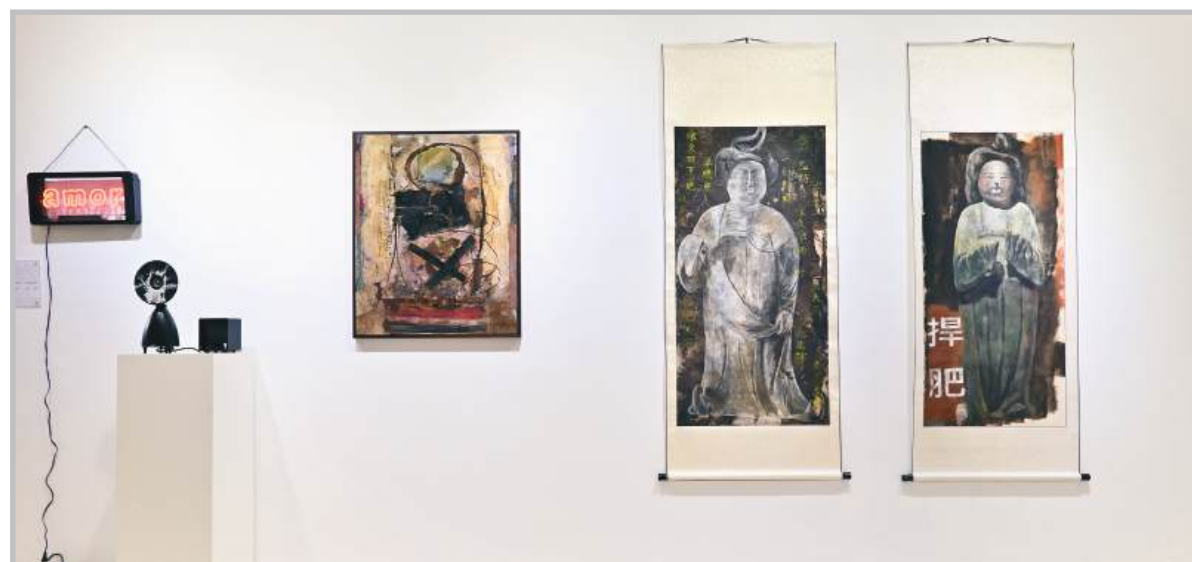
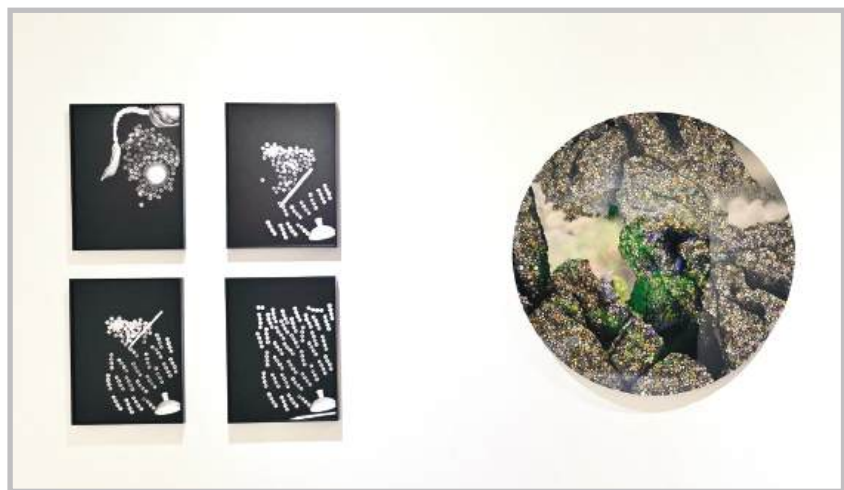
Its title, meanwhile, takes inspiration from a Southern Song Dynasty poem, with the exhibition "reflecting a sense of serenity and gratitude for life's seasons", according to a recent statement by Artyzen Grand Lapa. The poem, the statement noted, is as follows:

"In spring, all sorts of flowers bloom;
 In autumn, the Moon shines bright.
 Summer brings cool breezes,
 While winter covers the world in snow.
 When the mind is free of worries,
 It is a good season in this human life."

