

Meeting Xia, O Lam vows people-centred approach

Yuki Lei

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam vowed during her working visit to Beijing on Friday to study in-depth and implement thoroughly President Xi Jinping's important speeches and carry out the mission that he entrusted Macau with concerning local and national development, and she also pledged to keep the local government's people-centred philosophy of development as her main focus when preparing her portfolio's policy action guidelines.

O made the remarks during her meeting with 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), as well as 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.

According to a statement by O's office on Friday, the delegation's visit, which also included Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture Chief-of-Cabinet Lin Yuan, Health Bureau (SSM) Director Alvis Lo Iek Long and Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC)



This handout photo provided by the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture on Friday shows the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong (right) meeting with Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam in Beijing.

President Deland Leong Wai Man, aimed to fully implement the spirit of Xi's important speeches during his visit to Macau on December 18-20 last year, and to promote the better development of Macau's healthcare and medical services as well as its

cultural and sports sectors.

The statement noted that the meeting mainly focused on the work carried out in the social and cultural domains in line with the spirit of Xi's important speeches and the mission entrusted by him to Macau, as well

as the portfolio policy secretary's preparations of the next government action guidelines and the main tasks of their next phase, adhering to Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai's philosophy of administration aiming for "Endeavour, Solidarity, Persistence,

Innovation", and the people-centred philosophy of development.

The statement said that the delegation also visited the Peking Union Medical College (PUMC), National Health Commission (NHC), National Cultural Heritage Administration (NCHA), China Media Group (CMG), and the General Administration of Sport of China (GAS), during which numerous consensuses were reached through a working meeting on the operation and development of the Macao Union Hospital in Cotai, cooperation in medical and healthcare between Macau and the mainland, the preservation of cultural heritage, cultural communication and promotion, and the upcoming National Games.

"The leaders of the ministries and commissions, and of the relevant organisations indicated that they would seriously implement the spirit of President Xi Jinping's important speeches and closely follow the president's 'four expectations' to support the stable development of Macau's various sectors," the statement noted.

The four expectations are enhancing appropriate economic diversification; raising governance capability; building a higher-level platform for external exchanges; and safeguarding social harmony. ■

Colombia to block US deportation flights amid growing LatAm pushback

David Salazar

BOGOTÁ — Colombia's president vowed yesterday to block US deportation flights until migrants were guaranteed "dignified treatment," escalating a row between Washington and left-wing Latin American governments over US President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown.

"The United States cannot treat Colombian migrants as criminals. I forbid entry to our territory to US planes carrying Colombian

migrants," President Gustavo Petro wrote on X.

In a later post, he said he had "turned back US military planes," without saying when or how many planes were involved.

He added, however, that he would allow in civilian US flights carrying deported migrants, as long as they were not treated "like criminals."

The president later said over 15,600 undocumented Americans were living in Colombia and urged

them to "regularise their situation," while ruling out raids to arrest and deport them.

US officials did not immediately respond to Petro's remarks, but Trump's border czar told ABC News he was convinced that countries reluctant to take back citizens would cave under US pressure.

"Oh, they'll take them back," Tom Homan said yesterday in a televised interview.

If governments refused, "then we'll place them [migrants] in a

third safe country," he said, without specifying which countries would qualify as "safe."

Under Trump's first presidency, Mexico agreed to take in non-Mexican migrants deported from the United States after being threatened by Trump with punitive trade tariffs.

Under Biden, however, the United States reverted to deporting non-Mexican migrants directly to their countries.

Trump's threats to deport

millions of migrants has put him on a potential collision course with governments in Latin America, the original home to many of the estimated 11 million undocumented migrants in the United States.