Rutger Verschuren, Area Vice President of Macau and Hengqin for Artyzen Hospitality Group and General Manager of Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau, was quoted by the statement as saying: "GOOD TIME is a stunning reflection of how art can unite us and enrich our experiences, marking a meaningful start to the year."

Moreover, invited curator Joey Ho Chong I noted: "As long as you slow down and appreciate the works, you can enjoy the good time shared by the artists".

One can visit the gallery from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. It is closed on Mondays. More information about the gallery can also be found on <https://www.artyzen.com/en/hotels/artyzen-grand-lapa-macau/experiences/amagao-gallery/>



Photos: Rui Pastorin

António Sanmarful's 'Heritople' wins best documentary at Bangkok Movie Awards

Rui Pastorin

Trilingual documentary "Heritople"* directed by local filmmaker António Salas Sanmarful was named best documentary in the Bangkok Movie Awards (BMA), a monthly film competition, last month.

The around one-hour-long documentary, which was produced by the International Institute of Macau (IIM) and sponsored by the Macao Foundation (FM), premiered in October last year to a packed Cinematheque•Passion on Travessa da Paixão (戀愛巷). A screening at the University of Saint

Joseph (USJ) later ensued.

Featuring testimonies from eight interviewees, the film, according to a report by the *Post* last year, aims to expand the connection between people and local heritage. In a statement via a Facebook post announcing the award yesterday, the IIM pointed out that the documentary "focuses on Macau's rich history and cultural heritage, combining both interviews with locals" with archival footage of Macau's return to the motherland in 1999.

The statement noted that

Sanmarful's win at the BMA-organised competition puts him in the running for the coveted "Golden Elephant Award".

The film's trailer can be viewed on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oE9V-71oII>, while the results are also available on https://bangkokmovieawards.com/december_2024_result/ ■

*An artificial word created for the film, a portmanteau that combines the sounds and meanings of two words – heritage and people, according to an article published by the *Post* on October 10 last year.



This image downloaded from the International Institute of Macau (IIM) website last night shows the award winner certificate by the Bangkok Movie Awards (BMA) for António Salas Sanmarful's documentary "Heritople".

4 illegal currency dealers nabbed

Ginnie Liang

Four jobless mainlanders involved in illegal currency exchange deals were arrested, and a total of HK\$2.35 million in cash, HK\$66,700 in gambling chips and 3,300 yuan in cash were seized on Wednesday, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said in a special conference yesterday.

The four suspects comprise two men surnamed Cao and Liu, and two women surnamed Fan and Hu, and the PJ operation on Wednesday also caught a mainland gambler surnamed Ying who was overstaying, the spokesperson said.

PJ officers had received a tip-off recently that there was a group of illegal currency dealers operating in a casino in Cotai, the spokesperson said, adding that upon receiving the report, PJ officers went to a hotel room in the casino and found four currency exchange dealers and two gamblers there.

According to the spokesperson, Liu was banned from entering Macau for three years in February 2023 due to his involvement in illegal currency exchange deals, but he managed to enter Macau illegally in December last year.

Cao charged an overstaying



Evidence such as Hong Kong dollars in cash, smartphones is displayed at a PJ press conference room yesterday during a special press conference about the case. – Photos: Ginnie Liang

gambler, Ying, HK\$200 a day to stay in a hotel room with him and his three accomplices, the spokesperson said.

The four suspects were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, with the four illegal currency dealers facing illegal currency exchange charges, while Cao faces an additional charge of aiding and abetting an overstayer. Liu's illegal entry offence will be dealt with separately, the spokesperson said. ■



The four hooded mainland illegal currency exchange suspects are escorted by Judiciary Police (PJ) officers to a PJ vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape.

Beijing underscores need for countries to keep to the right path for inclusive development

China Daily Editorial

In his address to the World Economic Forum Virtual Event of the Davos Agenda in 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out that the problems facing the world are intricate and complex, and that no country can solve them alone or just to their own advantage. There must be global action, a global response and global cooperation, he stressed. A cold war, hot war, trade war or tech war, antagonism and confrontation are misguided approaches that eventually hurt all countries' interests and undermine everyone's well-being. It is only by upholding multilateralism that the problems can be overcome.

It is consultation and cooperation that are needed, the top Chinese leader stressed, rather than a narrow-minded, zero-sum game mentality. It serves no one's interest to reverse globalization and seek seclusion and decoupling. The experience of the past four years shows that so long as countries pool their wisdom and strengths, and pursue inclusive cooperation to find win-win and all-win solutions, economic globalization remains a historical trend that cannot be reversed, despite the headwinds and setbacks.

In his speech at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday, Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang highlighted the constancy of China's commitment to multilateralism by recalling a similar message that President Xi delivered to the same event eight years ago.

Citing Xi's words that "pursuing protectionism is like locking oneself in a dark room. While wind and rain may be kept outside, that dark room will also block light and air", Ding reminded his audience that "protectionism leads nowhere. A trade war has no winners".

Such a reminder is once again pertinent as there is still, as Ding said, "an ongoing tug of war between the forces for and against economic globalization", with a newly installed US administration set to double down on the country's looking-after-number-one approach to world affairs.

Given its staunch pro-globalization stance and unshakable commitment to multilateralism, it is natural that participants at the Davos meeting should turn their eyes to China to see what it proposes to do.

One of the solutions that China provides for growth, as Ding pointed out, is green development, something that is apposite in the circumstances, with the US putting its own short-term gain before the common good by once again withdrawing from the global climate pact.

Over the past year, the Chinese economy has made steady progress while maintaining overall stability, with the country's GDP growing by 5 percent. A major driving force of its growth is the green economy, which Ding described as "a salient feature of the Chinese economy".

He pledged that the country will make "tireless efforts" to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate pollution and "accelerate the comprehensive transition to green economic and social development".

China boasts the world's largest and most complete new energy industry chain and the country now produces 90 percent of the world's solar panels and 70 percent of its electric vehicle batteries. It has served as a strong booster for global green development and climate response. It is no exaggeration to say that in much of the world, the green transition is powered by "made in China".

Yet despite this, Chinese companies are facing increasing protectionist policies as they expand overseas. For example, the US quadrupled tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles last year to 100 percent, and the European Union has also conducted a raft of probes targeting "State subsidies" in China's green tech sector, as well as imposing punitive tariffs on Chinese-made EVs, prompting Ding to warn against "erecting green barriers that could disrupt normal economic and trade cooperation".

It is encouraging that European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in Davos that Europe "must engage constructively with China to find solutions in our mutual interest". After all, the need for the world to unite and work together to address global climate challenges has never been more urgent, with last year continuing the trend of being the hottest year on record.

Economic globalization is, as Ding remarked, not a "you-lose-I-win zero-sum game", but a universally beneficial process where all can benefit and win together so long as any tensions and disagreements that appear are resolved through dialogue and consultation.

China firmly believes that communication and coordination will not only make the pie of economic globalization bigger, but also distribute it better.

– Courtesy of China Daily



Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, attends the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2025, and delivers a speech entitled "Keeping to the Right Path of Multilateralism and Promoting Open and Inclusive Development" in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday. – Xinhua

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.40 pct lower

HONG KONG – The Hong Kong stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.40 percent to close at 19,700.56 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index lost 0.18 percent to end at 7,164.22 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index jumped 1.43 percent to close at 4,515.48 points.

– Xinhua

China-Africa win-win cooperation should be advanced for modernization and sustainability

Commentary by Arkebe Oqubay

China-Africa cooperation is the largest and most dynamic form of South-South cooperation. It is comprehensive, cooperative and strategic. It is based on mutual respect and the principle of win-win cooperation. China and Africa share common aspirations for development and prosperity.

Both are committed to developing a fair global governance system and represent the solidarity spirit of the Global South.

It is the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2025. Significant achievements in trade, investment, infrastructure development and people-to-people relations have been recorded over the 25 years. However, we also need to recognize that the potential for China and Africa is still to be fully tapped, and we should scale up our joint efforts to release that potential. For instance, bilateral trade has increased from over US\$10 billion in 2000 to US\$282 billion in 2023. Research indicates that the trade volume between Africa and China has more potential for further growth over the next decade. During the past 25 years, China's foreign direct investment flow to Africa reached around US\$50 billion. However, given Africa's demographic and economic transformation, there are vast opportunity and necessity for massive productive investment to create jobs, exports and productive capacity. Significant infrastructure development – energy, transport, communications – was achieved during this period. China and Africa have substantial opportunities for green transformation and building of a carbon-neutral economy through a joint effort.