Colombia's warning to Washington came amid outrage in fellow left-wing ally Brazil over the treatment by the Trump administration of dozens of Brazilian migrants deported back to their country on Friday. (More on p.12) — AFP

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Li holds symposium with foreign experts

Premier Li Qiang yesterday held a symposium at the Great Hall of the People with representatives of foreign experts who have won the 2024 Chinese Government Friendship Award and those who are working in China. — Story on p. 7

Indigenous rights activists protest on Australia Day

Tens of thousands of Australians protested over the treatment of indigenous people yesterday as the country celebrated a national holiday marking the 1788 arrival of British colonisers. — Story on p. 11

Portuguese lawmaker accused of stealing suitcases at airports

A Portuguese far-right lawmaker has been accused of stealing suitcases at several airports and has been kicked out of his political party as a result, the grouping has said. — Story on p. 12

Student's leg hurt in traffic accident 'not amputated': DSEDJ chief

Yuki Lei

In a traffic accident in Iao Hon district last Monday, a 19-year-old secondary school student was hit by a bus on a zebra crossing and was rushed to the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre after his right leg was run over by the vehicle, resulting in an open fracture of the right thigh and a right metatarsal laceration, in response to which Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Director Kong Chi Meng said on Saturday that the student had meanwhile undergone his first surgery and was in a stable condition, denying rumours that the teen's leg had been amputated.

Kong said that the victim, an F6 student, remained hospitalised, but was in good emotional and physical condition.

Kong underlined that his bureau was "very concerned" about the student's situation and remained in close communication with his school, adding that both sides have reached a consensus that after the student has recuperated, they would assist him in readapting to his school routine and provide him with special help for his examinations and further studies, including the provision of remedial lessons and exams and additional counselling by his teachers. He said: "The

student's health condition is most important at this stage".

According to Kong, in the wake of the incident, the Transport Bureau (DSAT), in conjunction with his bureau and the Public Security Police (PSP), held a meeting to listen to a raft of views from several schools in the northern district on optimising the road and traffic conditions in the area, including the installation of zebra crossings as well as the setting up of additional signage and safety alerts at carpark exits and certain locations near schools. Kong noted that a mechanism has meanwhile been put in place by the Transport Bureau to listen to schools' views on traffic issues on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, concerning the fact that a "parallel-trading" gang had employed school leavers aged 16-17 to smuggle items such as computer processors with a market value of about 700,000 patacas to the mainland, Kong said that according to the law, compulsory schooling ends at the age of 15. However, he said, his bureau has, in conjunction with nine local counselling organisations, been following up on school leavers who are over the age of compulsory education, with the aim of encouraging them to return to school. ■



This photo circulating on social media platforms shows firefighters assisting the 19-year-old student run over by a Transmac bus in last Monday's accident on a zebra crossing in Iao Hon district.

2 more diagonal crossings set up in northern district: DSAT

Yuki Lei

Following the installation of diagonal crossings at the junction of Rua Nova da Areia Preta (黑沙環新街) and Rua de Ma Kau Seak (馬交石街), two more junctions have been provided with multidirectional crosswalks in the northern district, which started operating on Saturday morning.

According to a statement by the Transport Bureau (DSAT) on Saturday, the relevant arrangement was made in the wake of a traffic accident at the junction of Avenida da Longevidade (長壽大馬路) and Rua da Tribuna (看台街) last Monday, in which a 19-year-old secondary school student was run over by a public bus, sustaining a severe leg injury.

The statement noted that having assessed the factors of the road conditions and vehicular traffic pressure at Avenida da Longevidade, Rua da Tribuna and Avenida do Hipódromo (馬場大馬路) and after communication



This handout photo provided by the Transport Bureau (DSAT) on Friday shows the multidirectional crosswalk at the junction of Avenida da Longevidade, Rua da Tribuna and Avenida do Hipódromo.

with the schools concerned, the bureau, taking into account the existing pedestrian traffic signals, set up additional diagonal crossing facilities at the junctions with the aim of further optimising the crossing environment and

safeguarding pedestrian safety there.

The statement said that now 10 signalised junctions in Macau have been equipped with diagonal crossings, of which three started operating earlier this month. ■

Mainlander nabbed with knife at border checkpoint

Ginnie Liang

A mainland man was caught for having a knife in his suitcase when he was leaving Macau through the Qingmao pedestrian border checkpoint last Wednesday, according to a statement by the Macau Customs Service (SA) on Friday.

Through the cooperation mechanism established with the mainland Customs authorities, the man and his weapon have been transferred to the Macau Customs Service for further investigation, the statement said.