In his speech at the FOCAC Beijing summit in September 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that the founding of the forum was a milestone in the history of China-Africa relations. He proposed that bilateral relations between China and all African countries having diplomatic ties with China will be elevated to the level of strategic

relations, and that the overall characterization of China-Africa relations will be elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

Furthermore, he also stressed the vital features and urgency of modernization in support of the African Union's Agenda 2063, the continent's development blueprint over a 50-year period.

In his speech, President Xi stressed that over the next three years, China will work with Africa to take partnership actions for modernization in the following respects, including deepening China-Africa cooperation and spearheading the modernization of the Global South; mutual learning among civilizations; trade prosperity; industrial chain cooperation; connectivity; development cooperation; health; agriculture and people's livelihoods; people-to-people exchanges; green development; and common security.

At the Beijing summit, significant attention was given to accelerating Africa's industrialization and developing industrial chain cooperation, modernizing agriculture and food security, energy cooperation, the digital economy and financial cooperation. China has removed all import tariffs on goods from 33 African countries and has taken the initiative to apply alternative payment systems for cross-border trade. Both sides should maximize their cooperation and efforts to achieve these shared goals and aspirations.

More importantly, China has remained a source of inspiration and development experiences for African countries in poverty reduction, industrialization, infrastructure development, urban development, human development, economic catch-up, and economic governance. Policy learning is a vital dimension of China-Africa cooperation. I have been involved in Ethiopia's continuous endeavor to learn from China's reform and opening-up journey over the past more than four decades.

China is at the forefront of the global fight for sustainability and a carbon-neutral economy. China is the leader in renewable

energy, accounting for over 80 percent of solar power production and contributing to massive cost reduction and accessibility. China is also the world's leading manufacturer of electric vehicles and battery storage. In the past decade, China has emerged as one of the innovation and technological leaders, in many fields such as renewable energy and electrification — solar, wind, green hydrogen, automotive and digital technologies. In comparison, Africa has a massive demand for clean and renewable energy. It accounts for over 60 percent of the potential for global solar energy. Africa must also create millions of jobs, generate exports and develop its industrial capacity.

I genuinely believe in the potential and impact of what I describe as a new green pact for Africa as one of the drivers of Africa's green transition and economic transformation. This pact will bring together China's capability and African requirements for a better future. It will also manifest the vision of a shared future for the Global South. This cooperation should be comprehensive and include green financing, investment, industrial capacity, knowhow transfer and a common position on climate justice.

The vision for China-Africa cooperation should be more resilient in meeting people's expectations. It should also aim to promote multilateralism and a multipolar world, reform the international financial architecture, and reform the United Nations system and Bretton Woods institutions. New institutions should be established to accelerate economic growth, sustainable development and build a prosperous future.

Let China-Africa cooperation live forever. Let us work for a prosperous, shared future.

**The author is former senior minister and special adviser to the prime minister of Ethiopia. He contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

– Courtesy of China Daily

Foreign visitors need home-like convenience



A traveler from Poland takes photos at the Yuyuan shopping center in Shanghai last month. China's visa-free policies, along with optimised payment options and other visitor-friendly services, have made traveling to the country more convenient, attracting an increasing number of foreign travelers. – Xinhua

Commentary by Kang Bing

The National Immigration Administration's new immigration-friendly policies for foreign visitors announced in December are set to prompt more foreigners to visit China. The policies show China's determination to advance high-quality opening-up at a time when some countries are resorting to protectionism and isolationism.

The new policies extend the duration of visa-free visits by foreigners to 10 days, and add 21 new ports of entry to the existing list. Since the NIA's announcement has added a new set of countries whose nationals can enjoy visa-free entry, China now has visa-free entry arrangement with 25 countries, offers unilateral visa exemption to the nationals of 38 countries and provides visa-free visits for visitors from 54 countries.

The visa-free entry policies are yielding the desired results, as data show that in the first 11 months of last year more than 29 million foreigners visited the country — an increase of 86.2 percent year-on-year. In fact, foreign visitors taking advantage of the visa-free policies have increased by more than 132 percent. And with the latest announcement extending the duration of visa-free visit, a lot more foreigners are expected to visit China for business or for sightseeing this year.