According to the statement, the male suspect was intercepted by mainland Customs officers at the Qingmao pedestrian border checkpoint when he entered the mainland and found to have a 40-centimetre-long knife in his suitcase.

As the man failed to explain why he was in possession of the



This undated handout photo provided by the Macau Customs Service (SA) on Friday shows the 40-centimetre-long knife seized at the Qingmao pedestrian border checkpoint last Wednesday.

knife, which was therefore classified as a "prohibited weapon", the man has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a charge of possession of prohibited weapons, the statement said.

According to Macau's law on the possession of weapons, if a person does not have a licence and fails to apply for a licence to

possess a controlled weapon, he or she is liable to imprisonment for two to eight years.

The bureau urged residents and travellers to strictly abide by the laws and regulations of both Macau and the mainland, and to refrain from bringing any form of weapons or prohibited items into or taking them out of Macau, the statement said. ■

Senior loses HK\$373,000 in 'girlfriend' and 'lawyer' scams

Ginnie Liang

An elderly local man was scammed out of HK\$173,000 by his online "girlfriend" and an online "lawyer" in a scam that began in November last year after the "girlfriend" had previously cheated him out of over HK\$200,000 in 2023, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said during a regular press conference on Friday.

According to the spokesperson, the senior citizen met a female netizen who claimed to be a "Chinese American female soldier" online in August 2023, and they became an online couple.

During their virtual relationship,

the victim was scammed out of HK\$200,000, but he only reported the case to the police in June last year, the spokesperson said, adding that while the case was still pending, the victim received another message from his "girlfriend" in November last year, indicating that he could get a refund of his money but had to pay a courier fee of HK\$25,000, which the victim believed to be true and transferred the money.

A few days later after transferring the money to his "girlfriend", an "Indonesian lawyer" contacted the victim, claiming that there was a problem with the

courier and demanded money for a variety of reasons, cheating the victim out of HK\$148,000, the spokesperson said.

The "lawyer" continue requesting money again for different reasons, the spokesperson said. Finally realising that he might have been cheated, the victim reported the case to the Judiciary Police.

Together with the courier fee, the victim suffered a total loss of HK\$173,000 this time, not including the more than HK\$200,000 that his "girlfriend" had fraudulently received from him in 2023, according to the spokesperson. ■

Published since Aug 2004

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- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua



Macau Weather

TEMPERATURE FALLING SLIGHTLY. COLD AND VERY DRY. CLOUDY, BECOMING FINE. FORCE 5 TO 6 NORTHERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 25% AND 65%.



9°C~16°C

Source: SMG

IAM urges public to stop eating eight 'Cape Herb & Spice' seasoning products

Ginnie Liang

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) warned the public on Friday against eating eight seasoning products sold under the brand of "Cape Herb & Spice" based in Cape Town, South Africa, due to potential plastic contamination.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) announced on Thursday that the problematic product was found to contain "foreign plastic matter".

The problematic products have a best-before-date between September, 2026 to May, 2027, namely, "Cape Herb & Spice Seasoned Salt", "Cape Herb & Spice Extra Bold Peppercorns", "Cape Herb & Spice Salt & Pepper", "Cape Herb & Spice Himalayan Pink Salt", "Cape Herb & Spice Sizzling Steak House Seasoning", "Cape Herb & Spice Atlantic Sea Salt", "Cape Herb & Spice Chilli & Garlic" and "Cape Herb & Spice Rainbow Pepper", which have a net weight ranging between 175 and 390 grams.

The bureau said in a statement on Friday that it has issued a food alert to warn local retailers about the product, adding that the bureau is dispatching IAM officials to look for the product.

The statement did not say whether the problematic batch was currently on sale in Macau.

Anyone who has food-related enquiries may call the IAM's Food Safety Hotline on 2833 8181. ■



This file photo provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) yesterday shows the eight problematic "Cape Herb & Spice" seasoning products.

To be cold for few days, people offer advice on keeping warm

Vox pop by Rui Pastorin

The cold was felt across Macau yesterday as the city experienced a sudden drop in temperature.

The yellow* cold weather alert had been issued by the local weather bureau (SMG), with cool temperatures expected to persist in the next few days. The lowest temperature, according to the SMG website's 7-day forecast, could dip as low as nine degrees.

The Post asked several members of the public last night about what they were doing to cope and stay warm, along with their tips to deal with the chilly weather.

"I've been here for a long time, so I think I'm ready for the cold weather" said a 34-year-old Filipino named Henry, adding that in the 10 years that he's worked here, he got to experience one of Macau's coldest winters and now knows to expect temperatures to drop around the Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday. Wearing enough clothing is a way to stay warm, but Henry said that one should also prepare in case one gets ill. "It's common for people to get sick in this weather, maybe you'll catch a cold or get a fever, so you should definitely prepare some medicine".

Meanwhile, a market vendor in her sixties named Tam seemed unfazed, noting: "Cold is cold". However, to tackle the chill, she emphasised the need to wear more clothing during this period, along with drinking warm liquids. But more than that, she emphasised that hand warming pouches help a lot, noting that they offer a great way to get through the nippy weather.

"Just let it be" added a local woman in her fifties who operates a stall in the city centre as she was braving the frigid weather last night. "Of course, I do feel the cold while I stand here, this is just the situation", adding that the wintry conditions comes with the CNY holiday. But working, she said, especially when it gets busy, does help her keep warm, along with the heat coming from her stall. In general, however, she said that there is no better way to stay warm than wearing more layers of clothing.



A sign carrier promoting a beef offal eatery tries to stay warm by wearing a thick jacket in Largo de S. Domingos in the city centre. - Photo taken last night by Rui Pastorin

Work is what also helps Lei, a local shop assistant, deal with the bitter cold. According to the 22-year-old, he thinks that people from Macau are quite attentive to changes in weather, pointing out that it is not uncommon to see everyone fully geared up for the weather. And as we approach CNY and the month of February, "They know they should keep warm...they have this sense".

According to the local observatory, the temperature stood a 9.8 degrees Celsius in Taipa at 1:47 a.m. today. ■

* "The cold weather alert in Macau comprises yellow and orange alerts. The bureau will issue a yellow alert if it predicts that Macau's weather will be cold, while an orange alert will be issued if it predicts that the city will be hit by very cold weather", according to a previous report by the Post on December 18, 2020.

金沙中國片區活化項目
Sands China's Community Revitalization Programme

PHILIP COLBERT

澳門MACAO

ART TOUR 藝術之旅

2025
15.01
16.03

Limited-Time CNY Activities at Former Iec Long Firecracker Factory and Taipa Houses

- 1 | Check out Philip Colbert's Macao Edition and Signature Sculptures
- 2 | Free lobster themed Fai Chun written by calligrapher on site
2025.01.25-26 15:00-18:00
Former Iec Long Firecracker Factory
- 3 | Chinese instrumental performances
2025.02.01 - 02.02 16:00-18:00
Former Iec Long Firecracker Factory

• Lobster Firecracker Macao Edition

• Lobster Cockerel Macao Edition

More details on Sands China's Community Revitalization Programme

Organizer: 金沙中國 Sands China Ltd

Supporting Entity: 澳門特別行政區政府旅遊局 DIRECCAO DOS SERVICOS DE TURISMO MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

文化局 INSTITUTO CULTURAL

All photos provided by TLGS.



Barbering: a gentleman's club

Ginnie Liang

Have you ever visited a traditional barber shop in Macau? In Pátio Oeste de Hó Chi Iêng (何子英西園), not far from Praça de Ponte e Horta (司打口), TLGS Barbershop has carved out a unique space in the local grooming scene.

TLGS stands for “Turn left, Go Straight”.

Earlier this month, the *Post* sat down with the owner, Siu Ao, who gave insights into the shop’s philosophy and the significance of barbering in today’s world. “Barbering has always been about more than just a haircut,” he explained. “Historically, barbers were essential figures in their communities, maintaining not just appearances but also a sense of well-being.”