But the authorities have to improve many things to better serve the increasing number of foreign visitors.

China is now largely a cashless society with people paying for their purchases by scanning QR codes with their mobile phones. But digital payments are not yet popular even in many developed countries, making it difficult for visiting foreigners to pay their bills. And although the authorities have taken measures to enable foreigners to swipe their credit cards and/or connect their mobile phones with their home bank accounts to make payments in many hotels, restaurants and shops, the arrangement is far from smooth.

In different cities and on different occasions, I have seen foreigners getting frustrated after being unable to pay their bus or metro fares, settle their restaurant or hotel bills, or book their tickets to enter tourist sites. Therefore, measures should

be taken to make foreigners' stay in China more convenient.

Homestays are now popular across the world. I too have opted for homestays in many countries not only because it is cheaper but also because it allows you to cook your own food and communicate with the hosts. Unfortunately, homestays are few and far between in China for foreign visitors. Hence, the authorities should consider encouraging more Chinese people to open their doors to foreign visitors.

True, about 200 million people in China can speak some English or other foreign languages, but communication remains a problem for foreigners visiting the country. Many cities now provide instructions and information on buses, subways and high-speed trains, and have put up road signs in English, but they are hardly of any help because they are translated from Chinese into English or other foreign languages using translation software or are printed without being professionally edited.

While strolling in and around an annual international forum venue in Hainan province a few years ago, I found at least 20 signs in English that were either inaccurate, erroneous or simply ridiculous. So I suggest that the authorities start a national campaign to correct the inaccurate and erroneous signs in public places to ensure they serve their intended purpose. Also, policemen, taxi and bus drivers, shop assistants and restaurant employees should get foreign language training so they can be more helpful to foreign visitors.

China has more than 500,000 public toilets. They are free, clean and mostly well-maintained. But, unfortunately, few of them provide free toilet paper, which is frustrating for many foreign visitors who are not used to carrying toilet paper and soap as they are mostly available in public toilets in the West.

Perhaps installing vending machines dispensing toilet paper and soap in front of public toilets is a better way of addressing this problem.

To make China a foreign visitor-friendly country, we still need to do more.

**The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of the China Daily.*

– Courtesy of the China Daily



A student from Guinea (left) experiences making Gongcheng oil tea at Yucai campus of Guangxi Normal University in Guilin, capital city of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, yesterday. As the 2025 Chinese New Year will fall on January 29 excitement is palpable everywhere in China. The Chinese people immerse themselves in traditional customs and partake in the festivities. The Chinese New Year, or the Spring Festival, falls on next Wednesday, marking the beginning of the Year of the Snake. – Xinhua

Xi inspects Shenyang ahead of Spring Festival



SHENYANG – Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, yesterday inspected Shenyang, capital city of northeastern Liaoning Province.

Xi made the trip shortly before the Spring Festival, the most important holiday for the Chinese people, which falls on January 29 this year.

Xi visited a food market and a residential community in Shenyang, where he learned about the supply of goods during the holiday season and measures in place to meet residents' daily needs and optimize public services, as well as details of progress made in improving people's life.

For more than a decade, Xi, as the Party and the state's top leader, has made it a tradition to spend time with ordinary people ahead of the Spring Festival. – Xinhua

President Xi Jinping (center), also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, learns about the supply of goods during the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday season and measures in place to meet residents' daily needs while visiting a food market in Shenyang, capital city of northeastern Liaoning Province, yesterday. Xi yesterday paid an inspection visit to Shenyang. – Xinhua

Nation honors Shenzhou-18 mission astronauts with medals

BEIJING – The three crew members of China's Shenzhou-18 mission – Ye Guangfu, Li Cong and Li Guangsu – were awarded medals yesterday for their services to China's space endeavors.

Ye was honored with a second-class aerospace achievement medal, while Li Cong and Li Guangsu received third-class aerospace achievement medals and the honorary title of "Heroic Astronaut." Ye, a veteran astronaut, received the honorary title of "Heroic Astronaut" in 2022.

The decision was made by the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the State Council and the Central Military Commission.

China launched the Shenzhou-18 crewed spaceship on April 25, 2024. It was crew commander Ye's second journey to China's space station, where he lived for approximately six months. Previously, he stayed

in the space station for six months during the Shenzhou-13 mission, thus becoming the country's first astronaut to have lived in orbit for over a year.

Shenzhou-18 was the first space flight mission for both Li Cong and Li Guangsu. Li Cong, the youngest member of the crew, completed all assigned tasks well, while Li Guangsu successfully installed the first space debris protection device on the space station in his first spacewalk.

During the Shenzhou-18 mission, the three astronauts carried out two extravehicular activities and nearly 100 space science experiments and in-orbit application payload tests/experiments.

The astronaut trio returned to Earth on November 4, 2024 after spending a record-breaking 192 days in orbit. – Xinhua

Senior official urges further efforts to counter cross-border gambling

BEIJING – Senior official Wang Xiaohong yesterday called for new achievements and breakthroughs to be made in the authorities' ongoing fight against cross-border gambling.

Wang, a member of the Secretariat of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and state councilor, made the remarks while addressing a national teleconference on anti-cross-border gambling work.

Over recent years, with the country's ever-improved prevention and control system, once-rampant activities of cross-border gambling

have been effectively brought under control, Wang said.

Noting the importance of maintaining a zero-tolerance approach during the fight, Wang called for systemic and comprehensive efforts to address both the symptoms and root causes of cross-border gambling.

He also urged efforts to fully tap into the country's political and institutional advantages and further strengthen accountability enforcement, mechanism-building and legal guarantees in the fight. – Xinhua

Xi sits down with family in flood-affected village ahead of Spring Festival

SHENYANG – President Xi Jinping on Wednesday sat down with a family in a village affected by floods in northeastern Liaoning Province during an inspection tour shortly before the Spring Festival.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, visited the home of Wang Baowei in Zhujiagou Village where he checked the structure and quality of the house, which was rebuilt after the disaster.

The village is under the administration of Huludao, one of the hardest-hit cities during summer floods in Liaoning in 2024. The floods severely damaged farmland, houses, farming facilities and transportation infrastructure, affecting more than 400,000 people.

Braving the cold, Xi reached the village after an hour-long journey along mountainous roads and inspected the progress made in post-disaster restoration.

Sitting down with Wang's family, Xi asked them about the value of properties lost in the floods, government subsidies for new house construction, the family's income and young people's employment.

Wang told Xi that he did not expect to move into such a bright new house so quickly.

Reiterating the principle that people should always come first, Xi said helping those affected by disasters is what the Party and government should do.

When asked about his expectations, Wang said he hopes his family will lead a better life.

"Your hopes are our hopes," Xi stated, urging everyone to work together to build a better future.

Xi told villagers at Zhujiagou that the people can always count on the Party and the government in their most difficult times.

"Huludao suffered severe flooding last year. I have been concerned about you," Xi said.

The Spring Festival, which

falls on January 29 this year, is the most important holiday on the Chinese calendar and an occasion for family reunions.

For more than a decade, Xi, as the Party and the state's top leader, has made it a tradition to spend time with ordinary people, especially those in difficulties, during the holiday season.

"At the beginning of a new year, my greatest concern is still for those in need – how they are eating, how they are living, and whether they can have a good New Year and a good Spring Festival," Xi once said.

At Zhujiagou, Xi told the villagers: "I come to see you before the Spring Festival. What I've seen today makes me feel relieved."

Xi said though many natural disasters occurred across the country last year, it is his firm belief that restoration and reconstruction in the affected areas would yield good results. – Xinhua

Senior CPC official delivers Spring Festival greetings to religious groups

BEIJING – A senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) yesterday delivered Spring Festival greetings to religious personages and believers nationwide.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Conference (CPPCC), extended festive greetings at a symposium with leaders of national religious groups ahead of the Chinese New Year.

Speaking highly of the work of religious groups in 2024, Wang urged efforts to develop religions in the Chinese context, strengthen governance of religious affairs, and build active and healthy religious relations, in a bid to contribute to Chinese modernization.

He stressed maintaining guidance of core socialist values and Chinese culture, and thus forming religious doctrines that are in line with China's national conditions step by step.

Highlighting strengthening law-based religious affairs governance, Wang called for efforts to enhance self-education, self-management and self-restraint of religious circles. – Xinhua