Opened in 2023 and run by a team of four skilled local barbers, the shop embraces the rich history of barbering culture—a tradition that dates back centuries, when barbers served as both hairdressers and surgeons, Ao said.

The origins of the barber shop can be traced back to medieval Europe, when it was a place that specialised in

moustache trimming. At that time, the barber shop also offered simple medical services such as tooth extraction and treatment for headaches, Ao said, adding that in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the barber shop became a place for men’s grooming.

Finding a traditional barber shop in Macau can be a challenge, as there are only about six to seven in the city. Ao emphasised the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere, pointing out that his shop was designed to feature retro decor and local art, highlighting the work of local tattoo artists. “We want our clients to feel at home, and it’s about building a community,” Ao said.

Unlike many modern hairdressing salons, TLGS focuses exclusively on men’s grooming—wet shaves, trims, and haircut styling. “We don’t do perms or dyes,” Ao noted. “We want to keep it traditional, just like the barbers of the past, so as to revive the timeless tradition of men’s grooming.”

Ao also discussed the significance of communication between barbers and clients. “Often, clients say they want just a little off [a minor trim], but what that means can vary widely,” Ao said, adding, “to bridge this gap, TLGS plans

to conduct workshops that teach clients how to articulate their desired styles effectively.”

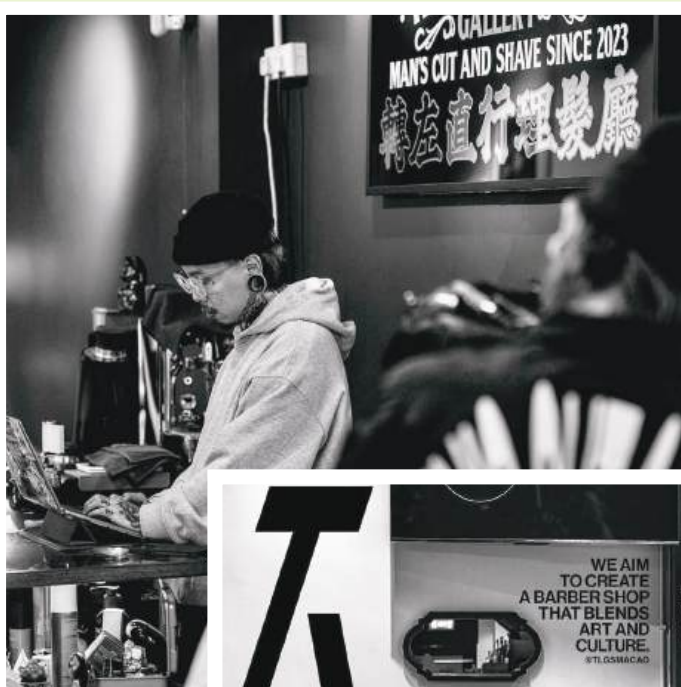
According to Ao, by understanding the tools and techniques of barbering, clients can better manage their expectations and achieve their desired looks without relying on guesswork, which Ao believes, will enhance the overall experience and satisfaction.

“We are not only focused on offering haircuts but also aim to foster a greater understanding of barbering culture,” Ao underlined, “just as diners request specific cooking levels for their steak at a restaurant, clients can learn to quantify their grooming requests, making it easier for barbers to meet their needs.” Ao said.

Looking ahead, TLGS has exciting plans to engage with the community: “We plan to make a magazine-style portfolio to better showcase our work and our aesthetic.”

Additionally, TLGS will also set up a pop-up booth at the ongoing Barra Lunar New Year Market, to be held from Friday through Sunday this week, where clients can enjoy haircuts in a vibrant atmosphere.

“In the end, barbering is about more than looking good; it’s about feeling good and belonging.”



Government Services Centre to move from Areia Preta to social housing estate on ex-power plant plot in Q4

Tony Wong

The government has announced that it is aiming to relocate its current Government Services Centre in the peninsula, located in a building in Areia Preta district, to the podium area of the nearby new social rental housing estate on Avenida de Venceslau de Morais (慕拉士大馬路) in the fourth quarter of this year.

Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) President Chao Wai Ieng made the remarks while attending this year's first regular meeting of the bureau's Consultative Committee at its headquarters in the city centre on Friday.

Macau has two Government Services Centres, with the other one located in Taipa.

The two Government Services Centres are one-stop facilities where various government entities run their respective service counters so that those needing services from different public entities can complete public administrative formalities at one place.

Private property leased to govt

The Government Services Centre in Areia Preta, which opened in 2009, is housed in a low-rise private building, located opposite the Luso-Chinese Vocational and Technical School, initially earmarked for commercial purposes. The government has leased the entire building, with four floors above ground, for its Government Services Centre. Before being leased out to the government, the building was initially known as San Kin Wa Commercial Centre (新中華商業中心).

The Government Services Centre in Taipa, which opened in 2019, is also a private property leased out to the government, located on a podium floor of



Vehicles drive past the new Mong Son Building on Avenida de Venceslau de Morais yesterday. An area on its podium will house the new Government Services Centre.

the Nova Park (濠珀) residential estate.

The two Government Services Centres are operated by the Municipal Affairs Bureau.

The new social rental housing estate comprising three blocks, built on the plot of the former CEM power station on Avenida de Venceslau de Morais, is known as Mong Son Building (望信樓), where tenants started to move into their flats late last year.



A car and a motorcycle drive past the current Government Services Centre on Rua Nova da Areia Preta (黑沙環新街) yesterday.

— Photos: Tony Wong

Avenida de Venceslau de Morais serves as a dividing line between Areia Preta and Mong Ha districts.

The social housing estate will have a public bus terminal on the ground floor, while its other podium levels will house commercial facilities and various other communal facilities.

According to previous news reports, the government decided to relocate its current Government Services Centre in Areia Preta to the podium area of the new social rental housing estate on Avenida de Venceslau de Morais so that it will not have to pay rent to operate the centre anymore.

Fewer service counters

Speaking to members of the government-appointed committee during Friday's meeting, which was open to the media, Chao said that

an area in the podium of the Mong Son social housing estate is being decorated for the new Government Services Centre, adding that the government is aiming for its decoration to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year when its current Government Services Centre in Areia Preta, could be relocated to the new location.

However, Chao said that as the new Government Services Centre in the Mong Son social housing estate will be equipped with more self-service kiosks, the number of its service counters will be smaller than in the current Government Services Centre in Areia Preta. Chao underlined that the number of service counters in the new centre would be sufficient to meet residents' needs as they have become more willing to use e-government services over recent years. ■

Inflation rate dips to 0.74 pct in 2024



Shoppers browse for cosmetics in a store in the city centre yesterday.

— Photo: Rui Pastorin

Staff Reporter

Macau's inflation rate dipped by 0.2 percentage points to 0.74 percent last year, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

However, according to a DSEC statement last week, the composite consumer price index (CPI) for last month rose by 0.23 percent year on year and by 0.2 percent month on month.

The price index of Food & Non-alcoholic Beverages, which had a weight of 29.47 in the CPI, increased by 1.1 percent year on year in 2024. In contrast, the price index of Transport (weight: 8.33) dropped by 3.26 percent, namely due to a decrease of 23.55 percent in the price index of passenger air transport (weight: 0.56). The price index of Housing and Fuels (weight: 34.47) grew by 0.45 percent year on year, with that of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) (weight: 0.72) up by 6.49 percent.

For the fourth quarter of last year, the average composite CPI rose by 0.28 percent year on year. ■

New waterfront sitting-out area in Fai Chi Kei opens

Tony Wong

The new sitting-out area along the south-side waterfront of Patane North Bay opened on Friday after the completion of its construction.

Patane North Bay, a bay off Fai Chi Kei and Ilha Verde, is known as Fai Chi Kei North Bay in Cantonese.

A statement by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) last week said that the ongoing rainwater pumping station project next to the new waterfront sitting-out area is now slated to be completed in the next quarter, after which it could come into operation.

The government launched a project in 2023 to build the rainwater pumping station on the south-side waterfront of Patane North Bay as well as underground box culverts in the vicinity. The project also included the construction of the new waterfront sitting-out area.

After the completion of the setting-up of the box culverts, the construction of the new waterfront sitting-out area was also completed earlier this year after which it came into use on Friday.

The sitting-out area, with a total area of 2,166 square metres, features various facilities such as fitness equipment, viewing platforms and children's "interactive" areas.

As seen by the *Post* yesterday, due to the still ongoing construction of the rainwater pumping station, the new waterfront sitting-out area is still not connected to the existing sitting-out area along the bay's east-side waterfront.

The road running along the bay's south-side waterfront is known as Rua do Comandante João Belo (俾若翰街/筷子基北街).



A boy sits in the new sitting-out area along the south-side waterfront of Patane North Bay yesterday, with the adjacent rainwater pumping station project (left) still underway.



Pedestrians cross Rua da Doca Seca at the junction of Rua do Comandante João Belo yesterday where traffic lights came into use on Friday.

— Photos: Tony Wong

The underground box culverts have been set up along a section of Rua do Comandante João Belo, as well as along the entire section of the adjacent Rua da Doca Seca (船澳街).

With the completion of the setting-up of the box culverts, the government has also set up traffic lights at two junctions on Rua da Doca Seca, one with the waterfront Rua do Comandante João Belo and the other with

Rua da Bacía Sul (海灣南街), both of which came into operation also on Friday.

A statement by the Transport Bureau (DSAT) yesterday underlined that the bureau is constantly adjusting the signal timing of the traffic lights at the two junctions in line with the developing situation with the aim of improving vehicular flows in the area while making it easier for pedestrians to cross the roads there. ■

MGTO expects average of over 185,000 CNY visitors a day

Rui Pastorin

With this week's Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday, Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes told reporters yesterday that she is expecting a daily average of 185,000 visitor arrivals over the 8-day CNY holiday.

The veteran tourism chief spoke with reporters after the opening ceremony of MGM's "Barra Lucky Blessing Market" * in Barra district.

"That's quite an optimistic projection, but seeing the current numbers during the past week, I think it is a possible scenario to achieve this 185,000 on average per day for the eight-day period", Senna Fernandes said in response to a question by the *Post*. She added that the expectations also come with the central government's new policies such as the one-trip-per-week permit for Zhuhai residents and the multiple entry permit for Hengqin residents, along with other promotions over the year.

In terms of hotel room occupancy, Senna Fernandes told reporters that it was close to 90 percent, noting that this figure could be exceeded and reach even 95 percent.

Moreover, with Thailand's Cabinet having recently approved



Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes speaks with reporters after the opening ceremony of the "Barra Lucky Blessing Market" in Barra district

a draft bill legalising casinos in the country, the MGTO Director added that given the Macau government's economic diversification strategy, she believes that in the future, it would be possible for the city to attract different types of visitors along with different age groups.

"Obviously we have to be cautious, but at the same time we are optimistic. We have to do our part, make sure that we develop our products well and do our promotions well. So, we have to continuously keep the momentum going", according to Senna Fernandes.

Reminding travellers to be safe

Meanwhile, given the holiday period, Senna Fernandes told the *Post* that MGTO has already issued travel safety reminders over the past week, reminding everybody to take good care of themselves and be aware of possible hazards.

She added: "We are very attentive to what's happening and making sure that our own residents are aware of the possible hazards". ■

*More details about the event in tomorrow's newspaper

Hotel guests rise by 6.4 pct to 14.4 million in 2024

Staff Reporter

Macau's 146 hotels recorded 14.4 million hotel guests last year, a year-on-year increase of 6.4 percent, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a DSEC statement last week, the hotel sector's average occupancy rate of guestrooms rose by 4.9 percentage points year on year to 86.4 percent in 2024, when guests' average length of stay remained unchanged at 1.7 nights.

Last year, the number of available guestrooms decreased by 7.8 percent to 43,000.

The number of foreign hotel guests grew by 57.4 percent year on year to 1.1 million, or 7.67 percent of the total number of hotel guests last year. The number of South Korea hotel guests increased by 100.8 percent to 321,000,

accounting for nearly 29 percent of all foreign hotel guests last year. Malaysians (87,000 +53.4 percent), Japanese (81,000 +49.1 percent), Indians (73,000 +97.2 percent) and Singaporeans (68,000 +24.1 percent) made up the hotel sector's other major foreign guest segments last years, according to the bureau. Compatriots from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan accounted for 92.33 percent of the total number of hotel guests.

Meanwhile, Macau received 2.1 million package tour visitors last year, an increase of 63.8 percent. Mainland Chinese accounted for 88.77 percent of all package tour visitors. Among package tour visitors from foreign countries, those of South Korea (91,000) and India (24,000) grew by 226.4 percent and 302.2 percent respectively. ■



A receptionist and a bell boy wait for guests at a hotel in the city centre yesterday. - Photo: Rui Pastorin

Jobless rate falls to 1.8 pct in 2024

Staff Reporter

Macau's general unemployment rate, which comprises residents and non-resident workers (NRWs), decreased by 0.9 percentage points year on year to 1.8 percent last year, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a DSEC statement last week, residents' jobless rate fell by 1.0 percentage points year on year to 2.4 percent in 2024.

The median monthly employment earnings of the employed population in general and the employed residents in particular amounted to 18,000 patacas (US\$2,240) and 20,500 patacas respectively, both up by 500 patacas year on year. ■



Promotional sign carriers work try to attract tourists' attention in Rua da Palha (賣草街) yesterday. - Photo: Rui Pastorin

CPC leadership extends festive greetings to cultural workers, scientists

BEIJING – On behalf of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and General Secretary Xi Jinping, a senior CPC official yesterday extended festive greetings to all the people working in the culture and science and technology circles.

Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, visited several prominent figures in these sectors and extended greetings for the upcoming Chinese New Year.

Cai, who is also a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, paid visits to a writer, a cosmochemist and geochemist, an aero-engine expert and an

economist, commending their achievements and listening to their advice.

Cai highlighted the reform plans regarding the cultural work system rolled out by the Party leadership and called for a fresh outlook and new achievements in ideological and cultural work.

He stressed the importance of innovative talent in China's drive to achieve sci-tech self-reliance.

Cultural and technological workers should shoulder their responsibilities, foster innovation, and integrate their personal ideals and pursuits into the cause of the Party and the country, he said.

- Xinhua

Visitor arrivals rise 23.8 pct to 34.9 million in 2024, incl 2.4 million foreigners



Tourists crowd Rua da Sé (大堂街) in the city centre yesterday. - Photo: Rui Pastorin

Staff Reporter

Macau recorded 34.9 million visitor arrivals last year, a year-on-year growth of 23.8 percent, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) has announced.

According to a statement by the bureau last week, same-day visitors (18.88 million) and overnight visitors (16.04 million) grew by 35.0 percent and 12.8 percent year on year respectively.

Visitors' average length of stay (1.2 days) shortened by 0.1 days last year, with that of overnight visitors remaining unchanged at 2.3 days.

Mainland Chinese visitor

arrivals rose by 28.6 percent to 24.49 million, accounting for 70.1 percent of the total number of visitor arrivals. Visitors from the nine Greater Bay Area (GBA) cities in Guangdong Province rose by 28.8 percent to 11.98 million, or 34.3 percent of the total number of visitor arrivals last year.

Visitors of China's Taiwan region (834,411) rose by 64.1 percent, while those from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) reached 7.179 million, up by 0.2 percent year on year.

Macau's number of foreign visitor arrivals rose by 66 percent to

2.42 million, or 6.9 percent of the total number of visitor arrivals in 2024, including 493,399 from the Philippines, 183,062 from Indonesia, 181,941 from Malaysia, 134,658 from Thailand, 119,201 from Singapore, 103,817 from India, 492,184 from South Korea, 126,424 from Japan, and 147,941 from the United States.

Of the total number of visitors, 79.5 percent arrived by land, 11.7 percent by sea, and 8.8 percent by air.

Macau's received a record 39.4 million visitor arrivals in pre-pandemic 2019. Last year's visitor arrivals reached 88.57 percent of the 2019 record figure. ■